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"THE BEST THING SOCIOLOGY CAN DO": THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF
A COMMUNITY ACTION AND INVOLVEMENT COURSE

by

BRENDA K. SAVAGE
B.S. Toccoa Falls College, 1996
M.A. Rollins College, 2011

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the transformative potential of a Community Action and Involvement course, an undergraduate sociological elective taught at a large southeastern university, to develop or support undergraduates' sense of personal agency and provide the resources necessary for them to engage in the work of social change. The research is rooted in both Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus and the work of Carmen Mills (2008) on the simultaneous existence of a reproductive and transformative habitus within students. This is a mixed methods study, which includes the analysis of pre- and post-course survey data and over 800 student writings collected during the course to uncover student attitudes and behaviors regarding social change. Results suggest that many of the 47 students credited the course with their increased optimism and confidence in their own potential to change things in society; additionally, they felt they gained tools they needed to cause social change. Further, in relation to the theorization of the dialectic of the reproductive/transformative habitus, complexities emerged as indicators, including desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions, were uncovered, thus complicating the attempt to understand if the students in the class were exhibiting a reproductive or a transformative habitus. This research, though limited to the outcomes of a single course contributes to the understanding of both the need for and the student response to action-oriented sociology courses; it also suggests pedagogical aspects that students might find helpful in such classes. Finally, this study opens the door for further research into the effect of social location on undergraduates' outlook on society and their ability to cause change, as well as additional testing of the theorization of the reproductive/transformative habitus.

This work is dedicated to the students of the Community Action and Involvement Course.

Thank you for agreeing to join me on this journey. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, frustrations, ideas, and insights about how we might make our society a better place for more people. Every one of you is a wild card on which I feel confident betting. I wish each of you all the best and more as you live your lives on the Möbius Strip.

May the ripples you start be never ending…

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the American Sociological Association (ASA) issued a report entitled, *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major Updated: Meeting the Challenge of Teaching Sociology in the Twenty-First Century* (McKinney et al. 2004). Compiled by the ASA Task Force on the Undergraduate Major, this report updates and expands a previous version (Eberts et al. 1990), offering sixteen recommendations concerning the undergraduate major in sociology. Of interest here, the task force states the following on the first page of the report:

> The best thing sociology can do for undergraduate students, whether majors or not, is to teach them to learn effectively so that they can keep up with rapid changes in society, particularly in knowledge, and live meaningful, engaged, and productive lives. (McKinney et al. 2004:1)

The report states that sociology can make a unique contribution to liberal education by helping students learn effectively through the development of the sociological perspective. This involves "unfettering the mind" so one can see beyond the ordinary and familiar social arrangements, "empirical inquiry," and debunking, or challenging "taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of the world;" ultimately sociology can offer undergraduates "an education worth having" (McKinney et al. 2004:1). While this appears to be an exciting and transformative agenda, the execution of it might be problematic and difficult.

I became aware of a snag in this optimistic vision when I was concluding my first term as an instructor in a university classroom, teaching sociology to undergraduates. For two hours per day, four days a week, over the six weeks of a summer course, 100 students and I came together for an Introduction to Sociology class. For many in this diverse mix of students, this class was their first experience with higher education, with most fresh out of high school, and it was their

initial exposure to the sociological perspective and its accompanying discussions of inequality, stratification, and discrimination. In the final week of classes, one attentive student quietly articulated, "We have spent this whole course seeing how bad things are in the world, but what can I do it? I feel helpless and frustrated because I do not like the way society is, but I do not know how to change it" (paraphrased). As I stood there in the pregnant pause that followed his emotional query, other students murmured their agreement. I have since reflected on that moment many times. Unlike the vast majority of his classmates, this student was a senior, and our class was his last requirement. Set to graduate three days later, he was leaving the course and his undergraduate life with a greater sociological awareness, however, in that moment, he felt unequipped to do anything with that knowledge. His eyes had been opened, but he was left unsure what to do with his new and developing sociological perspective.

Other sociology instructors have recognized and attested to the presence of this sentiment in their students (e.g. Johnson 2005; Rondini 2015). In light of the transformative agenda laid out by the ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004:1), this scenario raises an important concern as to whether undergraduate sociological education, in its quest to "unfetter the mind," and help students "learn effectively so that they can keep up with rapid changes in society," inadvertently causes students to underestimate their own social agency, or their ability to effect society to a significant degree. Further, it raises the question of whether or not sociological education can, in addition to growing a sociological perspective within students, provide the resources to help students to realize and exert their agency and get involved in social change if they desire to do so. In other words, can sociological education transform how undergraduates

2

see themselves and the social world so they can become agents of change, able to recognize and evaluate alternatives and take action, instead of feeling stymied, disempowered or overwhelmed?

This challenge provides the motivation, guidance, and direction for the present research. It is a complicated question with multiple considerations and nuance; it denies the possibility of a simple or generalizable answer. It lies far beyond the promises of one research project to uncover and untangle the complexity of the multiple strands that underlie such an inquiry. This is not to say, however, that the role of sociological education in transforming students should not or cannot be explored. Instead, one must acknowledge from the outset that a single attempt to research this topic is incontrovertibly insufficient and limited in the conclusions it can draw.

Accordingly, the present study will be exploratory in nature. The general purpose of this research is to investigate the transformative potential of a single undergraduate sociology course, conducted in a specific time and setting, with a certain group of students. Particularly, can a course on "Community Action and Involvement" play a role in activating students' views of themselves as social agents and providing the resource acquisition necessary for them to feel able to engage in social change? The goal of this research will be to flush out the components that can add to our understanding of the impact of sociological education on student views of the social world and their roles within it.

This research uses a mixed methods approach, drawing on pre- and post-course surveys, student writings, and the instructor's teaching journal from a semester-long undergraduate sociology course, Community Action and Involvement (CAI). The study draws on both quantitative and qualitative methods to measure the ability of this one course, specifically designed to challenge the reproductive outlook of undergraduates, or the belief things cannot be

changed in the social world, and move them toward a more transformative outlook, or the ability to see opportunities for action aimed at social change. The knowledge arising from this research will contribute a small piece to our overall understanding of the potential for sociological education to help undergraduates feel able to pursue positive change in their personal lives as well as in the social world. It may also better help us realize the goal of enabling students to "live meaningful, engaged, and productive lives" (McKinney et al. 2004:1) through sociological education.

Theorizing Transformation

The sociological perspective has the potential to affect students' patterns of thought and behavior, which, arising from socialization and lived experiences, guide the interpretation of classroom sequences, course material, self, and broader society. Undergraduates enter the sociological classroom with preconceived patterns of thought and action that may be unexamined and unproblematized. Developed from infancy and linked to economic, cultural, and social capital, perspectives of oneself and the social world by and large reflect the social position of one's family, evolving in a manner that makes one's outlook, expectations, and dis/advantages feel natural and appropriate. Pierre Bourdieu (1990b) terms this set of thought and behavior patterns as "habitus," and he theorizes that education serves to reinforce the habitus and guide students towards an acceptance of the social world 'as is'. As a result, students are less likely to challenge how it is organized, and instead make choices that reproduce it. Traditional education may facilitate this; it stands accused of reproducing habitual and constrictive patterns of fatalistic thinking in students, thereby serving to reinforce and reproduce broader social inequalities

(Bourdieu and Passeron 1970/1990; Bowles and Gintis 1976/2011; Giroux 1983; 2003). While actions born of habit are still expressions of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998), students may assume the hierarchical and inequitable arrangements of the social world to be appropriate and fixed, and the scope of their decisions is constrained accordingly.

Education, however, does not necessarily have to play a reproductive role. Instead, education may be transformative; by leading students to reflect upon their personal agency, education can expand the capacity of students to engage in meaningful, change-oriented action in the present and the future. Building on Bourdieu, Carmen Mills (2008a; 2008b) theorizes that education can enable students to shift from a "reproductive habitus" to a "transformative habitus." Mills argues that, through education, students can move from a more passive acceptance of the societal status quo to the awareness that social change is both warranted and accessible. Mills argues that teachers have a central role to play in moving students toward a transformative outlook. This involves helping students perceive the possibility for change and gain the practical tools and tactics necessary to make change a reality. The suggestion that a reproductive and a transformative habitus simultaneously exist as potentials within each individual opens a space in which one can question how education might move students toward transformation. The sociological undergraduate classroom, with its disciplinary focus on "unfettering the mind" through the development of the sociological perspective, is well suited to further investigate and elaborate the potential of this theorization. More specifically, a CAI course, with its orientation toward social engagement, provides an excellent setting, within which this conceptualization of habitus can be explored among one particular group of undergraduates.

Sociology and Transformative Education

In light of the ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004), it is fitting to associate sociology with education aimed at transforming undergraduates' views of themselves and society. This is an important consideration for the present research exploring the ability of a single CAI course to change students in such a manner. The task force suggests that developing a sociological perspective changes the way students see the social world, which in turn can lead to the evolution of values aimed at increasing social justice. In other words, students can be prompted to "see" alternatives to inequitable social arrangements and engage in social change. Further, this is a common goal in sociological undergraduate education, as Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016:153) find that "the importance of trying to change the world" is one of twelve areas of overlap across the sociological literature written concerning learning outcomes for the undergraduate.

Despite its prevalence, this academic ideal is difficult to realize for a number of reasons. First, much uncertainty revolves around the potential of education itself to change students in a consequential manner. For example, the findings of Arum and Roksa (2011) reveal that, in general, undergraduates underperform, meaning that they fail to grow significantly in their ability to think critically and tackle complex issues during their postsecondary experience. Similarly, reminiscent of the Coleman Report (1966), the ability of education to change student perspectives that have developed in a specific familial and social context over a number of years is likely to be limited. Considering such findings, one must proceed with very narrow and cautious expectations regarding the potential of a single course to cause meaningful change in the students' outlooks.

Second and more specifically, sociological education has its own challenges. Research shows that the course material and its presentation in the undergraduate sociology classroom may instead discourage students, leading to feelings of helplessness, frustration, and resistance as students encounter and grapple with information about deeply entrenched stratification, discrimination, and privilege (e.g. Davis 1992; Johnson 2005). If a sociology course emphasizes the fixedness of social structures while failing to suggest solutions, undergraduates may perceive themselves as unable to make a difference, contributing to what Johnson (2005) terms "a culture of doom and gloom." Or, students may gain awareness of the breadth and depth of social problems, leading to feelings of individual inadequacy in the face of such vast issues, similar to what Mills (1959) suggested in his presentation of the sociological imagination. Conversely, students may critically reflect upon their own personal agency if they are taught that society is socially constructed, or a product of human action (Berger and Luckmann 1966), and, as a result, feel as though they can change their social world. This, however, may be problematic as well. An emphasis on social construction without an understanding of structural intransigence may leave undergraduates with an overly optimistic view of the social world, potentially leading to disillusionment when institutionalized forces are seen to thwart individual efforts to improve society. So, while sociological education is potentially transformative, it is not necessarily so. This leaving us with questions about how best to proceed in selecting pedagogical methods, learning activities, and curriculum, particularly for a sociology class which focuses specifically on community engagement.

In light of the transformative potential associated with the sociological perspective, traditional education is arguably insufficient for helping undergraduates adequately connect their

growing sociological awareness with the recognition of alternatives and the ability to garner the resources they need to engage in social change. The traditional approach to education has been the target of much criticism in recent years, accused of reproducing social inequalities, preserving the societal status quo, and treating students as passive learners (Freire 1970/2000; Giroux 1983; McLaren 2003). In other words, instead of moving society towards social justice by teaching students how to actively build bridges between knowledge and action, traditional higher education is perceived to objectify and disenfranchise students, thereby supporting the reproduction of the social order. These perceived shortcomings have prompted the evolution of nontraditional educational approaches, such as critical pedagogy and feminist pedagogy, which proponents assert are transformative. For instance, Braa and Callero (2006:1) advocate for the integration of critical pedagogy, arguing that it generates "the transformative potential of the sociology classroom." By adopting student-centered methods intended to increase student recognition of their personal agency, transformative approaches thus seek to engage students in the development of a critical conscientiousness, or an understanding of power differentials, ideologies, and self, culminating in justice-oriented action (Shor 1992). In this sense, both the student and the society are to be transformed through education.

Transformative education may indeed be a fitting approach to sociological education; however, it too has shortcomings that must be considered by those who design and teach undergraduate sociology courses. In terms of similarity, transformative education directly integrates with key sociological theorizations regarding power, stratification, and social location (related to gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic class, etc.), and is tied to *praxis*, where theory leads to action intent on building a more equitable society (Marx 1845). Also, like transformative

approaches, sociology's ongoing investigation into how inequality is reproduced in society, both structurally and at the individual level, takes the institution of education and the classroom itself into account (e.g. Bourdieu and Passeron 1970/1990). Further, the discussion of the separate, yet intertwined roles of personal agency and social structure are central to both the sociological conversation and transformative education. Indeed, the teaching methods of transformative education are intended to address power dynamics, student passivity, and the customary societal arrangements (e.g. Chow et al. 2003; Freire 1974/2013; Shor 1992). These parallels suggest a natural union, indicating that transformative education might be well suited for teaching the sociological perspective; however, transformative education cannot be regarded as a panacea. Transformative education struggles to live up to its own ideals (Ellsworth 1989). Its suitability varies according to context. It prejudges the conclusions students should reach (Burbules and Berk 1999). It also fails to provide evidence of outcomes that convincingly demonstrate significant and definitive results; the results are mixed (e.g. Cho 2013 versus Kapitulik 2010). Consequently, between the traditional and transformative approaches to education, there is no straightforward solution as to how to teach undergradute sociology courses, particularly a course intentionally aimed at helping undergraduates engage with the broader world. This therefore opens space for further exploration in the present study.

Although the literature demonstrates a commitment to education as a transformative force for students, there is a gap between theorization and outcomes that needs further research and assessment. As noted above and discussed further in the next chapter, the sociology classroom has already provided a testing ground for research concerning how and what students learn, their emotional reactions to the subject matter and its presentation, and their ability to connect the

9

course material with their own lives. It is well poised to continue to do so. Also, as the ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004) implies, there are few areas of study more perfectly suited to the exploration of how students view their roles as agents in the social world and the potential for education to provide a transformative experience as described above. For example, it would arguably be more difficult and unnatural to investigate such issues in a chemistry or computer science course. Sociological education has also, in several ways, already moved beyond traditional education to implement tenets of transformative approaches that aim to change both student and society through education. The centrality of the sociological perspective and its connection to social change indicates that sociological education naturally overlaps with transformative education, as both consider power, privilege, the structure/agency debate, and the reproduction/transformation dichotomy, opening the door to challenge societal arrangements associated with stratification and inequalities. In light of these considerations, the present study uses one undergraduate sociology classroom to further investigate what "works" in terms relative to transformative aims and the theoretical framework of the concurrent actuality of the reproductive and transformative habitus.

<div align="center">The Transformative Potential of Sociological Education</div>

The ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004), along with the literature, gives rise to questions that should be of particular relevance for sociologists who desire to help undergraduates transform the way they see themselves and the social world. How do undergraduates see the social world? Are they full of cynicism or optimism, or do they vacillate between both? Do they see the world as fragile and open to change? Or, on the other hand, do

they view the world as fixed and impervious to the work of social actors? Do they feel powerless to challenge social inequalities, or do they feel able to enact positive change in society? Do they see potential for an individual to make a difference in society, or do they feel overwhelmed by the vastness of social problems? ? Do they feel they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to address social problems if they desire to do so? If not, what are they lacking? Can they draw on their past and present to articulate, develop, and predict outcomes of their personal plans for engagement? Can students be moved toward a transformative outlook through a sociology course? If so, what helps accomplish this? If not, why not? And, how does social location affect the answers to these questions? Further, is it possible to further uncover the indicators of a reproductive/transformative habitus?

By pursuing the answers to such questions using one CAI course, the present study aims to move us toward a greater understanding of whether or not sociological education, by "unfettering the mind," can lead undergraduates toward "meaningful, engaged, and productive lives" (McKinney et al. 2004). While the results of this research will be both temporally and spatially specific and therefore not generalizable to sociological education as an entity, they will provide a cache from which themes can arise for future consideration in other settings. If this one course is able (or unable, for that matter) to help students critically reflect on their roles as social agents and edge their social outlook away from reproductive patterns and toward transformative thoughts and actions, then it will contribute to our overall understanding of the transformative potential of sociological education.

In summary, this research examines if a single undergraduate sociological course can move its students away from a reproductive or fatalistic outlook and toward a transformative

outlook through the development of the sociological perspective. Both Bourdieu (1990b) and Mills (2008s; 2008b) argue that it is possible for education to affect students in this manner, and therefore, the present study tests such theorization in a CAI course designed and taught by the researcher in a large, southeastern, metropolitan university. Beyond exploring the simultaneous existence of both a reproductive and a transformative habitus within the individual student, this particular course was intentionally constructed to advance students beyond sociological awareness to a recognition of opportunities to employ tactics (De Certeau 1984) or tools that evidence a personalized, intentional, and reflective employment of agency to affect the social world (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). This too will be evaluated. The course was intended to facilitate the connection of critical self-reflection with the sociological perspective, presenting a scholastic approach to social change while guiding students in the exploration of their own patterns of perception and behavior. The research employs analyses of pre- and post-course surveys of student attitudes and behaviors related to social action and social change as well as student writings to uncover if this course was at all transformative for the students who took it. As noted above, sociological education is potentially transformative. Therefore, the aim of this study is to uncover a starting point of the students in regards to their outlook on social engagement and then investigate the extent to which transformation did or not did not occur in this particular pedagogical setting.

The rest of the work will proceed in the following manner. Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature and the theoretical framework for the study. Chapter Three reviews the methods for this research. It provides a brief overview of the course design utilized in the research and delineates the analytic plan for the study as well. Chapter Four provides a picture of

the CAI class, presenting information about the students, including demographics and lived experiences. Chapter Five draws on student writings to outline how the undergraduates in the CAI course viewed the social world generally. Chapter Six provides analysis of student writings regarding whether they saw themselves as social agents and the degree to which they felt equipped for social change. Chapter Seven also draws on student writings, exploring the barriers that held the students back from engaging in social action. Chapter Eight presents the findings regarding the degree to which students changed over the course of the semester. Chapter Nine outlines the analytic results of the pre- and post-course surveys, showing significant mean differences from the beginning to the end of the semester. Chapter Ten outlines both the pedagogical aspects of the CAI course that the students appreciated and what they felt could help make the course more useful. Chapter Eleven concludes the study, providing a discussion of the outcomes, the limitations and implications of the study, the researcher's reflections, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BASIS

The question of how to best teach undergraduate sociology is not a new one; it features repeatedly in the literature. It has been the work of decades past and times present. For example, in *Passing on Sociology*, Goldsmid and Wilson (1980) drew on their experiences in the classroom as well as the literature to reflect upon the problems and complexities of sociological education of their day, and they laid out goals and means for sociological education as it moved forward. This type of research continues, as exemplified by the ASA journal, *Teaching Sociology*, and the ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004). Another recent example is "Measuring College Learning in Sociology," in which Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016) review the sociological literature to develop a "Sociological Literary Framework" that delineates five essential concepts and six essential competencies for undergraduate sociology. Further, beyond discussions of *what* should be taught, Atkinson and Lowney (2016) provide a practical guide, *In the Trenches: Teaching and Learning Sociology*, to address *how* to teach, thereby suggesting effective teaching practices. Additionally, the ASA is expected to issue a revision of its *Liberal Learning* report in 2017 (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016). Thus, there has been and continues to be an intentional effort within sociological education to grapple with and understand what to teach, how best to teach it, and how to evaluate its effectiveness. The present research endeavors to contribute to this ongoing effort.

This literature review is woven together to clearly demonstrate the essentiality for the present study. It begins by examining the essential knowledge and skills undergraduate sociology seeks to impart to and develop within its students. This will demonstrate not only that this research sits squarely within the aims of undergraduate sociological education, but that it is also

necessary work in order to better understand how to realize the intended outcomes of sociological education regarding social change and to further explore how best to help students develop a transformative view of the social world. This will be further unwrapped using works such as the ASA *Liberal Learning* report which establishes the centrality of the sociological perspective for teaching undergraduate students and delineates what lies within its parameters. This will serve to uncover the transformative agenda of the sociological perspective, which is of principal interest for the present study.

Next, the theoretical framework for this study is established. First, it draws on the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998) to define and demonstrate the elements that make up agency. Second, the theoretical framework draws heavily on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1990a; 1990b) and, more recently, Carmen Mills (2008a, 2008b), on the reproduction and transformation of habitus, or the collection of the patterns of perception of the world and its associated possibilities that structure and guide a person's thoughts and actions. This is an easy link, which allows the present study to elaborate on the simultaneous existence of both a reproductive and transformative habitus as potentials within the individual, and explore the ability of the sociological perspective to move students' habitus away from reproduction and toward a transformative outlook on themselves and society. Together, the complexities of agency and the reproductive/transformative habitus conceptualization helped guide the selection of discussions and activities for the CAI course as well as offer suggestions for course design and coding terms for the analysis of student writings.

Against this theoretical backdrop, difficulties related to teaching the sociological perspective will be identified, the inadequacies of traditional education for transforming students

15

and increasing their sense of agency will be highlighted, and the benefits and shortcomings of transformative education for teaching sociology and moving students toward a transformative habitus will be examined. The issues associated with both traditional and transformative education suggest that neither offers a straightforward or infallible solution to the question of how best to help undergraduates embrace their personal agency and engage in action aimed at intentional social change. This literature is foundational for the design of the CAI course; it informed the selection of teaching methods, topics of discussion, types of assessments, and other considerations for the course, which are discussed in the next chapter.

The literature review and theoretical framework lead to a series of broad research questions. These questions capture the exploratory nature of this research. Taken together, the questions shape the intention of this study to investigate the potential of the CAI course to affect the outlook of the students enrolled in the class. Particularly, the study will seek to uncover whether or not students' views of the social world and their engagement with it changed over the course of the semester. It will expose how these students viewed their personal agency and social involvement and reveal how they personally assessed the resources available to them for social change. Also, it will investigate the ability of the students to identify and critically evaluate concrete ways to engage in social change. Together, the answers to these questions will help us explore if the students moved toward a transformative outlook, and perhaps help us better understand the pedagogical strategies useful for such aims.

<u>The Transformative Potential of Sociological Education</u>

As this research explores and evaluates the impact of an undergraduate sociological

course centered on community engagement, it is helpful to first identify the main aims of undergraduate sociological education, generally speaking, before turning to a discussion of its transformative potential. The ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004) provides an appropriate launch point because, while it is not prescriptive, it does project what undergraduate sociological education generally entails across the discipline. The report cites the development of the "sociological perspective," or an understanding of "the importance of social structure and culture" as vital to "providing an education worth having" (McKinney et al. 2004:1). The sociological perspective is central to education within the discipline, as it connects sociological theory, methodology, and practice, thereby "unfettering the mind" and "challenging [students'] taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of the world." (McKinney et al. 2004:1). Such a perspective coincides with the development of the "sociological imagination" (Mills 1959), or the ability to see private troubles as part of wider public issues. The sociological imagination undergirds all sociological research and is a key outcome for students who enroll in undergraduate sociology classes (Atkinson and Lowney 2016; Mitra and Sarabia 2005). Indeed, its centrality is evidenced by its presence in the first learning goal for the sociology major in the *Liberal Learning* report.

The development of the sociological perspective also accounts for social structure, which can include, for example, social institutions, norms, and beliefs, and personal agency, or the free will of individuals as social agents. The differing perspectives on the dichotomy of social structure and personal agency are evidenced by the organization of the discipline into three major paradigms, structural functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism, the understanding of which is considered a learning goal in developing the sociological perspective (McKinney et al.

2004). These key conceptualizations are central to sociological education and therefore intimately connected to changing or expanding students' perceptions of the social world, as well as their own social location and personal agency.

Beyond those components mentioned in the *Liberal Learning* report, sociological education exposes undergraduates to additional sociological concepts that can alter their perceptions of the social world. Through sociology, undergraduates are introduced to the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966), which emphasizes that human beings, as social agents, create and institutionalize social phenomena, or culture. En route to developing the sociological perspective, students also explore sociological insights on social inequalities as generated by intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989, 1991), matrices of domination (Collins 2000), and social stratification (Massey 2007; Massey and Denton 1993; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002), which capture differences in relation to race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, and other categories of classification that inform perceptions of the social world. Finally, the sociological perspective accounts for the dissection of power and the privileging of certain practices and types of knowledge, as well as theorizations to uncover and deconstruct hegemonic tendencies (e.g. Bourdieu 1990a; Ellsworth 1989; Foucault 1980; Wallerstein 2001). In addition to the sociological imagination, structure and agency, and social theory, these components are fundamental aspects of any undergraduate sociological course.

Most recently, Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016:154) have drawn on works such as the ASA *Liberal Learning* report (2004) to build a "Sociological Literacy Framework" which concisely captures the prime objectives of sociological education. First, undergraduates should develop a sociological eye (Collins 1998). In addition, they should increase their understanding

of what Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016:154-55) term the other "essential concepts" of sociology, including social structure, socialization, stratification, and social change/social reproduction. In doing so, the students develop the sociological perspective, learning how to see the social world and the human experience in its complexity, as a sociologist does. Alongside these concepts, the undergraduate sociology student is introduced to skills of application and evaluation. These skills, or "essential competencies," include, for example, applying social theory, evaluating research methods, and analyzing data (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016:154). Further, and particularly applicable to the present study, undergraduates are expected to develop the sociological perspective and their application and evaluation skills so that they can "engage with and have an impact upon the world in which they live and work" (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016:160). This "Sociological Literacy Framework," provides indicators that can be used to build and assess the effectiveness of a sociological undergraduate course, including the one at the center of this study.

With these objectives, teaching sociology to undergraduates is indeed an important and daunting task; however, the selection of goals and outcomes, curricula, and pedagogical methods is just the beginning. Given the very nature of sociology, teaching within the discipline involves much more than the preparation of daily lesson plans. Critically reflexive instructors (Brookfield 1995) are acutely aware of how the contextual elements of the sociology classroom affect teaching and learning. These elements include, for example, the social location of the instructor, the power dynamics within and surrounding the classroom and the academic institution, privilege related to membership in socially constructed categories, the process of knowledge creation, and the socio-historical setting. Also, familial history and social context create a particular social location, with its associated thought and behavior patterns, that affect students' experiences and

successes in the classroom (this recalls the conclusions of Coleman et al. [1966]; Bourdieu and Passeron 1970/1990). These concerns are evident in the ever-expanding literature as sociologists, often in the dual role of instructor and researcher, strive to find what works best to achieve the aims of the undergraduate sociology classroom. The present research follows in their footsteps.

Despite such challenges, sociological education is an effort worth making, for it can facilitate and support a transformation in how students see themselves and their potential as social agents. This transformative potential of sociological education is suggested by the optimist, even inspiring tone of the ASA *Liberal Learning* report. Through the multi-faceted sociological perspective, undergraduates can gain an "education worth having," by being taught to "learn effectively so that they can keep up with rapid changes in society," enabling them to "live meaningful, engaged, and productive lives" (McKinney et al. 2004:1). The development of the sociological perspective as *the* essential concept indicates a transformation in the way students view the social world.

The transformative potential of sociological education has found support in the literature. For example, delineating the content analysis results of an activity meant to challenge students' stereotypical assumptions about inequality, Moremen (1997:117) attests, "personal transformation [of students] is the goal." Sociological education can transform patterns of reproductive thinking in students; it can also support patterns of thought that already see the world with a sociological eye. Sociological education engages students in "debunking," or challenging the customary nature of the social world by asking students to see beyond the ordinary (Berger 1963:38). This targets for transformation the folk beliefs and "nonsociological ideas about the nature and causes of social harm" that students may bring into the classroom

(Kleinman and Copp 2009). Additionally, as Bengston and Hazzard (1990) find that common sense is not necessarily in opposition to sociological sense, undergraduates who enter a classroom with the beginnings of a sociological perspective can find theoretical and empirical evidence that support its further development.

Further, the process of growing one's sociological perspective is expected to lead students to develop transformative values that include "reducing the negative effects of social inequality," and working for social justice (McKinney et al. 2004: 23, 52). This indicates that action challenging some forms of social reproduction is an anticipated outcome of the sociological perspective. Similarly, Persell and colleagues (2007:311-12) identify trying to improve the world as one of nine learning goals of sociology. Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016:160) agree, desiring that sociology enable students to "engage with and have an impact upon the world." While the amount of transformation that students undergo will vary according to lived experiences and vantage points, the potential remains for undergraduates to be profoundly affected by sociological education. In fact, it is a desired outcome. Therefore, as students begin to grapple with these major aspects of the sociological outlook, it is rightly expected that their view of themselves and society may undergo a sea change, but the extent to which this happens and the pedagogical methods best suited to guide students in this process require more research, thus reiterating the need for the present study.

The Theoretical Framework: Agency, Reproduction, And Transformation

In light of the aforementioned goals for undergraduate sociological education, this research builds on the premise that the sociological perspective can transform the way students

21

see themselves and the social world. Essentially, the sociological perspective manifests as an internalized lens through which students can recognize alternatives to the current societal arrangements and thereby engage in social change. Despite its transformative promise, however, there is no guarantee, even with the best pedagogical intentions, that students will see themselves as agents able to alter the construction of the social world. First, it must be acknowledged that agency is complicated and multifaceted, as Emirbayer and Mische (1998) explain. Second, undergraduates may become willing, albeit perhaps unwitting, participants in the reproduction of current social arrangements. Even if they are armed with increased sociological understanding, students may fail to move toward action or engagement with social issues. Undergraduates may be, as Rondini (2015) finds, unable to articulate and enact methods for social change. Further, those students who experience privilege related to their social location (in terms of, for instance, race, gender, or social class) may be disinterested in, unaware of, or resist the need for social change (Allen and Rossatto 2009; Davis 1992). The reasons for this may be captured by the theoretical work of Bourdieu on symbolic violence, habitus, and education, and Carmen Mills, who extends Bourdieu by theorizing the simultaneous existence of both a reproductive and transformative habitus in every student. Together, Bourdieu and Mills provide a lens through which the transformative potential of the sociological perspective can be explored in this research. More specifically, their work suggests that students' patterns of thoughts and action related to their personal agency and role in the social world can be altered through education, while concurrently attesting to the intense difficulty of doing so. The present study aims to further explore this complication, because, though not always explicitly stated in theoretical

22

terms, the literature reveals that the outcomes of transformation and increased agency through

education are difficult to define, achieve and measure, and reproduction is much more likely.

The Complexities of Agency

Defining agency is important for this research. Because student recognition of their

personal agency is a key objective of the Community Action and Engagement course, it is

helpful to find indicators related to the manifestation of this phenomenon. In speaking about

agency, it is important to avoid oversimplification of this very complex term. Emirbayer and

Mische (1998) unravel agency to reveal the strands, or the "chordal triad" of which it is

comprised. The authors explain that agency is a "temporally embedded process of social

engagement" (963). Agency is the interplay of these three dimensions: (1) iteration, or habits

from the past, (2) projectivity, or creating possibilities for the future, and (3) practical-evaluative,

or judging options based on the problems and demands of the present. With this in mind,

Emirbayer and Mische (1998:970) offer the following definition of agency:

> *…the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural*
> *environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the*
> *interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms*
> *those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing*
> *historical situations.* (italics in original)

Agency thus has a role in reproduction and transformation, and is a "dynamic *interplay*" between

"routine, purpose, and judgment…situated within the flow of time" (963; italics in original).

Through their deconstruction of agency, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) present indicators

that are helpful for uncovering the extent to which students see and utilize their agency, as well

as designing course activities that can tap into these three strands. For example, the authors offer

subsets of words as well as key ideas for each strand that can be used to shape coding schemes and other evaluation methods. By way of illustration, the authors, in discussing iteration, highlight the effect of past experiences and historical biographies on the agentic process, noting how they dictate and limit the schemas, or "repertories," from which an individual will select an action as well as frame expectations related to that action. In this way, habits are agentic, not structural, as Bourdieu (1990a) argues. This presentation of iteration suggests that it is appropriate for the present study to, for example, seek to uncover the habits with which students entered the CAI course, their expectations about the future, and how their biographic histories affect their interpretation of the social world, as these are all part of the complexities of agency. Similarly, the study can focus on the hopes, goals, and ambitions of the students, as these are tied directly to projectivity. It becomes clear that the course design must include activities that draw these out for study. Also, following the practical-evaluative strand, assessing the students' ability to deliberate and make the best possible decision about what action to take becomes an important learning goal. In addition, the importance of self-reflection in agency becomes evident. Thus, the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998) dissecting the three strands comprising agency provides indicators useful in both structuring and determining the effectiveness of the CAI course in generating a transformative outlook in students and engaging them in self-reflection on their agency. This becomes particularly apropos when considered in light of the theorization of Bourdieu and Mills below concerning the role of students in the reproduction and transformation of society and their potential as social agents.

Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus and Reproduction

Reproductive patterns of thought and action are central consideration in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (i.e. 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron 1970/1990) details how education reproduces class inequalities and legitimates social stratification by structuring and reinforcing patterns of thought and action within individuals in conjunction with their social positions. Bourdieu (1990b:126) argues that education contributes to "symbolic violence," or a gentle, misrecognized form of domination, in which students are socialized to accept their social lot as fitting and see no need or potential for social change or exertion of personal agency to challenge the status quo. Symbolic violence is carried out through the habitus, defined as a set of acquired internalized dispositions reflecting the external social structure (Bourdieu 1990b).

The habitus is central to understanding how an individual can simultaneously be constrained and act as an agent (Akram 2013). It answers Bourdieu's (1990a:65) question, "how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?" Bourdieu seeks to synthesize the objective and subjective social forces evident in the structure/agency dichotomy (Sweetman 2003). Simply put, in terms used by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), Bourdieu argues that one's projectivity is affected by iteration. Bourdieu argues that the actions and expectations of an individual are likely to be constrained by the habitus, yet the capability to exercise personal agency remains. In other words, the habitus reflects one's social position and the social arrangements, guiding an individual toward patterns of thought and behavior that feel natural, befitting one's particular social location, but do not necessarily preclude alternatives (Bourdieu 1990b). Other choices are possible; change is possible. Thus, Bourdieu (1990b:130) sees individuals as social agents who "construct their vision of the world," yet they do so "under

structural constraints" which feel appropriate and familiar. Developed from a young age through socialization, the patterns within the habitus guide individuals toward thoughts and actions that appear fitting for people of their 'type.' By the time a child reaches adolescence, socialization by family, education, cultural expectations, and life experiences have shaped the habitus, suggesting those outlooks, behaviors, and life expectations that are appropriate to one's social location. As this socialization is linked to economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital, it is difficult and uncomfortable to "undo" these patterns of thinking.

The formation of habitus begins in infancy, incorporating the capital holdings of one's family, history and the corresponding social position. Economic capital includes material resources, while cultural capital reflects nonmaterial resources such as knowledge, manners, and credentials (Bourdieu 1988). Cultural capital can be converted to economic capital; for example, a college degree (cultural capital) can lead to a higher paying job (economic capital). Economic and cultural capital serves to differentiate between and distribute individuals to particular social locations, creating the external milieu in which the habitus feels comfortable. In this manner, the habitus serves as an internal constraint on the individual's decisions and actions (Bourdieu 1990b:6). Social capital refers to those networks available to individuals, which provide connections to facilitate their advancement in society (Bourdieu 1990b). Symbolic capital is prestige, esteem, or charisma that arises in relation to the other forms of capital, representing a source of "legitimated" power that is "misrecognizable" as such (Bourdieu 1979:83). For example, a doctoral degree is equated with expert status and academic respect. Combined, these four types of capital determine social position and the associated structural limitations an individual will experience and incorporate into one's habitus. Habitus thus develops as "the

active presence of the whole past of which it is the product," and becomes "spontaneity without consciousness" (Bourdieu 1990b:56). Both advantages and disadvantages take on a natural feel as befitting one's social location. Bourdieu (1990b:131) argues that "habitus implies a 'sense of one's place'," through which "we have a world of common sense, a social world which seems self-evident" (Bourdieu 1990b:132). Habitus becomes a lens that narrows an individual's expectations regarding life chances and the social world. Using Bourdieu's theorization as a frame, we see that undergraduates enter the sociology classroom with particular tastes, perspectives, choices, and actions congruent with their social location and capital; this directly impacts their vision of the social world. While there may be similarities among students with comparable amounts of capital, there is uniqueness as well, which inhibits cookie-cutter approaches to teaching the sociological perspective and developing student agency.

Bourdieu's theorization of the habitus as restrictive leads to strong strictures for education in general. Bourdieu accuses education of serving as a tool of reproduction, maintaining the preexisting order" by reinforcing the habitus of students (Bourdieu 1974; 1998b:20; Bourdieu and Passeron 1970/1990) instead of being a "change agent" (Cho 2015). Bourdieu argues that education systematically reproduces culture and its associated structural inequalities through a naturalization of the power dynamics of society constructed relative to the distribution and employment of capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970/1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Further, the habitus structures "the reception and assimilation of the specifically pedagogical message" of education (Bourdieu 1977:87). In other words, as a social institution, education generally helps perpetuate a subtle oppression within society (Knight and Pearl 2000).

This criticism is highly relevant for teaching sociology, for it suggests that students enter the undergraduate classroom with perceptions of the social world and themselves well engrained in their habitus. This may make the development of a transformative outlook difficult as students, subject to symbolic violence, might see current social arrangements as appropriate and natural instead of something to be upset or challenged. Additionally, those students who do see the social world as something in need of alteration might lack the initiative or the tools to do so, as these are not part of their habitus. In other words, helplessness in the face of social problems may feel germane for some students, rather than ambition intent on challenging such issues. By connecting habitus to capital, socialization, and social institutions such as education, Bourdieu emphasized its reproductive strength. This is particularly problematic for those interested in transforming students through sociological education because he rightly articulates how difficult it is to move from reproduction and toward social change. Sociological education, therefore, faces great challenge if it aims to help students set aside the constraints of their habitus and develop transformative outlooks on the social world. If we accept Bourdieu's premise, the potential for a single course over a semester to dramatically shift the outlook of a student toward is likely to be minimal.

Within Bourdieu's theorization, however, there is also potential for change. This is an essential consideration for the present study. Although the habitus largely restricts behavior by, its fixedness is not final. Bourdieu (1990a:9) argues that humans are not "automata;" they are "social agents," and as such, they are able to make choices that contradict their habitus. Although the habitus generally reinforces itself by encouraging the selection of thoughts and actions to which it is pre-adapted by social position and possession of capital (Bourdieu 1990b), behavior is

not a determined response or an inevitable certainty. The habitus, though constraining, is not

fixed; it is not a "mechanical apparatus," nor does it produce "programmed actions" (Bourdieu

1990b:60-61). Instead, Bourdieu (1990a:116; emphasis added) argues that the habitus:

> …as the product of social conditionings…is endless *transformed*, either *in a
> direction that reinforces* it, when embodied structures of expectation encounter
> structures of objective changes in harmony with these expectations, *or in a
> direction that transforms it* and, for instance, raises or lowers the level of
> expectations and aspirations.

Here then, though Bourdieu makes plain the reproductive tendency of the habitus, he theorizes

that transformation is also possible, allowing individuals to realize increased ambitions and

optimism about life chances. The place of individual agency is evident in Bourdieu's *Acts of

Resistance* (1998a:21-23), where he highlights a train driver who singly challenged the

xenophobic and racist dialogue of the politicians in his country. Bourdieu sees the transformative

potential of seemingly small, individual actions, and the benefit of those decisions for the

individual. Bourdieu (1990a:134) thus argues that the individual can attempt to alter "the

categories of perception and evaluation of the social world." This is a vital theoretical space for

sociological teaching aimed at transforming undergraduates; it acknowledges the difficulty in

challenging the constraints of the habitus while embracing the potential of doing so and notes the

relevance of individual actions and choices in countering current societal arrangements.

Carmen Mills: The Reproductive/Transformative Habitus

Through habitus, therefore, Bourdieu acknowledges that the habits associated with one's

upbringing and social location restrict behavior, yet he opens space for the subjectivity and

personal agency of the individual, bridging the gap between structure and agency (Harker 1984;

McNay 1999; Sweetman 2003). Into that space, Carmen Mills (2008a, 2008b) extends Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus to theorize that education can serve to reproduce or transform the habitus of students and thus affect how they view the social world and their own agency. Mills draws on Harker's (1984:121) interpretation of Bourdieu, seeing the habitus as "a mediating construct," which is continually engaged in the process of being either reinforced or transformed, leading in turn to the constriction or expansion of choices about what students see as possible for themselves. Mills (2008a:100) theorizes that within each student is a potential for two different habitus to develop, a "reproductive habitus" and a "transformative habitus;" these are "dialectically related" and exist simultaneously as "potentials within each agent."

Mills (2008a; 2008b) asserts that students with a reproductive habitus are likely to confine themselves to opportunities that appear natural and deserved in relation to their social position. A reproductive habitus is fatalistic, rooted in the strength of recurring negative and limited thought and behavior patterns related to social position. Students with a reproductive habitus see themselves as constrained by their social conditions with little hope of improvement. They see themselves as having little or no agency, feeling unable to alter their social worlds. Bourdieu (1977:77) equates this to loving the inevitable, or limiting aspirations and expectations to exclude some "*as unthinkable*." Given the naturalness of the reproductive habitus, students are likely to view their social position and the social arrangements in which they live as appropriate and will be unable to recognize the potential for social change. They also may be satisfied with their social positions, feeling content and seeing change as unnecessary. Reinforced by family, community, peers, and teachers, the reproductive habitus is the default position for most students, who tend to "…take things for granted, rather than recognising that there are ways that [their]

30

situation could be transformed" (Mills 2008a:102). Students with a reproductive habitus see the social world as fixed and beyond their ability to change. Improvement is considered impossible or unobtainable and social forces are viewed as conspiring against the individual, precluding recognition of one's agency or tactics and tools for change. Students with a reproductive habitus "have internalized… the objective chances they face," and "they know how to 'read' the future that fits them" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:130).

On the other hand, students with a transformative habitus can recognize and grasp greater possibilities for themselves beyond those suggested by their current situation. These students "tend to look for opportunities for action in the social field" instead of resigning themselves to the role to which society attempts to relegate them (Mills 2008a:100). A transformative habitus allows students to see beyond their immediate social situation and recognize the possibility for alternative outcomes beyond those expected within the current societal arrangements. Unlike the reproductive habitus, the transformative habitus enables a student to see "possibilities in what might otherwise appear constraining, which invites agency and is generative of alternatives not immediately apparent" (Mills 2008a:104). A transformative habitus suggests action and recognizes one's ability to improvise, changing situations by engaging in "self-enhancement or self-renewal" (Mills 2008a:104). By developing this type of habitus, students see their potential to "*make things happen*" (Mills 2008b:83), and they move away from the reproduction of those dispositions within their habitus that limit their agency. These students can see possibilities that others may miss, and can therefore use circumstances to their advantage (Mills 2008). Where others experience resignation, they see opportunity; they act on instead of being acted upon (Mills 2008a:106).

Mills finds in Bourdieu's work the potential for schools and teachers to generate improved educational outcomes, which links directly to the present research. She raises the possibility for teachers, as well as the institution of education, to engage in the "restructuring of students' habitus" (2008b:79). Mills (2008a) applies the theorization in a specific context, studying marginalized secondary students in a rural area of Australia that has a large Indigenous population and is suffering from economic depression. Using a purposive sample to conduct semi-structured interviews with students, parents, and teachers to study how the students see themselves and are seen by others in regards to their life chances, Mills (2008a:105-6) finds that teachers "battle to engender more transformative dispositions," attempting to provide students with tools and opportunities that encourage students "to make 'use' of their circumstances, to see the possibilities." Mills compares these tools to what De Certeau (1984:xix, 37) terms "tactics," or moving within "enemy territory" to "watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing'." A tactic is used to "constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into 'opportunities'." Further, De Certeau (1984:xix, 37) identifies a tactic as that which "must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected." It is important to note the difference between "tactic" and "strategy," in De Certeau's work. A strategy operates from a place of power, while a tactic "is an art of the weak" De Certeau (1984:36-7). By selecting tactic instead of strategy, Mills (2008a:106) is noting the weaker position from which the marginalized students are operating, as their habitus reinforces their domination through symbolic violence. To overcome this, those who work with

32

marginalized students must teach them to recognize opportunities where they use tactics and "act in ways that can transform situations."

This potential to help students develop a transformative habitus contributes largely to the theoretical framework within which the current research is conducted. Mills opens a space for additional theorization of the simultaneous existence of the reproductive and transformative habitus within undergraduates and development of practical applications in particular contexts. It is in this space that teaching the sociological perspective, agency, and the reproductive/transformative habitus come together. It allows one to hypothesize that the development of the sociological perspective can serve to upend the common-sense expectations and beliefs about the social world engrained in the habitus of students, thereby transform their outlook and expectations revolving around their personal agency. The ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004:1) argues that sociology "challenges [students] taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of the world." The sociological perspective, by unveiling the structural forces working to maintain stratification, privilege, and discrimination within society, disputes the customary nature of such arrangements as reproduced in the habitus. Bourdieu (1977:87) contends, "…the habitus transformed by schooling…in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences." Although in context Bourdieu is speaking of the *reproduction* of the habitus developed in one's childhood and reinforced through education, if indeed the habitus can be *changed* instead of reinforced, as Mills suspects, Bourdieu's statement takes on a more optimistic meaning.

Combined with Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) presentation of agency as the interplay between the iteration, projectivity, and practical-evaluative elements, the work of Bourdieu and

Mills suggests that if sociological education can help students develop a sociological perspective and move toward a transformative habitus, it will affect not only how they view present circumstances, but also their expectations for the future. And of course, as time moves forward, this will affect the iteration, or the habits available for them to draw upon in making decisions and exerting agency. A transformative outlook will impact interactions and decisions, and therefore has implications for the individual as well as the collective. In other words, the potential to uncover and transform students' perspectives through sociological education has repercussions for broader society.

Within a theoretical framework connecting education to the reproductive/transformative habitus, it is possible to conceive of the transformative possibilities of undergraduate sociological education and the sociological perspective suggested by the ASA *Liberal Learning* report and aimed at in this research. The transformative habitus is evidenced by the ability to both recognize and articulate opportunities for action; students recognize that they are social agents and can identify tools, skills, or pathways through which change is possible. This links directly to the sociological perspective, which Berger (1963:30) argues, involves "'being up on all the tricks'." It also connects to transformative education, as Mills (2008a:107) terms this work, "'countering' in the sense of counter-hegemony," because it seeks to undo the patterns of thinking and behavior, products of a stratified societal structure that are engrained in the habitus through socialization, which limit student recognition of possibilities for agency and initiative. Further, it may affect one's iteration, projectivity, and ability to practically evaluate present circumstances and alternatives for action (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

Though one must take care not to overstate the ability of education to generate a transformative habitus within students, given the strength of habit, objective structures, reproduction, and socialization, it is possible to situate the present research on the transformative potential of a CAI sociology course within this theoretical space. With its inherent interest in power, reproduction, social inequalities, social stratification, structure, agency, social constructionism, and social change, sociological education is well suited to operate within this theoretical framework and explore its own potential to help undergraduates develop a transformative outlook and equip them with the tactics and tools necessary to enact social change and recognize alternative social arrangements. Together, Emirbayer and Mische (1998), Bourdieu, and Mills (2008a; 2008b) provide a strong theoretical framework within which the course design and delivery, the research design, analyses, and interpretation of findings for this particular study take place.

The Difficulties of Achieving Transformation

In light of Emirbayer and Mische's (1998:980) discussion of the limitation of "repertoires of habitual activity" on agency and the theorization by Bourdieu and Mills concerning the reproductive strength of habitus, it is not surprising that the literature demonstrates that achieving transformation through undergraduate sociology courses can be very difficult for students. It makes sense that sociological instruction evokes resistance (Davis 1992; Johnson 2005; McKinney et al. 2004) and discomfort in some students, as their natural patterns of thinking and acting may be challenged or debunked. As Moremen (1997:117) states, "the process [of transformation] is never easy;" in fact, "it is intense and emotional work." Moremen (1997:117)

confirms that while some students might develop greater self-awareness, others struggle to "find enlightenment." Research shows that the subject matter in undergraduate sociology classes, particularly introductory courses, can be problematic and uncomfortable for students. In an oft-cited study, Davis (1992) draws on fifteen years of teaching experience in various contexts to conclude that, in response to discussions of inequality, power, privilege, or stratification, students may become resistant, paralyzed, or enraged. In a resistant class, students deny the existence of unequal access and support the meritocracy myth of individual responsibility (Alvarado 2010). Paralyzed students become fatalistic and see no hope for social justice, and deny their own agency. In an enraged classroom climate, a portion of the students, often from disadvantaged groups, become angry with the other students who are members of advantaged groups (Davis 1992). Further, increased sociological awareness may lead to feelings of hopelessness or being overwhelmed, as one begins to understand the deeply rooted nature of social problems or becomes conscious of problems that were before unbeknownst. Similar to what C. Wright Mills (1959) noted in his discussion of the sociological imagination, the more one learns about the social world, the greater the potential for pessimism. As Carmen Mills (2008b) predicts, students may therefore adopt fatalistic or dismissive outlooks regarding their personal agency and the inevitability of structural inequalities.

Other researchers, including Bohmer and Briggs (1991), Haddad and Lieberman (2002), Johnson (2005), Kleinman and Copp (2009), and Pence and Fields (1999), have documented student resistance and frustration in sociology classrooms. As a whole, they document the potential for sociology undergraduate classes to increase student cynicism, apathy, and alienation. Also, Hedley and Markowitz (2001) note that student resistance may also result from

36

reductionism, whereby students become invested in a "norm/other" logic that causes them to

misconstrue sociological information about social inequality as moral argumentation.

Additionally, Snowden (2004) cites student apathy as an issue that prevents students from

developing a sociological perspective and truly engaging with the course material. Also, the

diminishment of self-efficacy in some classes may inadvertently downplay the agentic potential

of the students (Johnson 2005). These issues appear particularly problematic when one considers

that a non-major will likely complete only one introductory sociology course to fulfill a general

education credit (Mitra and Sarabia 2005; Snowden 2004). With these issues in mind, sociology

can leave students feeling frustrated, pessimistic, angry, or even fatalistic, which detracts from

the "meaningful, engaged, and productive" life envisioned in the *Liberal Learning* report

(McKinney et al. 2004:1) and counters the transformative potential of sociological education.

This scenario suggests that the present study is necessary: sociologists, particularly those

who teach undergraduate courses, need to further examine how students think and feel in relation

to a sociology course. Although the literature provides insight into the student experience at

particular moments *during* undergraduate sociology courses, there is little substantial research

into how students think and feel *after* exiting the course in comparison/contrast to how they

thought and felt *at the beginning* of a sociology course, particularly in relation to agency and the

potential for social change. For example, we can ask if a particular course inadvertently

contributed to feelings of powerlessness and anger, or if it generated hope and encouraged

student efficacy. Or, did it do both? Or neither? We can also question if a course contributed to

the reproductive tendencies of a student's *habitus*, or if it promoted the development of a

transformative outlook. Although there is research measuring the development of the

sociological imagination and critical sociological thinking, both of which are linked to how students perceive themselves and the social world (e.g. Bengston and Hazzard [1990]; Grauerholz and Bouma-Holtrop [2003]; Killian and Bastas [2015]; Mitra and Sarabia [2005]; Shepelak, Curry-Jackson, and Moore [1992]), these studies do not explicitly attempt to uncover how such courses affect students' feelings about the social world, perceptions of agency, and the extent to which they see themselves as able to cause social change. This gap in the research about the entire undergraduate sociology classroom experience is problematic because this information is highly relevant for sociologists who shape and teach such courses. Consequently, the present study draws on data collected at the beginning of a semester, at multiple points throughout the semester, and as the semester concluded in an attempt to uncover the extent to which change occurred in student outlooks in that particular course, during a specific time period.

Together, the literature and the theoretical framework discussed above that undergraduate sociology courses can potentially provide students the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to alter their personal situation and beyond, thereby transforming their outlook on the social world in a way that supports increased engagement. It is unclear, however, if such courses can or are actually doing so in practice. This is generally due to a lack of empirical evidence. It leaves us uncertain in our ability as sociology instructors to equip undergraduates with the tools they need to recognize alternatives to the customary social arrangements and engage in the work of social justice. These tools include not only the knowledge inherent in developing a sociological perspective, but also the ability to articulate practical methods through which intentional engagement becomes possible and predict the potential outcomes of utilizing such methods. The potential also exists that students may leave sociology courses feeling fatalistic, inadvertently

38

reinforced in their own passivity, thereby reproducing current social arrangements. Of course, this may happen regardless of our efforts, but pedagogical responsibility requires us to continue to explore this issue. Therefore, in light of the goal of helping students develop the competency to engage with and change their world (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016; McKinney et al. 2004) and the theoretical framework drawing on Emirbayer and Mische (1998), Bourdieu, and Mills (2008a; 2008b), this research posits that sociological instruction can be transformative. It is beyond the confines of this research, however, to test such a claim broadly. Instead, this study envelops one course designed and taught specifically in an attempt to achieve this aim.

How Do We Teach Toward Transformation?

The next logical step is to ask how such transformative work might be done. In other words, if sociological education is indeed capable of helping students become aware of the reproductive tendencies of their habitus and transform their patterns of thinking and action, how does it realize the goal? Research suggests that the choices made regarding pedagogical methodology and the social context of the sociological classroom will affect this work. It is useful therefore to now examine those approaches to education, which, unified in their criticism of traditional education, intentionally aim at increasing student agency and moving students toward transformative outlooks. We proceed with caution, however, because while these findings and theorizations offer helpful guidelines and suggestions, the literature reveals that there is no "transformative blueprint" that teachers can use to ensure undergraduates develop their agency and recognize and employ tactics to exert it. As a whole, this literature served as a guide for the construction of the CAI course at the heart of the present study.

The Reproductive Tendencies of Traditional Education

The literature on transformative education surmises that, by aiming at societal reproduction, traditional education is generally insufficient for transforming students and helping them engage in the work of social change. Traditional education is generally hampered by a number of negative characterizations. First, traditional education treats students as "objects," or passive recipients, stymied in the expression of their own creativity and humanity as "Subjects" (Freire 1970/2000). This might be termed a 'cookie cutter' approach to teaching that treats all students the same. Students are mechanical receptacles into which teachers deposit content; this is termed the "banking" method, and student interests or situations are of little consequence (Freire 1974/2013:72-73). For example, if sociology instructors compose syllabi, select readings, and grading procedures without student input, this generally disregards the agency and passions of each student and the class collectivity. A second common criticism of traditional education is the use of lecture as the primary teaching method; the teacher is viewed as the fount and determiner of relevant knowledge. Freire (1974/2013:84-85) terms this "extension," meaning the teacher gives knowledge from a particular, privileged vantage point, which renders the receivers "things" instead of active co-creators of "real" knowledge. Traditional education leads to informative learning that might change *what* students know, but it does not problematize *how* knowledge is created (Simmons, Barnard, and Fennema 2011), or "*whose* knowledge" is privileged (Apple 1979; Freire 1974/2013; Shor 1992), thereby reinforcing student passivity, or their oppressed status (Freire 1970/2000). Third, the traditional structure of the classroom is criticized for its failure to adequately interrogate power and privilege. The traditional teacher-student relationship is hierarchical, placing the teacher as the powerful expert while minimizing

the potential for students to contribute to the decision-making process (Freire 1974/2013).

In light of such practices, critics see traditional education as serving to reproduce social inequalities and hierarchies inside and outside the classroom instead of transforming both students and society by cultivating agency and generating social change. This is due in large part to the practices of traditional education that lead to the alienation of students from an education relevant to their experiences, which might expand their agency (Freire 1974/2013). Beyond Freire and Bourdieu, there are other well-known voices that have articulated recriminations of the reproductive nature of traditional education. First, Gramsci (1971:35-6) argues that in traditional education, a large portion of students receive "instruction" but not "education," as curricula likely reflects social arrangements counter to their own experiences. The issue is deeper, however, for beyond teachers and curricula, "the entire social complex" is at fault and in need of transformation. Second, Bowles and Gintis (1976/2011) conclude that education reflects capitalism, serving to control the workforce, justify inequality, and reproduce social hierarchies through a hidden curriculum, although their work has been criticized for its exclusive focus on how education distributes knowledge, as Apple (1995) argues the production of ideas and knowledge in education is also problematic. Giroux (1983; 2003; 2011) and McLaren (2003) are well known for their indictment of traditional education for its failure to engage students and advance social justice, as well as for its reproduction of the hierarchical structures and oppressive ideologies of broader society. Additionally, De Lissovoy (2015) argues that traditional education breaks down the 'self' so students will passively assume the roles deemed appropriate for them by the power structures within a society. Therefore, traditional education, instead of being praised as a "change agent" (Cho 2013) that transgresses boundaries and engages students in "the

41

practice of freedom" (Freire 1970/2000; hooks 1994), stands condemned for protecting social stratification and perpetuating social inequalities. Further, in their longitudinal study using a large, representative sample, Arum and Roska (2011) find that inequalities, particularly racial/ethnic differences, are generally sustained through higher education. Thus, such studies demonstrate that despite its promises of social mobility, individual development, and a leveling of the political and economic playing fields, traditional education largely preserves the societal status quo.

Traditional education is often termed problematic. Arum and Roska (2011:30; italics added) find that, although there are exceptions, "a pattern of *limited learning* is prevalent on contemporary college campuses." Chow and colleagues (2003) find through their study of the dialogue, participation, and experience method of teaching (DPE) that classroom hierarchies related to social categories such as race, gender, and sexuality may limit cooperative efforts between the teacher and students, as well as among the students themselves. Freire (1974/2013) deems the teacher/student hierarchy oppressive and dehumanizing for both teacher and student. Traditional arrangements can also create a politicized environment, making it difficult to recognize, challenge, or deconstruct social inequalities within the classroom (Chow 2003). Further, hooks (1994; 2003) accuses traditional education of failing to interrogate the impact of social location in the classroom, thereby privileging and normalizes the voice of the white heterosexual male. She further argues that the minimization and exclusion of marginalized voices renders traditional education irrelevant to the lived experience of students from disadvantaged positions. Traditional education is also deemed a dehumanizing experience in which students become a universalized identity (Allen and Rossatto 2009; Freire 1970/2000:44;

Snowden 2004), with little consideration of their membership in oppressor or oppressed groups or their location in what Collins (2000:26) terms "the matrix of domination," or the "intersecting oppressions" that result in differential treatment in society. With these issues in mind, LaMantia and colleagues (2015:144) argue in favor of dismantling the power differential between the teacher and students by involving students in the development and management of the class, thereby increasing the potential of a "transforming experience" for students.

With these concerns in mind, traditional education appears to be at counter-purposes with the development of the sociological perspective, as it is negatively defined by its lack of attention to how identities related to race, gender, sexuality, class, and socio-historical and socio-political contexts can manifest themselves in classroom dynamics, the production of knowledge, and broader society (Chow et al. 2003; hooks 1994; LaMantia, Wagner, and Bohecker 2015). This has implications for course design, curricula decisions, and teaching practices in the undergraduate sociology classroom. Therefore, given their critical eye, sociology instructors may analyze the dynamics of the traditional classroom in relation to privilege, power, and practice, find them lacking, and naturally look to draw guidance from more transformative approaches to education (Kaufman 2006). This research proceeds in a similar vein. Indeed, there are shared interests between sociology as a discipline and those educational approaches defined as transformative that suggest a natural melding of the two, making their consideration an important aspect of this review.

The Potential of Transformative Education

Transformative education lacks a clear-cut definition in the literature, however it

generally sees itself as the answer to the shortcomings of traditional education. It encompasses those nontraditional approaches to teaching that intentionally aim at the development of critical consciousness in order to achieve *praxis*, or the connection of knowledge to action, and increase student agency (Freire 1970/2000). Shor (1992) defines critical consciousness as having four qualities. First, students develop an awareness of power, its imbalances and the interaction between power and policy-making. Second, students develop their critical literacy, becoming able to see deeper meanings and challenge common sense notions. Third, desocialization occurs, meaning students learn to critically analyze dominant ideologies, myths, and behaviors. Fourth, students learn self-organization and self-education, which entails taking action and claiming initiative to change society. This definition is rooted in the concept of *conscientzação*, a term employed by Paulo Freire (1974/2013:15) to represent "the *development* of the awaking of critical awareness" in his literacy work with Brazilian farmers. Freire (1974/2013:30) argues that education "could help men to assume an increasingly critical attitude toward the world and so to transform it."

Students cannot be forced into a critical consciousness, yet the instructor can put the potentiality within their grasp. As part of a critical consciousness, students learn to see their roles in social action reflectively. Perceived through a Freirean lens, education should be transformative, helping students develop a critical awareness of the world and awaken them to their own potential as social agents, instead of reproducing social hierarchies and social inequalities and reinforcing subjugation. These goals are markedly similar to the transformation associated with the development of the sociological perspective and the learning outcome of students engaging with and impacting their world (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016). As students

44

learn to "see" the world differently, it is expected that they will behave differently by using their knowledge to challenge social inequities and work for social justice.

Proponents of transformative approaches argue that education, instead of serving to reproduce inequitable social arrangements, should have a transformative agenda that leads students toward critical consciousness and justice-oriented action (Braa and Callero 2006; Breunig 2009; Freire 1974/2013; Shor 1992; Sweet 1998). Transformative education seeks to improve on traditional education by implementing methods designed to increase student agency. For education to move students toward an awareness of themselves as social actors, Freire advocates (1970/2000) for the teacher-centered orientation to be replaced by student-centered, problem-posing, problem-solving dialogue to engage students in critical analyses, knowledge production and social activism. While acknowledging that power differentials cannot be completely eradicated in the classroom (Freire 1970/2000; hooks 1994), proponents see the transformative potential of education as teachers and students engage in critical self-reflection to connect their personal social locations and experiences with the course content, thereby co-creating knowledge in a learning community that is democratic, participatory, and experiential; there is a great emphasis on the collective over the individual (Brookfield 1995; Chow et al. 2003; Fobes and Kaufman 2008; hooks 1994; hooks 2003; LaMantia et al. 2015; Long 1995; Shor 1992). Other methods commonly associated with transformative education include: empowering the student voice, creating alternative forms of grading and assessment, and a general leveling of the classroom through which students gain power and responsibility regarding how and what they learn (Chow et al. 2003; LaMantia et al. 2015; Shor 1992; Sweet 1998). Others recommend service learning (Hollis 2002), travel abroad (Fobes 2005) and

community-based research (Ganote and Longo 2015) to engage students and teaching them how to be active members of society. Education is expected to transform society by challenging hegemony, or the "organization of private life and cultural processes" through which subordination feels natural (Connell 1987). Similar to Mills' (2008a:107) theorization of "'countering' in the sense of counter-hegemony," or teaching to undo constrictive patterns of thinking and behavior of the *habitus*, transformative education can construct a counter-hegemony that promotes values and actions intended to challenge aspects of neoliberalism such as individualism and meritocracy (Braa and Callero 2006; De Lissovoy 2015; Lucal 2015). Within such a framework, it is anticipated that education will transform students and lead to a socially just society. Therefore, as they may be well suited to challenge the reproductive tendency of education and help students move toward a transformative outlook, the key tenets of transformative education will guide (but not dictate) the present study in the selection of teaching methods and practices for the CAI course.

Despite their similarities, however, the various transformative approaches have shades of difference regarding how to best teach. Critical pedagogy draws on Freire, and it emphasizes the use of critical, rational dialogue by students to critique themselves and society, thereby uncovering and challenging hegemonic practices (Braa and Callero 2006). Feminist pedagogy has ties to Freire as well, but it introduces a "gendered lens" and moves beyond rationality to also incorporate emotion as a key component in the learning experience (Chow et al. 2003:260; hooks 1994). For example, Magnet, Mason, and Trevenen (2016:1) find kindness to be a "pedagogical strategy" that can "sow the seeds of possibility for the transformation of our students' lives." This includes, for instance, instructors admitting errors, which can help

dismantle domination in the classroom. Additionally, feminist pedagogy decries the practice of publically shaming students for infractions such as arriving late to class or being disruptive as a form of domination that negatively impacts student learning (Burke 2015; hooks 2003; Magnet et al. 2016). Feminist pedagogy is also suspicious of civic engagement projects that reinforce power inequalities, glossing over differences through universalizing terms such as democracy (Costa and Leong 2013).

Other transformative approaches generally draw on critical or feminist pedagogy, or both, in articulating their educational framework. Snowden's (2004) "transformative pedagogy" draws on Freire to emphasize collaborative learning in which student involvement takes center stage. Merizow's (1997) conceptualization of transformative learning theory also reflects Freire, encouraging critical reflection and critical discourse, leading to a change in one's frame of reference (Kitchenham 2008). Simmons and colleagues (2011) build on Mezirow (1997) to test "participatory pedagogy," finding favorable results related to student participation in the creation of syllabi and selection of course content in a graduate level course. Drawing on critical and feminist pedagogy, hooks (1994:15, 153) argues for an "engaged pedagogy" in which teachers and students work together to develop learning strategies relevant to each unique "community of learners," thereby transgressing established hegemonic boundaries. Long (1995), like Freire and Shor, advocates a pedagogy that liberates students by increasing their agency and voice. Ganote and Longo (2014) blend critical pedagogy with feminist ethics to create "education for social transformation," or a collaborative model meant to challenge individualistic models of community engagement. Finally, Keesing-Styles (2006:96) presents "a pedagogy of being," as a holistic approach that helps students develop self-awareness and confidence to cope with the

47

uncertainties of a rapidly changing world. These differences, however slight, indicate that there is not a programmatic approach to transformative education, and therefore this research must carefully weigh such practices in light of particular contexts.

It is useful at this juncture to demonstrate that the methods and goals of transformative education coincide with sociological education, which is an important consideration for the present study. This is possible using Recommendation 12 of the ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004:23), which calls for undergraduate sociology programs to "translate sociological understanding into knowledge and skills that equip [students] to become active, responsible citizens and effective decision-makers in the public domain." The task force suggests that community-based learning, service learning, and community-based research can help reinforce the values of social justice and generate the knowledge necessary for critical analysis and social change. Further, they advocate for classroom-based civic education, such as practicing public sociology, studying social movements, or engaging with social activists. The report identifies goals for students of sociology such as: gaining a critical understanding of social problems, evaluating social programs and policies, comprehending strategies for effective social action, working collaboratively, and developing a sensitivity to inequity. Recommendation 12 thus provides ample points of connection between teaching sociology and the goals of transformative education. The development of the sociological imagination, socio-historical analysis, recognition of power and privilege differentials, critical analysis of issues and proposed solutions, understanding of social and political action strategies, collaboration, and leadership indicate movement toward transformation and away from reproduction. Students gain knowledge, skills, and tools that lead to action and engagement. Therefore, while traditional education may

fall short in its attempt to change how students see themselves and the social world, transformative education is arguably more in tune with the sociological ambition of helping students develop the sociological perspective, realize their own agency, and identify and employ alternatives available to challenge current societal arrangements that are unjust or inequitable.

Proceed with Caution: Shortcomings Of Transformative Education

Despite the apparent overlap between teaching the sociological perspective and the tenets of transformative education, before designing undergraduate sociology courses, particularly for the present research, one should question if transformative approaches live up to their own democratic, collaborative, and counter-hegemonic ideals before implementing them in the classroom (Malott 2011). The literature reveals that transformative education is not a panacea, and it too struggles with ideology, privilege, and domination; these are important considerations in designing a course on Community Action and Engagement. Like traditional education, transformative education has shortcomings and is not an approach that is one-size fits all. First, transformative approaches do not adequately problematize the difficulty of transferring power "from the powerful to the powerless" (Mayes 2010); however, deconstructing privilege requires power. For instance, Snowden (2004:299, 302) is troubled because "one of our better students" struggled with the "enforced conformity to community standards," noting the difficulty of determining "how hard to push students to conform to a learning community..." Second, the line between teaching for transformation and teaching through indoctrination might blur, as it is difficult to allow students to reach their own conclusions about themselves and society without "prejudging what those conclusions must be" (Burbules and Berk 1999:53). Third, some

approaches, such as critical pedagogy, are tainted by hegemony, privileging the cognitive above the affective domain (Ellsworth 1989), failing to interrogate the role of gender in its theorization (hooks 1994), and using vernacular that separates insiders from outsiders (Brookfield 1995). It also falls short when working with privileged students who tend to become angry, resentful, or experience feelings of guilt when their sense of entitlement is directly confronted (Allen and Rossatto 2015).

Additionally, advancing a democratic, participatory, experiential agenda requires the authority to define and implement a vision (hooks 1994). This may occur, for example, when an instructor sets the development of a critical consciousness as a goal for students in a course. This creates a problem with the reproductive/transformative dichotomy. If a methodology transforms students, then it would be tempting to formulaically reproduce that methodology. This is problematic because broad implementation of a transformative educational approach requires teachers, institutions, or lawmakers to decide what is best for students on their behalf, thereby reinforcing traditional power hierarchies. Hjelm (2013:871) uncovers this dynamic, finding that "student empowerment" and "student-centered activities," once aspects associated with transformative education (Lidinsky et al. 2015), are becoming hegemonic because they have been universalized into traditional education. This tendency is evident in the ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et. al 2004:24), which encourages the use of "good pedagogical practice," including active learning, collaboration, and the constructing of knowledge. Another instance is Killian and Bastas (2015), who study the results of active, collaborative learning methods in contrast to more passive, lecture-based methods in introductory sociology courses, absent any mention of transformative education or radical pedagogy. Burke (2015:393) too

reveals that student-centered methods are now required of all 'good teachers' in higher education.

While it is tempting to celebrate such standardization as a triumph of transformative education, Burke (2015) reminds educators that, just as critics of traditional education argue, not all students are the same. Transformative practices do not 'work' for every student. They can generate feelings of fear and discomfort, as students are required to make themselves vulnerable by assuming active roles despite social dynamics related to power, marginalization, and the "othering" of individuals operating within the classroom. They may create resistance and anger among undergraduates, reinforcing exclusion and separation (Allen and Rossatto 2009). Designating the classroom, a "safe space," though believed to be empowering and inclusive, can alienate those students who, expecting a therapeutic class, instead face struggle and risk, as well as those students who find their privileged status criticized. Also, to ensure a safe space, the teacher must assume a position of power (hooks 1994; LaMantia et al. 2015). The transformative practice of "giving voice" to students may cause anxiety, shaming, or tokenism (Burke 2015; Magnet et al. 2016). Measured against its own basic tenets, transformative education thus struggles to meet its proclaimed democratic and egalitarian ideals. Therefore, like traditional education, transformative education should not be unthinkingly implemented in the undergraduate sociology classroom.

In addition to these ideological concerns, there is only a small number of outcomes-based conclusions directly linked to transformative education upon which the present research can draw. Results of such studies are often not generalizable; however, this is not necessarily problematic, as it is likely that what works in one teaching context may not work in another (Grauerholz and Main 2013). While there are studies within the higher education literature on

some of the hegemonized methods of transformative education, such as "student-centered learning" (Hjelm 2013), such research does not adequately examine if the methods served to deconstruct hierarchies in the classroom and help students develop a transformative outlook. Additionally, the practicality of implementing transformative education is questioned (Brookfield 1995; Ellsworth 1989; Sweet 1998) and even decried as ineffectual and counterproductive to societal change, as it may demand intellectual skills of students beyond what some of them are equipped to deliver (Gimenez 1998; 1989). For instance, in a recent study, Huggins and Stamatel (2015) question the pigeonholing of lecture as 'bad' pedagogy for the sociology classroom, finding instead that context matters in making such determinations; sometimes, students need to hear from the instructor, particularly when they have no background in a particular topic. Thus, students may benefit from those methods condemned as "traditional," and they may be harmed by those methods praised as transformative. Further, there is a scarcity of longitudinal research on transformative methods to evaluate whether or not they truly transform the student for the long run, over a five-, ten-, or twenty-year period.

Generally, the empirical studies that test the outcomes of transformative education are carried out by instructors seeking to evaluate the implementation of a single course or method (e.g. Fobes 2005; Long 1995; Rondini 2015; Snowden 2004). For example, Chow and colleagues (2003), use qualitative analysis of student journals to conclude that the DPE approach improved the learning experience of their students; however, they are hesitant to set forward a model of practice. Others employ pre/posttests or indexes to quantitatively measure short-term attitudinal change (e.g. Mobley 2007; Snowden 2004); however, it is difficult to definitively attribute such changes directly to a particular transformative teaching method without accounting for factors

that might undermine validity. For example, Snowden (2004) uses the results of a pre/post course index to test the potential of a collaborative learning community in a semester-long introductory sociology class to overcome student apathy and cynicism, alter how they perceive social inequalities, and grow their agency. The small sample size, however, limits the application of advanced statistical analyses, leaving her to speculatively conclude only there was a slight shift in critical consciousness. It is also possible, however, that this slight shift may have been due to the intellectual maturity gained by students in the first semester of college. Even if quantitative changes are uncovered, this does not necessarily equate to lasting change in students (Mobley 2007), and survey results about outcomes and self-reported gains may reflect social desirability bias (Bowman and Hill 2011). These issues will likely trouble the present study, and therefore, a mixed methods approach has been implemented to generate a richer dataset. Still, conclusions drawn from a single CAI course will remain tentative and limited in their generalizability.

Often the results of such research highlight student enjoyment and knowledge gained, but they do not provide certainty regarding the transformation of the student in relation to the sociological perspective and engagement in social change. Students might express that they like new teaching methods, but this does not necessarily translate into increased agency or social justice work (Cornelius 1998; Moremen 1997). Despite knowing more about social injustice, students may not feel empowered or even interested in social activism; therefore, self-efficacy and commitment to social justice remain elusive (Johnson 2005; Mobley 2007). For instance, measuring the effectiveness of transformative pedagogy in an Honors Social Problems class, Kapitulik (2010) too finds that many students struggle to see past the immensity of social issues, feeling they lack the agency to challenge them. In a second example, by analyzing the self-

reflexive responses of students, Rondini (2015:144) concludes there is strong evidence of a transformative outcome, as all the students in the class, "without exception," were able to recognize and understand structural inequities, and accordingly, they each individually expressed a commitment to social justice. Rondini notes a gap, however, between the vocalization of such a promise and "students' belief in their capacities to contribute to meaningful social change in practice," finding that very few students "seemed confident or comfortable in identifying concrete ways" through which they could "make meaningful social contributions" (144). Similar to Davis's (1992) findings, the students expressed frustration and fatalism, questioning their ability to impact societal issues. In a final example, even though Kaufman and Ross (2006) find positive outcomes in this area, detractions remain that must be taken into account. Though student evaluations generally deem their "Praxis Project" a meaningful learning experience, with some students informally self-reporting that they continued taking social action after the end of the course, the authors also indicate there were implementation issues with a few students. Basically, though students may enjoy transformative education and learn more than in a traditional undergraduate setting, it is not clear that this leads to their increased agency and development of a transformative perspective on the social world. This is the proverbial "hump" that sociological education, particularly sociological education aimed at engaging students in changing the social world, cannot seem to move beyond. It prompts the present research.

With the aforementioned issues and contradictions in mind, the transformative potential of education remains unclear, and this has implications for students in undergraduate sociology courses, and more specifically, this research. Often, the theoretical work of transformative education lacks translation into practices and teaching strategies, leaving teachers to figure it out

on their own (Gore 1993). This connection of theory to practice is a difficult one, as the context in which one is theorizing may be markedly different from the context in which empirical research is being conducted. For example, Freire's (1970/2000) theorization arose from his literacy work with Brazilian farmers in the 1960s. Therefore, his ideas may not be particularly well suited for a millennial undergraduate classroom in New York City. At times, it is also unclear as to whether transformative education is more focused on the macro or micro-level, as it vacillates between broad theorization, considering impact on the institution of education and society, and empirical research, which reflects individual attempts at implementation within singular context (Cho 2015). In short, at this point, this rather lengthy review of the literature suggests there is no guarantee that students will develop the sociological perspective or be prompted to engage with the social world, even with a particular set of methods considered to be transformative. Therefore, despite the obvious overlap between sociology and transformative education in discussions of privilege, power, and inequality, the present research cannot simply implement a "transformative blueprint" into the CAI course because there is no guarantee that a particular method in a specific context will help students develop their sociological perspective, recognize their personal agency and articulate ways in which they can engage in social change. This study is therefore, of necessity, exploratory in nature, and the course design draws on various methods of both traditional and transformative education in the quest to achieve the desired goals and outcomes.

<u>Knowing More is Not Necessarily Better</u>

The literature thus shows that there are pedagogical methods adequate for increasing knowledge and moving students toward a sociological perspective, methods that can be both enjoyable and frustrating, but these results do not guarantee that students will have a transformative experience through which they increase their sense of agency, see the world as changeable, and become able to articulate practical ways in which they can pursue social change and live "meaningful, engaged, and productive lives" (McKinney et al. 2004:1). It is possible that undergraduate sociological education might fall short of the goal laid out in ASA's *Liberal Learning* report, leaving some students to cope unequipped and unprepared in a stratified and rapidly changing society. It also may increase anger and resistance among those who sense that their privilege and way of perceiving the social world is threatened. Further, it is possible that students will grow in their knowledge of social inequalities and power differentials, yet remain unable to identify tools or methods at their disposal to exert their own agency in light of what they know; this can result in disenchantment and frustration. There are hints of this potential in the opening paragraph of *The Sociological Imagination*, where Mills (1959:3; emphasis added) states:

> Nowadays men often feel that their private lives are a series of traps. They sense that within their everyday worlds, they cannot overcome their troubles, and in this feeling, they are often quite correct: What ordinary men are directly aware of and what they try to do are bounded by the private orbits in which they live; their visions and their powers are limited to the close-up scenes of job, family, neighborhood; in other milieux, they move vicariously and remain spectators. And *the more aware they become*, however vaguely, of ambitions and of threats which transcend their immediate locales, the more trapped they seem to feel.

In this case, *knowing more is not necessarily better*, and it is vital that we not assume that it is. A sociology course may lead undergraduates through Shor's (1992) first four steps of developing a

critical consciousness, without reaching the fifth, self-organization and self-education. This would leave students inadequately prepared to move beyond awareness toward an understanding of how to engage with and try to improve the social world. It may serve to reinforce the constraints of a reproductive habitus by emphasizing structure over agency.

Nor should it be expected that "learning effectively" always results in positive outcomes, as the *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004:1) seems to suggest. "Unfettering the mind," and "challenging taken-for-granted assumptions," through the development of the sociological perspective may only be partial, leaving students with an altered perception of the social world without tools for managing what they now understand about structure, agency, and self. There is significance distance between introduction and mastery, and it can take years and several sociology courses for undergraduates to cover that ground. Further, sociological instruction may lead students to believe they should engage in social change or social justice work, yet leave them unable to articulate how to do so (Rondini 2015), leading to feelings of guilt or shame, or even withdrawal. In such a situation, the internalized lens of the sociological perspective remains out of focus, as students might more clearly see problems, but alternatives for social change and personal agency remain opaque. Arguably, this is pedagogically irresponsible. This research, therefore, aims to further elucidate the implications and extent of this possibility, and use what is known about traditional and transformative education to conduct an undergraduate course intentionally designed in light of these issues and analyze its outcomes.

Exploratory Research Questions

Set within the aforementioned goals and complexities of sociological education, helping

undergraduates develop a transformative view of the social world presents itself as a challenging task. Yet, it is the objective of the course at the heart of the present study. There is no denying this aim is a common one, as Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016) list "[t]he importance of trying to improve the world" among the twelve areas of overlap common across the literature on what should be taught in undergraduate sociology courses. The ASA *Liberal Learning* report (McKinney et al. 2004) too desires for undergraduates to embrace values related to social justice as a result of developing their sociological perspective. What is also undeniable, however, is that there is no clear pathway to realizing an outcome directly linked to this aim, such as the one suggested by Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016:162), "Students will use their sociological knowledge and skills to engage with and impact the world around them." There have been suggestions as to how to best realize this goal, such as community service, internships, or service learning, but research has shown these to be problematic, as demonstrated below. In other words, this outcome may be easier said than done. We may desire for students to develop the sociological perspective so that they recognize and employ knowledge, tactics, and methods through which they engage with and improve the social world, but more research is necessary to determine how best to make this happen as well as how much social engagement of this type we should expect or require from undergraduates.

From this, a question emerges: How can sociological education transform the way students see the social world, prompt or support their desire to make social change, and provide the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to do so, while preserving and taking into account their interests and distinctiveness (i.e. social location)? Traditional education has been criticized for its tendency to objectify students, using education as a form of mass production that renders

students as passive recipients of knowledge irrelevant to their lived experience, thereby

reproducing social hierarchies and inequalities. In answer to these criticisms, transformative

educational approaches have emerged, aiming to promote student agency and social change.

These too, however, have practical issues that detract from their lofty ideals. The need remains,

therefore, to continue the work of uncovering how we can best teach sociology to undergraduates

so as to increase the students' sense of their own agency, their recognition of opportunities to

change inequitable social arrangements, and their willingness to engage in "trying to improve the

world" (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016). The present study, though limited to the outcomes of a

single course at a particular moment in a specific setting, targets that question and seeks to add to

our understanding by exploring the ability of a single CAI course to help students see themselves

as social agents able to transform the social world instead of reproducing its inequities. These

broad research questions will guide the study:

- What were the lived experiences and biographical histories of the students who elected to enroll in the CAI course?

- How did the students in the CAI course generally view the social world and their personal agency?

- Did the students in the CAI course change significantly over the course of the semester in their general attitudes and behaviors toward the social world, particularly regarding social engagement and social change?

- By the end of the semester, were the students in the CAI course able to formulate and evaluate a personal plan for social engagement, thereby traversing the "hump" found in the literature?

- What pedagogical aspects were effective in helping students achieve the goals and objectives of the CAI course? Where is there room for improvement?

- What are the indicators of a reproductive/transformative habitus?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

This study focuses on the potential of a Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course to help undergraduates develop a transformative view of society and their role within it, as well as provide the resources necessary for students to identify how they can practically engage in social change. In order to assess any such transformative changes, the current research integrates quantitative and qualitative analyses. The course here refers to the CAI class that was designed and then taught by the researcher in the Fall 2016 semester at a large southeastern university. Data were collected during the CAI course throughout the semester and then, after the close of the semester, the data were analyzed in light of the exploratory research questions noted at the end of Chapter Two.

The data came from two primary sources. First, pre- and post-surveys were given to students at the beginning and end of the academic term. Second, the student writings and the instructor's teaching journal were collected to provide qualitative data. Therefore, this study uses a mixed methods approach, allowing a more thorough exploration of the lived experiences and social locations of the undergraduates in the CAI course and how they felt about social change and their role in it. Further, it allows investigation of the impact of the CAI course on the students enrolled in it; particularly, did they change over the semester in their attitudes and behaviors toward social change, could they formulate a personal plan for social engagement at the close of the class, and what pedagogical strategies appeared effective in achieving the goals of the CAI course?

Overview of the CAI Course

As the CAI course is the center of this research, it is helpful to first provide a rationale, or an overview of the goals and structure for the course, before turning to the analytic methods. Perhaps it is best to start by briefly explaining what the course *was not* intended to be. This class was not a community service course, as students were not expected or required to log hours spent doing volunteer work, such as serving in soup kitchens, to fulfill a course activity or grade. Also, it was not a service-learning course because it did not adequately fit the service-learning classroom model advanced by Hollis (2002). In other words, the instructor did not coordinate with community organizations or require any formal student participation in those community organizations, nor were students required to critically reflect on time spent doing such activities. This decision was made for three main reasons. First, there was a desire to make space to allow students to choose to engage if they wanted to, without necessarily requiring them to do so, as this was more in keeping with the focus of the study. Second, handled without great care and advance notice, this approach to learning can put an undue burden on community organizations that must accommodate the schedules and needs of the students. Third, there were many other well-established opportunities offered by the university itself or campus organizations through which the CAI students could get involved in volunteer work, community service, and service learning.

The primary goals set for the students of the CAI course included: (1) supporting the development of their sociological perspective, (2) increasing their feelings of personal agency, and (3) enabling students to identify opportunities and name methods to get involved in social change. Along with the self-reflective nature of the course topics, students grappled with the

sociological imagination, social theory related to societal change, social location and intersectionality, the relationship between social structure and personal agency, the social construction of reality, dominant myths and ideologies, and power dynamics in society. This facilitated the connection of critical self-reflection with the sociological perspective, helping to ensure that this was a scholastic approach to personal agency and social change, not simply an emotion-laden experience. This is not to say the affective dimensions of learning were not engaged; however, in an effort to move students beyond the "do gooder" outlook (Johnson 2005), an intentional effort was made to avoid any reliance on guilt or sentiments such as, "If we all would just learn to love each other…." or "love conquers hate," to motivate students toward social involvement. Instead, the course was grounded in academic, sociological and SoTL literature. The syllabus for the CAI course provided the goals, objectives, assignments, and course outline (see Appendix B). To help students achieve the goals of the CAI course, they were asked to produce both high-stakes and low-stakes writings (see Appendix C) through which they reflexively wrestled with their role as social agents. These writings included two self-assessment and personal mission statements (Crawshaw and Jackson 2010), a sociological autobiography (Kebede 2009), journal entries (Atkinson and Lowney 2016; Grauerholz and Copenhaver 1994; Picca, Starks, and Gunderson 2013; Wagenaar 1984), a social action toolkit, and a social action project.

The first portion of the CAI course (weeks 1-6) was designed to lead students in uncovering the reproductive tendencies of their habitus, as well as prepare them to move forward in the recognition of their own agency. Students considered their lived experiences and social location, which likely shape how they see their social world and the options available to them for

62

channeling their agency, guiding what Emirbayer and Mische (1998) term iteration, or the

habitual expression of agency. Students did self-inquiry to uncover answers to questions such as:

How do I see my role in the world? What are my interests, skills, and passions? What does social

change mean to me? If I wanted to change something in my social world, could I? What

resources are available for me? Do I see the world as fixed or fragile? Am I optimistic? What

limits me? How does my social location affect what is knowable and attainable for me? Built

within Hitlin and Salisbury's (2013) finding that individualism does not necessarily negate

concern for others and Mills's (2008a; 2008b) theorization that many students have a

reproductive habitus, these self-reflective questions laid the groundwork for the semester. The

topics and assignments in this portion of the class were designed to help students uncover their

patterns of thought and behavior, helping students situate and evaluate themselves as potential

agents in society.

The second portion of the course (weeks 6-12) focused on helping students analyze both

individualistic and collective methods and tools by those who engage in social action. The class

focused on recognizing alternatives and opportunities for social change, the ability of particular

methods to produce meaningful and lasting change, and the limitations of such methods in

dismantling societal arrangements or challenging structural intransigency. It focused on the

potential ends of selected means and problematized the imposition of good intentions upon a

social group to which one does not belong (Freire 1970/2000). This portion of the course was

designed to address issues raised in the literature, e.g. Rondini (2015) and Kapitulik (2010),

evidencing the inability of students to identify concrete examples of how they can work for

social change, even after successful completion of a sociology course designed to develop this.

The students in these studies could successfully identify power dynamics and structural inequities, but they struggled to identify concrete examples of how they could work for social justice (even though they wanted to do so), and they thus felt overwhelmed and frustrated. With these issues in mind, students researched examples of social action tools related to their personal career ambitions, talents, and areas of interest. In this period, students also worked toward their final project, with the goal of bringing the aforementioned ideas, activities, and skills together.

The closing weeks of the semester (Weeks 13-15) focused on how students could take care of themselves as individuals when it seemed impossible to create perceivable social change. It was an exercise in pedagogical responsibility to discuss this openly at the end of the course, because individuals who are socially conscious and see themselves as able social agents may struggle with frustration, weariness, and disappointment if they meet structural or personal resistance. In the last days of class, students were also asked to reevaluate themselves and their perspectives of agency and social change. The students closed the semester by constructing a concrete, sociologically sound, and critically conscious example of a method of social action they can use that is in keeping with who they are as individuals and members of a community. In other words, they were to engage in the projective and practical-evaluative dimensions of agency discussed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998). First, the students were asking to "move 'beyond themselves' into the future," projecting the image of themselves as social agents and determining a path toward the realization of that image (Emirbayer and Mische 1998:984). Then, they were encouraged to practically evaluate their social plan and the potential outcomes of such a deliberate decision to engage in social action in light of their own social experience and present circumstances.

Thus, from inception to conclusion, the curricular design of this CAI course was quite intentional. It was theoretically oriented to have students cast a light on their own habitus, and in doing so, move towards a transformative outlook instead of a reproductive view of the world. It was also within what Keesing-Styles (2006) terms the "pedagogy of being," or a holistic approach to education that helps students thrive despite the uncertainties and hyper complexities of today's society. This holistic idea was supported by the setting aside of three class days just to "take a breath" during the semester. Work was put on hold and, instead, the students and instructor shared food, laughter, and conversation. This approach was meant to encourage and empower students to engage with their world in a healthy manner, and it is in keeping with education for social justice (Keesing-Styles 2006). Altogether, the approach to the CAI course and its associated activities aimed at helping students leave the class with a greater awareness of themselves and society, as well as a sense of optimism about their potential as social agents to engage with and affect society.

<u>Analytic Plan: A Mixed Methods Approach</u>

The data collection and analyses for the current research aims to explore those attitudes and behaviors of the undergraduates in the CAI course that relate to personal agency and social change. This sociology elective course was designed and taught by the researcher. Data were collected over the course of the semester, from the second day of class until the final day. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from pre- and post-course surveys administered to the students in the course (see Appendix D). Qualitative data were also gathered from student writings and the instructor's teaching journal. The qualitative data collected via the pre- and

65

post-course surveys and the students' writings were inductively analyzed while remaining sensitive to the construct of the reproductive/transformative habitus as theorized by Bourdieu (1990a; 1990b) and Mills (2008a; 2008b), as well as the components of agency laid out by Emirbayer and Mische (1998). Combined, these sources provided richer data than any one single source might have. The sources also provide corroboration for and points of divergence from each other (Silverman 2013). The intention of this approach was to help establish the credibility of the research through a "confluence of evidence" that is weighty and persuasive (Eisner 1991:110).

<div align="center">Setting</div>

The setting for data collection was the CAI course described above. It was a 4000-level elective within the undergraduate sociology major. While many who took the class were sociology majors, the course also served as an elective for other majors. To enroll, however, each student had to meet one of the following prerequisites: Introduction to Sociology, General Psychology, General Anthropology, or junior standing. The course was a traditional face-to-face (lecture) class, and it met twice a week in the mid-morning, 75 minutes per session for 15 weeks. The course description as offered by the sociology department indicated the class would focus on the "Utilization of sociological principles in the treatment of practical human problems and organization." Given the course title, it is possible that students entered with prior interest in the topic, but others might have enrolled simply in need of an elective that fit their schedules.

Obtaining Informed Consent and Protecting Confidentiality

There are perceived risks when involving students in research (Hatch 2002), and therefore, effort was made to minimize such risks in the present study. First, regarding the pre- and post-course surveys, participation was optional, and therefore, the risk was minimal. Second, the greatest anticipated risk was that the principal investigator might learn the participation status of a student because this information could potentially affect a student's experience in the class (i.e. how the "researcher as teacher" treats that individual). Therefore, procedures were put in place to prohibit the principal researcher from knowing which students agreed to participate and which did not. Specifically, information regarding who agreed or did not agree to participate was unavailable to the principal investigator until after final grades were posted with the university. This helped to keep the role of researcher separate from the role of instructor.

A research assistant outlined the research study and conducted the consent process on the second day of class (the principal investigator/instructor did not attend this portion of the class). Students completed a written consent document indicating whether or not they agreed to participate in this research study. To participate meant allowing the principal researcher to use a student's written work and survey answers as data. Students completed the consent form by marking "Yes, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research," or "No, I do not agree to participate in this research," and then signed their names. The completed consent documents were collected by the research assistant, placed in a manila envelope, sealed, and secured in a locked file cabinet housing student records. There was a minimal risk associated with the possibility that students in the course might self-disclose their participation status to peers or the instructor. Despite the fact that the possibility of this was anticipated and addressed during the

consent process by the research assistant, a few students inadvertently did so, but this did not seem to adversely affect them or the research. Interestingly, such information was generally revealed when a student wrote to apologize for missing an assignment and stated something along the lines of "I am sorry I missed this because I know you need it for your research," or someone turned in a late assignment, stating, "I know I will not get credit, but I wanted you to have this for your research." This was rare however. Additionally, if participants wished to withdraw from the research at any time, they could do so using the contact information for the research assistant, which was available all semester on the homepage of the course's online learning management system (Canvas). In this manner, the principal investigator remained largely unaware of the participation status of the students, allowing the CAI course to proceed as normal for the rest of the semester with little mention of the study. This helped ensure that grades, instructor feedback, and class activities were not influenced by any students' participation status.

At the beginning of the semester, each student in the course was assigned an identifier. Identifiers followed the convention of CA1 (Community Action) for the first participant, CA2 for the second participant, and so on. The code assignment was randomized in order to avoid reflecting the course roster (i.e. alphabetical order). Student work was submitted as digital files through Canvas. Each file was copied; the assigned identifier was then written into the file name, and all identifying information such as student name was removed. These digital files were placed on a password-protected thumb drive that remained in the possession of the principal investigator. In this manner, throughout the semester, all identifying information was removed from each piece of data collected. Through this method, there were no instructor comments or

grades on the data being collected for the research. After final grades were submitted for the CAI course, the written consent forms were retrieved from the locked filing cabinet. The appropriate identifier was written on each of the consent forms. The work of those individuals who declined participation in the research study was then excluded from the research. The teaching journal of the principal investigator is a digital file, and it is also stored on the password-protected thumb drive. The teaching journal does not contain student names. The data will be stored for a minimum of five years, as per the Institutional Review Board approval process. Through the process of de-identification and the assigning of participant codes noted above, the data do not contain any names of participants. Only assigned identifiers will be used in writing results; for example, the number assigned to the student will be used as her or his name. Thus, the student assigned the identifier, CA40, will be called "Forty" or "Student Forty" in the reported findings.

Population

The CAI course was the source of participants for this research. The course was capped at 75; the class included 48 students. Before the intial class meeting, those who enrolled in the course were sent a recruitment email highlighting the research associated with the class, the opportunity for participation, and the right to decline participation (without any sanction). In other words, it was made clear to the students that they could take the class and decline participation in the research. Students were also informed of the opportunity to participate in the research on the first day of class. The enrollment of all study participants took place within the first week of class. The population thus includes those students 18 years of age and older who provided written informed consent. Of the 48 students who enrolled in the class, 47 agreed to

participate in the study. The pre- and post-course survey data and the writings of the one student did not provide written consent has been excluded from all analyses. The duration of participation was from August 22, 2016 to December 15, 2016. Despite the option being available, of the 47 students who gave initial consent, none withdrew their participation at any time during the semester or after it concluded.

<div align="center">Pre- and Post-Course Survey Data</div>

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from pre- and post-course surveys administered to students in the course (see Appendix D). Pre- and post-surveys were administered through Qualtrics to those students who enrolled in the course. As participation was optional and anonymous, the pre- and post-surveys were not graded for completion. Consent was implied if a participant entered and completed the questionnaire online. Also, students were given an identifier that they provided for the second question on both the pre- and the post-course surveys. The research assistant offered students time to complete the pre-course survey during the second day of class, when the principal researcher was not present. The post-course survey was administered during the exam at the end of the semester.

<u>The Surveys</u>

The pre- and post-course surveys were markedly similar, but not identical. Questions about student attitudes and behaviors regarding social action and social change included in the pre-course survey were repeated on the post-course survey. Questions about areas of interest and demographics remained the same as well. On the other hand, some questions appeared on one survey, but not the other. For example, the pre-course survey asked participants to articulate their

<div align="center">70</div>

reasons for taking the CAI course. The post-course survey differs largely in that it asks students to reflect on the CAI course. The data from the pre- and post-course surveys were quantitatively analyzed in an attempt to uncover change over time in the attitudes and behaviors of the students regarding agency and social change. The data from the surveys also helped to substantiate qualitative findings. Additionally, by collecting student input as to their interest in, reaction to, and evaluation of the CAI course, the pre- and post-course surveys offer data useful for assessing the need, value, and outcomes of such a class and identifying pedagogical methods that the students found helpful.

Analytic Plan for Survey Data

The pre- and post-course survey data provide descriptive statistics for the 47 students of the CAI course who agreed to participate in the research and provide the opportunity to test for change from the pre-course survey to the post-course survey. The original intention of this study was to use regression analyses to determine the impact of key demographic indicators on student attitudes toward social change and social agency. Upon examination of the survey data, however, it became evident that it would be very difficult to do any sort of regression analyses that might use variables such as race/ethnicity, gender, or class as predictors. This was due in large part to the small sample size and the demographic makeup of the CAI course. It was possible, however, to analyze the data collected from the pre-course surveys in comparison to the post-course survey data to uncover any change from the beginning of the semester to the end of the course. The decision was made to provide general descriptives and to use the paired sampled t-test to check for significant change from the pre- to the post-course surveys on an aggregate level. While it is

71

possible, due to the use of identifiers, to compare pre- and post-course survey results at the individual level, there is no way to tell if a move from, say a 4 to a 5 on a Likert Scale of political ideology, indicates a significant change. Also, sociology is generally not interested in particular individuals so much as group changes and dynamics, and for quantitative analysis, there is no basis for looking at individual level answers in such a manner. Therefore, it will not be done here.

With the above considerations in mind, the analytic plan for this component of the research was to use paired samples t-tests to determine if there was change over the course of the semester. In other words, paired samples t-tests were used to determine if, as a whole, the students in the CAI course changed in their attitudes and behaviors regarding social change and social agency. While not demonstrating causation, the paired samples t-tests provided findings of value, particularly when compared with the results of the analyses of student writings. The paired samples t-test is appropriate for continuous variables and is often used to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention by testing for difference of means between pre-scores with post-scores.

Because it was possible that many of the students who elected to enroll in the CAI course held similar beliefs about social change and social action, there was a concern about the normality of the distribution of answers given to the survey questions. Because the paired samples t-test assumes normal distribution, the data were inspected using histograms and the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. It was found, across the board, that the data deviated from the normal distribution. This raised concerns about the validity of the results of the paired samples t-tests, despite the generally robust nature of the results of t-tests given a sufficient sample size

(>30). Therefore, the analyses were rerun using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, a nonparametric test appropriate for use with skewed data; it uses medians instead of means. The significance levels of the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests, however, were very similar to those obtained by the paired sample t-tests. Therefore, the skewness of the data had little to no effect on the significance of the results. In light of these findings, and the desire to focus more on the means than the medians of the data, the decision was made to discuss the results of the paired samples t-tests instead of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests.

Instead of writing specific hypotheses for each survey question, generally speaking, it is expected that the results of the paired sample t-tests will demonstrate that students became more positive, optimistic, or engaged regarding social change. For the paired samples t-tests, the null hypothesis assumes that the mean difference between the paired samples is zero. Because the direction of the outcome may both increase or decrease in this series of analyses, a two-tailed alternative hypothesis will be used. Therefore, the rejection of the null hypothesis will indicate that mean difference of the paired samples is greater than or less than zero. In other words, the purpose of this analysis is to test for an increase or a decrease in the mean difference between the paired samples from the beginning of the semester (pre-course survey) to the end of the semester (post-course survey). The questions in both the pre- and post-course surveys have been constructed and/or recoded as continuous measures with the higher numbers indicating greater likelihood of positive feelings or behaviors toward social action and social agency.

In addition to the descriptives and the results of the paired samples t-tests, some of the student responses on the pre- and post-course survey provide qualitative data as well. This would include, for example, the students' reflective comments about the CAI course itself at the end of

the semester. These responses have been coded and incorporated into the findings chapters as appropriate in a manner similar to the one described below.

Analytic Plan for Student Writings

Over the course of the semester, approximately 800 pieces of student writing were collected in the CAI course. The de-identified written work of the 47 students who agreed to participate in the research was analyzed for patterns and meanings. This written work included all informal and formal writing (Bean 2011) such as: student journals, self-assessments and personal mission statements, sociological autobiographies, and social action plans. The written work was collected as digital files submitted through the online learning management system. These items were read only by the instructor-researcher and were not shared with the rest of the class; this was to help protect privacy as well as minimize the potential for social desirability (related to peers) to affect the students' responses.

The student writings were analyzed in light of the theoretical framework of the reproductive/transformative habitus (Bourdieu 1990a; 1990b; Mills 2008a; 2008b) and the component elements of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998), the literature on sociological, traditional, and transformative education, and the research questions arising from collection. Though this research did not employ grounded theory, an inductive approach to category development was used to code the data in order to preserve its richness (Mayring 2000). This was also appropriate for uncovering the standpoints, situations, and actions of students in the course (Charmaz 2006). Further, this method offered the benefit of obtaining information directly from participants without losing potential insights by imposing preconceived categories.

The analytic process included initial coding, or naming the data, and focused coding, or using the more frequent initial codes to sort and organize the data and develop categories (Charmaz 2006; Strauss and Corbin 1990). A series of "sensitizing concepts" provided by the theoretical framework served as "points of departure" for looking at the data and initiating the coding process (Charmaz 2006:16-17). The theoretical framework suggested that sensitizing concepts could include, for example, projective aspects such as hopes and fears, or concepts such as cynicism that might suggest a reproductive outlook, to guide the initial coding. The writing assignments for the CAI course were designed in light of the theoretical framework, and therefore, they had sensitizing concepts "built in". For example, the journal prompts often introduced "points of departure" for the students to use in their writing; they then drew on some of those phrases or terms throughout the rest of the semester. Both the manifest content, providing descriptive statistics, and the latent content, providing underlying meanings and context (Babbie 2011; Berg and Lune 2012: Cho and Lee 2014), were coded. Ultimately, this approach to the qualitative analysis was beneficial in that it allowed for the use of comparative methods and sequential comparisons (Charmaz 2006), which helped uncover similarities and differences between data, show change over time, and provide corroboration for the survey data.

The coding process began with an initial review of all the student writings as well as their responses to the "fill in" questions on the pre- and post-course survey. Each piece of student writing was read at least twice before coding began, once during the grading process and once as the first step toward coding. Then, initial coding began, using sensitizing concepts drawn from and in keeping with the theoretical framework. From this initial coding, conceptual categories emerged, each revolving around a family of coding terms related to it. Deeper analysis then

began, as each piece of student writing was reread in light of a single family of terms, and a log was made for each such category. Then, when a coding term or phrase was identified in the writing, that passage and the term were copied into the log, along with the student identifier. Once a category log was complete, meaning all the writings had been reviewed for that particular family of terms, the log was then analyzed, looking for greater nuance using comparative methods and sequential comparison. The qualitative research portion of the study proceeded in this manner using the categories that arose from the initial coding and the theoretical framework. Therefore, the findings offered in the following chapters represent a deep and exhaustive reading of the students' writings in light of sensitizing concepts relevant to the theoretical framework, while leaving space for unexpected or unanticipated concepts to emerge. After the initial readings, a decision was made to focus largely on the students' writings from the first several weeks and the last few weeks of the course because these specifically target the central question as to whether or not the students definitively demonstrated a move toward transformation from the beginning to the end of the CAI course. This was in keeping with the aim of this research to contribute to the literature by uncovering where the students began and where they ended in order to determine the transformative potential of the CAI course. At the outset of the study, it was expected that the writings from the middle of the course (weeks 6-12) would reveal a steady process of transformation or capture "ah ha" moments, however, initial readings indicated that this was not so.

At the outset of this research, it was expected that differences in relation to the race/ethnicity and gender of the students would commonly arise during the coding and analysis of the student writings. Given the unexpected demographics of the CAI course, however, such

differences did not always emerge and causal links were hard to determine. For example, because males made up such a small percentage of the class, it was difficult at times to determine if a perspective or response was due to the "maleness" of the student or not. This was made more difficult when maleness and race/ethnicity were considered together, as there were four black males, three white males, and one Latino. Alternatively, as the class was largely comprised of females, it was equally challenging to determine if a response was due to a student's "femaleness" or if it was just a general feeling lacking direct ties to gender. Beyond increasing the potential to violate confidentiality, it was often impossible at times to recognize trends, similarities, or differences related to race/ethnicity or gender or the intersection of the two. If and when it was possible to do so (and without violating confidentiality), however, the analysis did take race/ethnicity and gender into account, but largely refrains from drawing causal conclusions.

Apart from the students' writings, the instructor's teaching journal serves as an additional source of qualitative data, but it does not feature significantly in the results. The journal was kept as a deliberate attempt to take notes and keep an additional record of how the course proceeded. The journal contains anecdotal observations related to the class consisting of statements related to instructor perceptions of self, the course, students, teaching methods, external events, and other such topics. It also includes paraphrasing of class discussions, student to student, and student(s) to instructor interactions. Two journal entries were written per week (immediately after each class meeting). The use of a teaching journal can be important for the instructor's own reflexivity, and it also can be shared with the students to "level" the classroom (Brookfield 1995). Because in the present study the teacher and the researcher were one and the same, the teaching journal provided the additional benefit of serving as a type of "field notes," including the verbal

exchanges, practices, and the implied connections between "observed actions, interactions, and behaviors" in the classroom, as well as the subjective reflections of the instructor (Berg and Lune 2012:229-232). It has not, however, been coded in the same manner as the student writings. So as not to distract from the richness of the students' writings, the contents of the instructor's journal are drawn upon only if needed to verify or challenge the credibility of the findings from the analyses of the pre- and post-course surveys and the student writings.

<u>Managing Validity and Reliability Concerns</u>

To address the validity and reliability concerns, this research drew on a few of Creswell's (2007) strategies for assessing accuracy in qualitative research. Validation strategies include "prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field including building trust with participants" (Creswell 2007:208), triangulation of different sources of data to provide corroborating evidence, clarifying researcher biases and orientations at the outset of the study, and the use of thick, rich description. This study involved prolonged and repeated contact between the researcher and the participants that built trust; it also draws on three sources of data, notes the orientation of the researcher through the course design and theoretical framework, and generates a thick and rich description through the qualitative analysis of over 800 pieces of student writings. Creswell recommends a minimum of two such methods be employed in any given study to increase validity, which this research has thus been able to do.

The primary reliability issue for this study emerges in relation to coding in the qualitative analysis. A decision was made to not perform an interrater reliability check. This was in large part due to the fact that the researcher began with contextual knowledge about the CAI course

and its students, and this contextual knowledge was important in interpreting the student writings. For example, the contextual knowledge helped define sensitizing concepts. Someone without such contextual knowledge may have been unlikely to interpret the writings in the same light. It is acknowledged that this decision could increase the potential for confirmation bias. There are other checks in place, however, to help minimize this possibility. First, given the mixed methods design of the research, the quantitative results can be used to test the validity of the qualitative findings. Second, the student comments about the CAI course on the post-course survey can serve to confirm or test some of the findings of the qualitative analysis of their writings. Third, a concerted effort has been made to include as many negative examples as possible. Negative examples are defined as those that challenge or are exceptions to the general or expected findings. In this way, the threat of confirmation bias is minimized.

Summary of Methods

This research centers on the CAI course taught by the researcher in the Fall 2016 semester at a large southeastern university. The general aim of the present study is to explore the attitudes and behaviors of one specific set of undergraduates toward social change and personal agency. Further, it seeks to determine the extent to which one specific sociology course helped students develop a transformative view of society and provided them with the necessary resources to plan their personal path to social engagement. The present study collected data from pre- and post-course surveys, student writings, and the instructor's journal. It adopts a mixed method approach. First, this research uses quantitative analyses to provide descriptives and to uncover any significant change from the beginning to the end of the course in student attitudes

toward social change and personal agency. Second, qualitative analysis is utilized to explore

students' written responses on pre- and post-surveys and assignments throughout the semester.

Triangulated, these methods helped to uncovered the extent to which this particular CAI course,

conducted in a specific temporal and physical context, served to activate or support the students'

desire to make social change and provide the resource acquisition necessary for them to do so.

Additionally, this multifaceted approach engendered a better understanding of the potential for

sociological education of this specific type to help students develop a transformative outlook on

society. The present study thus explores the potential for this CAI course, explicitly designed to

be transformative for students by helping them realize and increase their capability to affect their

social world, to achieve its aim.

CHAPTER FOUR: WHO WAS ON THE BOAT?
UNDERSTANDING THE STUDENTS IN THE CLASS

In her second self-assessment, completed at the end of the semester, Student Forty

reflected on the Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course in this manner: "Four months

ago, I jumped on a boat with a group of forty-nine people unaware of how the trip would go. But

we knew that we wanted to change the world." With this phrase, Forty captured the general

mood of the 48 students and the instructor who "jumped on the boat" by participating in the CAI

course. But just who were these students that embarked on this semester-long journey?

This chapter discusses the students who enrolled in the CAI course using data collected

from the pre- and post-course surveys as well as the student writings. The aim is to uncover who

the students were in terms of demographics, lived experiences, and areas of interest. The

demographic information and areas of interest are drawn from the pre- and post-course surveys.

Beyond the demographics, the students provided greater insight into their life stories by writing a

sociological autobiography (Kebede 2009) and a self-assessment early in the semester, both of

which are useful here. The importance of understanding the social biographies of the students

connects directly to the theoretical framework of this study. Past experiences and one's life

course affect iteration, or habits, which is one component of agency; it is also therefore likely to

affect one's projections and evaluations regarding future action (Emirbayer and Mische 1989).

Additionally, as Bourdieu (1990a; 1990b) argues, social location and family history affect the

habitus of individuals and the extent to which they see the arrangement of the social world as

appropriate. Further, Mills (2008a; 2008b) sees one's past experiences as largely responsible for

shaping one's outlook to be either reproductive or transformative. In other words, the social

location and lived experiences of the students will likely affect their approach to social change and social agency. Therefore, though it is impossible to here discuss each of the students in depth, the findings presented will provide enough detail to paint a picture of the class as a whole and help explain, in general, just who was on the boat.

By the Numbers: Basic Demographics

Table 1: Basic Demographics for the Students in the CAI Course

	CAI Course (n=47)			University (N=55,783)*	
	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Percentage	Mean
Gender					
Female	39	83.0		54.4	
Male	8	17.0		45.5	
Race					
Asian and Pacific Islander	1	2.1		5.94	
Black	15	29.8		11.33	
Hispanic or Latino/a	9	19.1		25.28	
White, non-Hispanic	20	42.6		50.87	
Other, Multi	2	4.2		3.87	
Age (in years)**					
18-22	32	68.1	22.9		23.0
23-30	13	27.7			
31 or older	2	4.2			
Sexuality					
Bisexual	7	14.9			
Gay/Lesbian (or Homosexual)	2	4.3			
Heterosexual	37	78.7			
Pansexual/Queer	1	2.1			
Where Did You Grow Up					
Rural	5	10.6			
Suburban	32	68.1			
Urban	10	21.3			

*University data are from the semester (Fall 2016) during which the CAI course occurred.
**Age range for the CAI course = 19-53 years.

82

Table 1 provides basic demographic information for the 47 students in the CAI course who provided written consent for their survey data to be used. The information of one student who refused to give consent has been excluded. So, while the CAI course had an enrollment of 48, given the exclusion of one student, N=47 for the results discussed here. These 47 students completed the entire course, as well as the pre- and post-course surveys. In terms of self-identified gender, the CAI course consisted of 39 females and 8 males. The course makeup was therefore 83.0% female and 17.0% male. This is markedly different than the gender composition of the university in which the course occurred, where, during the same term, the undergraduate population was 54.5% female and 45.5 % male (IKM 2017).

Regarding race and ethnicity, 27 students, or 57.4% of the class, identified as something other than "White, non-Hispanic." More specifically: 1 student (2.1%) identified as "Asian/Pacific Islander," 15 students (29.8%) identified as "Black," 9 students (19.1%) identified as "Hispanic or Latino/a," and 2 students (4.2%) indicated they were "Mixed: Asian and White," and "Mixed: Black and White," respectively. The remaining 20 students, or 42.6% of the class, identified as "White, non-Hispanic." These numbers vary from the racial/ethnic makeup of the undergraduate population in the university within which the course was held, particularly in terms of "White, non-Hispanic" students and "Black" students. During the semester in which the CAI course took place, the entire undergraduate body (full- and part-time) as composed of 5.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 11.3% Black or African American, 25.3% Hispanic/Latino, 50.9% White, and 3.9% Multiracial (IKM 2017).

Combining gender with race/ethnicity provides further clarity regarding the students in the CAI course. Of the eight males in the class, four were "Black," one was "Hispanic," and

three were "White". Of the 39 females in the class, there were 22 women of color and 17 who were "White." More specifically, 1 was "Asian/Pacific Islander," 11 were "Black," 8 were "Hispanic," 17 were "White," and 2 identified as "Mixed." Thus, we see that the numbers of female and black students who enrolled in the CAI course were disproportionately high when compared with university numbers. The students themselves noted the uniqueness of being in a class where people of color were the majority and there were so few white males, although it is beyond the means of the present research to confirm, deny, or qualify their claim. This raises an interesting consideration about the social location of students who elect to enroll in a course centered on community action and engagement, which will be explored further in the discussion chapter.

In terms of age, 32 students, or 68.1% of the class were within 18-22 years of age. A smaller percentage of the class, 27.7%, or 13 students, were within 23-30 years of age, while 2 students, or 4.2% of the class, were over 31 years of age. The range of ages given by respondents was 19-53 years of age. The average age of the 47 students was 22.9 years. For the university during the same semester, the average age of the undergraduate population was 23 years (IKM 2017). Therefore, the mean age for the CAI course was very similar to the mean age for the university.

When examining basic demographics, it is also helpful to consider how the students identified their sexuality. This is particularly true given the shooting at a gay nightclub in the area, just two months before the semester began. As it will be seen later in the findings, in a few cases, sexuality affected student outlook on social action and community. Seven students, or 14.9%, identified as bisexual, 2 students, or 4.3% identified as gay or lesbian, and 1 student

identified as pansexual/queer. The vast majority, or 78.7%, of the students in the CAI course identified as heterosexual.

Finally, to better understand the social biographies of the students, they were asked to indicate the type of area in which they spent most of their childhood. The question asked: "Which of the following best describes the area where you spent the majority of your childhood? (1) Rural (farmlands, smaller communities), (2) Suburban (outskirts of city, larger communities), or (3) Urban (inner city, city)." The pre-course survey results demonstrate that 5 students (10.6%) indicated they grew up in a rural area, 32 students (68.1%) spent the majority of their childhood in suburban areas, and 10 students (21.3%) spent the majority of their childhood in an urban area.

In summary, the basic demographics provide a snapshot of the social location of the students in the CAI course. The members of the CAI course were overwhelming female and the majority identified themselves as people of color. In terms of age, the students tended to be close to the university average of 23 years. Although the majority of the students identified themselves as heterosexual, over one-fifth of the class identified as bisexual, gay/lesbian, or pansexual/queer. Many of the students spent their childhoods in suburban areas, several grew up in an urban area, but only a few came from a rural background. These findings paint a picture of a diverse group of individuals, a number of whom identify themselves as, at least in part, occupying an intersection that is not the "norm" in terms of social location. This will likely, as Bourdieu (1990a; 1990b), Mills (2008a; 2008b), and Emirbayer and Mische (1998) argue, affect their views on social change and personal agency, and perhaps even prompted them to enroll in the CAI elective.

By the Numbers: Socioeconomics

Moving beyond the most basic demographics, Table 2 offers a brief overview of the students' socioeconomic situation. In order to better understand the socioeconomic situation of the students, they were asked two survey questions, one concerning family income while they were growing up, and another asking if they currently worked more than 20 hours per week. As it can be difficult for people to rank themselves accurately in terms of social class, these two questions serve as proxies for the socioeconomic situation of the students.

Table 2: Socioeconomics Status of the Students in the CAI Course

		Frequency Pre (Post)	Percentage Pre (Post)
Family Income While Growing Up:			
Plenty of Money, Many Extras		12	25.5
Good Amount of Money, Some Extras		16	34.0
Fair Amount of Money, Few Extras		15	31.9
Could Not Always Afford Necessities		4	8.5
Work a Job Over 20 Hours Per Week:			
	Yes	24 (26)	51.1 (55.3)
	No	23 (21)	48.9 (44.7)

n=47

For the first question, the students were asked the following regarding family income: "Which of the following best describes your family's economic situation when you were growing up? (1) Plenty of money, could afford many extras, (2) Good amount of money, but could not always afford extras, (3) Fair amount of money, could pay for necessities but few if any extras, or (4) Could not always afford necessities, such as food and rent." In the pre-course

survey, 12 students (25.5%) indicated their families had plenty of money, 16 students (34.0%) indicated that their families had a good amount of money, 15 (31.9%) students indicated their families had a fair amount of income, while four students (8.5%) indicated that their families could not always afford necessities. On the second SES question, a majority of the students disclosed that they worked at a job for money more than 20 hours per week. At the beginning of the semester, 24 students, or 51.1% of the class, indicated that they worked at a job for more than 20 hours per week. By the end of the semester, the number of students working at a job for more than 20 hours per week increased to 26, or 55.3% of the class. Taken together, we see that 59.5% of the students in the CAI course felt their families had plenty or a good amount of money during their childhood. Therefore, approximately 40% of the students grew up in homes where extras or necessities were hard to come by. This may help account for the fact that a majority of the students in the class worked over 20 hours per week. The number of hours that students work is an important consideration because, when combined with the hours they commit to their studies, it is possible that there is only a limited amount of time left during which students might engage in some form of community action, even if they strongly desire to do so.

<center>By the Numbers: Politics and Religion</center>

Table 3 provides a snapshot of the political and religious views of the students in the CAI course. In terms of political ideology, the students in the CAI class leaned toward the liberal end of the political spectrum. In the pre-survey, 7 students, or 14.9% of the class, identified themselves as extremely liberal, 10 students, or 21.3% of the class, selected liberal, and 3 students, or 23.4% of the class, selected moderate. Nine students, or 19.1%, identified as

<center>87</center>

moderate, and two students, or 4.3% identified as slightly conservative. Five students, or 10.6%, indicated that they did not know their political preference, while three others, or 6.4%, preferred not to say. These eight students were recoded as "system missing," in order to find the mean of the 39 students who indicated their political views. With the recoding, the mean was 2.72, indicating that the students who provided a political identification, as a whole, fell between "Somewhat Liberal" and "Liberal."

Table 3: Politics and Religion of the Students in the CAI Course

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean (SD)
Political Views			2.72
Extremely Liberal (1)	7	14.9	
Liberal (2)	10	21.3	
Somewhat Liberal (3)	11	23.4	
Moderate (4)	9	19.1	
Slightly Conservative (5)	2	4.3	
Conservative (6)	--	--	
Extremely Conservative (7)	--	--	
Do not know	5	10.4	
Prefer not to say	4	8.3	
Religion			
No Religion	13	27.7	
Christianity	27	57.4	
Islam	1	2.1	
Judaism	2	4.3	
Eastern Religions	--	--	
Other, Please Fill In	2	4.3	
Prefer Not To Say	2	4.3	

n=47

In terms of religion, students selected from the following options: (1) No religion, (2) Christianity (including Catholic, Protestant, and all Christian denominations), (3) Islam, (4) Judaism, (5) Eastern Religions (i.e. Buddhism, Hinduism), (6) Other (Please type in), and (7) Prefer not to say." In the pre-course survey, 13 students (27.7%) selected "No religion," 27

students (57.4%) chose "Christianity," 1 student (2.1%) selected "Islam," 2 students (4.3%) selected "Judaism," 2 students (4.3%) chose "Other", and 2 students (4.3%) preferred not to say. The two students in the "Other" category wrote in "Agnostic" and "Spiritual," respectively. Taken together, politics and religion are important influences on student activism and civic engagement; such beliefs are often formed under familial guidance and reinforced or challenged by schools (Andolina et al. 2003). Political ideologies and religious beliefs are therefore part of the social histories that students carried into the CAI classroom with them.

By the Numbers: Educational Experiences

Table 4 draws on the survey data to provide a picture of the education experience of the members of the CAI course. First, 22 of the students, or 46.8% of the class, identified themselves as first generation students. A question was added to the post-course survey to collect this information after it became evident during the semester that several of the CAI students were first generation students. This is markedly high compared to the university numbers; first generation students comprised just 25.5% of the undergraduate student body for the 2016-2017 academic year. This suggests that the CAI course had a disproportionately higher percentage of first generation students when compared to the undergraduate population of the university. This is likely linked to the fact that the majority of students in the CAI course also identified themselves as members of groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Table 4: Education Experiences of the Students in the CAI Course

		Pre-Course (n=47)		University (n=55,783)
		Frequency	Percentage	Percentage
First Generation Student				
	Yes	22	46.8	25.5*
	No	25	53.2	74.5*
Class Standing				
	First Year	1	2.1	9.7
	Second Year	10	21.3	13.8
	Third Year	18	38.3	31.8
	Fourth Year	18	38.3	43.8
Took Intro to Sociology or Social Problems				
	Yes	47	100	
	No	--	--	
Sociology Major				
	Yes	22	46.8	
	No	25	53.2	
Number of Sociology Courses				
	1	12	25.5	
	2	6	12.8	
	3-5	14	29.8	
	6 or more	15	31.9	

*Based on data from the 2016-2017 academic year, not the Fall 2016 semester; n=54,815

In terms of class rank, the majority of the students in the CAI course were in their third or fourth year of post-secondary education. The course consisted of 1 first year student (2.1%), 10 students (21.3%) in their second year, 18 students (38.3%) in their third year and 18 students (38.3%) in their fourth year. Therefore, the majority of the students in the CAI course were third and fourth year students, similar to the university percentages for the entire undergraduate body.

There were 22 students (46.8%) of the class who defined themselves as sociology majors. All of the students (100%) in the CAI course had previously taken an introductory sociology

course, either Introduction to Sociology or Social Problems. This is not surprising, as completion

of an introductory level sociology course was one of the prerequisites for the CAI course.

Students were also asked to recall how many sociology courses they had taken previously, and

this resulted in a range of answers. There were 12 students (25.5%) who had previously

completed just one sociology course, and 6 students (12.8%) who had taken two sociology

courses. Additionally, 14 students (29.8%) had taken three to five sociology courses, and 15

students (31.9%), likely the sociology majors, had taken six or more sociology courses

previously.

The students were enrolled in a wide range of academic majors. As noted previously, 22

students in the CAI course were sociology majors. One student was studying criminal justice.

Five students were pursuing a social sciences or anthropology degree. Five others were

psychology majors. Three students were in advertising and public relations, and one was in

broadcasting. Two others were in communications, and one student was majoring in journalism.

One student was a history major, one was pursuing international and global studies, and one was

in interdisciplinary studies. Another student was in environmental studies. Engineering, statistics,

and pre-clinical majors also featured, one student each. Thus, the students brought a variety of

interests and passions into the CAI course.

By the Numbers: How Did They React to Their Introductory Sociology Course?

As all students in the CAI course had previously completed an introductory sociology

course, it is possible to examine how this particular collection of students responded to the

material covered in such a course. While it is impossible to generalize these results to a larger

population or contextualize the results by comparing them to other samples/populations, the responses provide an interesting glimpse into the CAI students' perceptions and reactions to their introductory sociology class, particularly in light of the research indicating that students often have an emotional reaction to the content and presentation of material in introductory sociology courses (see, for example: Davis 1992; Moremen 1997; Johnson 2005).

Table 5 provides the means and standard deviations for a group of questions asked on the pre-course survey. The students given fifteen statements following the question: "How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your Intro/Social Problems course?" The students were asked to indicate how often they felt a particular way, with 1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Some of the Time, and 4=Much of the Time. Therefore, higher means indicate a more frequent occurrence of a specific feeling arising in response to the introductory sociology course.

Generally speaking, the students in the CAI course reported that they seldom felt indifferent, discouraged, overwhelmed, or annoyed by the material covered in their introductory sociology course. This is suggested by the results for the following statements: "I felt indifferent (did not care) about the social problems being discussed" (M=1.46; SD=.62), "I felt discouraged or overwhelmed by the topics being discussed" (M=2.15; SD=.88), and "I felt annoyed because the conclusions in the class were too liberal, blaming the structure of society instead of the individual person," (M=1.66; SD=.79).

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations for Reactions to Introductory Sociology Courses

How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your Intro/Social Problems course?	Pre-Course Survey Mean (SD)
I felt empowered to take action to challenge social problems we discussed in class	3.09 (.88)
I felt angry or outraged due to the existence of the social injustices we discussed in class	3.47 (.80)
I felt guilty	2.50 (.86)
I felt helpless to change any of the social inequalities discussed in class	2.77 (.87)
I agreed with the conclusions drawn in class about social inequalities	3.49 (.78)
I felt indifferent (did not care) about the social problems being discussed	1.46 (.62)
I found myself questioning my own opinions and perspectives about society	3.30 (.83)
I felt discouraged or overwhelmed by the topics being discussed	2.15 (.88)
I wanted to engage in social activism, or take action to cause positive social change	3.45 (.78)
I felt annoyed because the conclusions in the class were too liberal, blaming the structure of society instead of the individual person	1.66 (.79)
I felt encouraged that things in the world could be changed for the better	3.02 (.85)
I felt the topics and concepts we were covering were relevant to my personal life and experience	3.40 (.77)
I felt optimistic and positive about society	2.55 (.80)
Class discussions confirmed my thoughts and beliefs about the social world	3.23 (.81)
I saw myself as responsible for making society better	3.06 (.90)

1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Some of the Time, 4=Much of the Time
n=47

Conversely, the students in the CAI class indicated that they more often found themselves identifying strongly with the content of their introductory sociology courses. For example, the students often found themselves agreeing with the conclusions drawn in class (M=3.49; SD=.78), and it was quite common that they found the topics and concepts covered to be relevant for their

personal lives (M=3.40; SD=.77). They found their thoughts and beliefs about the social world were confirmed at least some of the time (M=3.23; SD=.81), while, to a slightly greater degree (M=3.30; SD=.87), they also recalled questioning their own opinions and perspectives about society. Further, they recalled feeling angry at the social injustices discussed in class as well, with the mean (3.47; SD=.80) falling midway between "Some of the Time" and "Much of the Time." Between these results and the fact that the students had elected to take the CAI course, it is not surprising that the students also recalled often feeling a desire to engage in social activism as a direct result of their introductory sociology course (M=3.45; SD=.78).

Even though the students generally found themselves agreeing with the topics covered in their introductory sociology course and desiring to engage in social activism, the scores for statements that referenced the possibility of positive social change were generally lower than those related to agreement and desire noted above. For example, for "I felt optimistic and positive about society," the mean of 2.55 (SD=.81) falls between "Seldom" and "Some of the Time." Students also noted that, as a direct result of the introductory sociology course, they felt empowered to take action to challenge social problems some of the time (M=3.09; SD=.88), and they saw themselves as responsible for making society better some of the time (M=3.06; SD=.90). Similarly, in regard to the statement, "I felt encouraged that things in the world could be changed for the better," the mean of 3.02 (SD=.85) suggests that students felt this way some of the time as a result of their introductory sociology class.

As a whole, the results of this series of questions provide a clearer picture of the students enrolled in the CAI course, particularly in relation to the experience they had in their introductory sociology courses. The students in the CAI course indicated that they tended to find

themselves aligning with the conclusions of their introductory sociology course. Also, they often experienced a desire to engage in social activism as a direct result of the course. The students, however, recalled positive feelings about the potential for social change to a lesser degree as a result of their introductory class. With such results, one might tentatively suggest that these students might have elected to enroll in the CAI course to find ways to increase their positive feelings about social change.

By the Numbers: What Were They Already Up To?

The results of the pre-course survey suggest the extent to which the students who enrolled in the CAI course were already socially involved at the outset of the class. It must be kept in mind, however, that there is no point of comparison against which the "activeness" of the students can be judged as above, below, or at par with other undergraduates. The results instead serve to deepen our understanding of this collection of students in particular, and in a few cases, provide a basis against which the results of the post-survey can be compared in order to test for change over the course of the semester.

Issues of Interest

Many students entered the CAI course articulating an interest in particular social issues or social problems. In the survey, the stem of the question, "How interested are you in working for positive change in:" was followed by a social institution or social issue. Students were asked to rank their level of interest in each, choosing from: 1=Not interested at all, 2=Somewhat interested, 3=Interested, and 4=Very Interested. Students were also able to write in an issue of interest. The results from the pre-course survey are found in Table 6.

Table 6: Issues in Which the CAI Students Were Already Interested

	Pre-Course Survey Mean (SD)
How interested are you in working for positive change in:	
Race/Ethnicity Issues	3.55 (.69)
Environmental Issues	2.81 (1.01)
Gender Issues	3.36 (.90)
Sexuality Issues	3.21 (.93)
Poverty	3.47 (.72)
Criminal Justice System	3.47 (.80)
Economic System	2.83 (.87)
Politics/Government	2.68 (1.05)
Health Care	3.13 (.88)
Education	3.68 (.52)
Discrimination	3.74 (.53)

1=Not interested at all, 2=Somewhat interested, 3=Interested, 4=Very Interested
n=47

Results demonstrate that the students enrolled in the CAI course had a wide range of interests. Those receiving the highest levels of interest included discrimination (M=3.74; SD=.53), education (M=3.68; SD=.52), race/ethnicity issues (M=3.55; SD=.69), poverty (M=3.47; SD=.72), the criminal justice system (M=3.47; SD=.80), and gender issues (M=3.36; SD=.90). Issues receiving a modest amount of interest included sexuality issues (M=3.21; SD=.93) and health care (M=3.13; SD=.88). On the remaining issues, including the economic

system (M=2.83; SD=.87), environmental issues (M=2.81; SD=1.01), and politics/government (M=2.68; SD=1.05), the students expressed feelings landing between "Somewhat interested" and "Interested." As an additional note, students were provided a text entry box in which they could write other issues of interest. Three students used this option to express interest in mental health care, two students noted an interest in media issues, and two other students referenced religious issues. Animal rights, family problems, and corruption also featured (one student each).

As a whole, therefore, students entered the CAI course quite interested in many issues. Obviously, interest in working for positive change does not necessarily equate to action or translate into activism. An ability to articulate an area in which one's passions lie, however, is arguably an important objective on the road to social engagement. On the other hand, it is possible that a high level of interest in several different social issues might leave one feeling paralyzed, unable to figure out where to start one's engagement. Additionally, in light of the aforementioned social location of the students in the CAI course, it is interesting to note their issues of interest; these interests affected the social action tools and social action plans the students created as part of the course requirements.

Interest is Great, But Did They *Do* Anything?

Despite a large amount of interest in social issues, it was only a relatively small number of the students who indicated that they were involved in some sort of action aimed at social problems at the outset of the CAI course. This included volunteering and/or being involved in a campus organization. Table 7 displays the frequency of student engagement at the outset of the semester. Results suggest that only a small number of students worked as volunteers at the

beginning of the CAI course. Fourteen students, or 29.8% of the class, indicated that they

worked as volunteers, while 33, or 70.2% of the class, did not. Fifteen students, or 31.9%,

indicated that they were involved in an organization on campus, while 32 students, or 68.1%,

said they were not involved in such groups. Thus, the number of students who were already

socially engaged through volunteer work or engagement in campus organizations at the outset of

the CAI course appeared to be rather low. Even if there were no overlap between the 14 students

who volunteered and the 15 students who participated in on campus organizations, it suggests

that just 29 of the 47 students were socially engaged in this manner. These results will be

compared to the post-course survey results in Chapter Five to determine if the level of

participation in these two forms of engagement changed.

Table 7: Volunteer Work and Involvement on Campus of CAI Students

		Pre-Course Survey	
		Frequency	Percentage
Work as a Volunteer			
	Yes	14	29.8
	No	33	70.2
Involved in Organizations on Campus			
	Yes	15	31.9
	No	32	68.1

n=47

<u>Yes, But Who Were They, Really?</u>

The early writing assignments in the CAI course were framed to allow students to begin

thinking in depth about their social location, upbringing, and life experiences, and consider how

variants related to their views on society, agency, and social engagement. While it is impossible to provide a full biography for each of the 47 students, an overview of this qualitative data adds detail and richness to the above quantitative data. Using what the students said about themselves provides a clearer picture of who they were beyond a check in a survey box. This, in turn, contributes to a better understanding of the composition of the class itself.

From Where Did They Come?

The paths that the students traveled to arrive in the CAI course were widely varied. While many of the students grew up in the United States, a number came from other countries. For example, one female student recounted spending the first ten years of her life in Jamaica, while a couple of other students were Haitian by birth. Additionally, one student was born in The Philippines, but moved to the United States with her family at the age of two. A small number of students noted that their parents emigrated from places such as Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Ghana before they (the students) were born. Even those who were native born United States citizens hailed from markedly different locations, ranging from the suburbs of Baltimore, Maryland, to St. Louis, Missouri, to a small town in rural Florida. A couple students were Puerto Rican. One student grew up in the farmlands of Pennsylvania, while a few students grew up in the city of Miami, Florida. Interestingly, a number of the students recalled spending part of their childhood in New York City, noting locations like Washington Heights, Long Island, and Queens. One student grew up in a blue-collar, Italian town in New Jersey. Several of the students mentioned that their families moved them to Florida from some of the aforementioned locations in order to pursue a better life. Another student, a military dependent, recalled moving

every two years to a new location. Thus, the CAI class was composed of students from diverse geographical locations, which, in light of Bourdieu (1990a; 1990b), Mills (2008a; 2008b), and Emirbayer and Mische (1998), likely shaped their upbringing and biography, their expectations about society and the future, and their views regarding agency and engagement.

<div align="center">The Intersection of Race, Gender, Class, and Sexuality</div>

The students' lived experiences related to race and ethnicity varied widely as well, and several white students recalled their experiences related to racism and racial discrimination, or the lack of such experiences. One student who was white shared that the word "nigger" was part of her family's vernacular, while another white student discussed having had no opportunities to interact with people of color during his upbringing. One white student remembered her neighbors petitioning for African American families to be removed from the neighborhood. Another white student recalled growing up with children of color and witnessing police brutality against his black friend. Conversely, a number of white students commented that they had never experienced any sort of racial discrimination, nor did they realize its existence until they entered the university; thus, they felt helpless and naïve on issues of racial equality. One even noted that she grew up believing that racism and racial discrimination were part of the past, not the present. These experiences generally led the white students to believe that they were insulated from many social problems, so learning more about such issues became paramount to them; in some cases, it caused them to question their "right" to get involved in the issues of marginalized groups.

Generally, the students of color had different experiences, encountering racism and its effects from an early age. One student recalled her parents telling her she had to work ten times

<div align="center">100</div>

harder than everyone else because she is black. Several students of color remembered being the target of racial epithets throughout their childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood. One student vividly described a white man calling her an "ol' monkey" in a grocery store when she was five years old. Interestingly, two of the most infamous, racially-charged events of recent times, the shooting deaths of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, had directly impacted students of color in the class. One lost a friend in Trayvon; another watched her friends get caught up in the Ferguson protests. Another student contemplated the difficulty of being biracial, feeling she was neither "black enough" or "white enough." Similarly, two students noted feeling not quite "white enough" and not quite "Hispanic enough;" they felt subjected to mistreatment from both sides. Finally, a couple students recalled hearing their white friends regularly denigrate people of color, yet turn to them and say, "we don't mean you," or "you're not like them." Due to these experiences, it is possible that a number of the students of color may have been more advanced in their desire or readiness to make social change in issues related to race and ethnicity than white students. It was evident that their lived experiences influenced their views on the need for social change, making it a highly personal issue.

Beyond race and ethnicity, the vast majority of the students critically considered the impact of their gender on their lived experiences. Many female students recounted their experiences of having to challenge and overcome traditional gender norms as well as stereotypes. This was consistent across racial and ethnic lines. Several female students mentioned being subjected to misogynistic remarks and behaviors, and a number recalled surviving rape, as well as domestic and sexual abuse. On the other hand, most of the male students in the class noted

their "privilege" as males, but the white males were much more emphatic in this. One male student recalled growing up in a home where the men were aggressors, finding himself personally rejecting such a role. Another identified his biological father as a sexual predator. As a result, these two males identified themselves as feminists, dedicated to championing the cause of women.

Almost without fail, gender was considered in tandem with other markers such as race, class, and sexuality, thereby presenting various forms of intersectionality. White and Hispanic males in the class mentioned the privilege they experienced based on both their gender and their race/ethnicity. A number of white and Hispanic female students discussed their "privilege" and their middle to upper class status, yet found it moderated by their gender as well as, for some, their sexuality. One white, upper class student described herself as having no struggles at all, while another white female was raised in severe poverty. A white student recalled growing up in a gated community and attending exclusive schools, while a student of color attended inner city schools that lacked supplies and textbooks. One Hispanic student was raised on food stamps, but another Hispanic student saw herself as enjoying the benefits of "white privilege." A few black students came from affluent families, and they recalled the challenges of living among whites while being criticized as sell-outs by other, less prosperous black people. Despite fondly recalling vacations and other luxuries, as people of color, they labeled their class status as a disadvantage. In terms of sexuality, the white students who identified as queer, gay, lesbian, or bisexual saw their sexuality as a source of disadvantage. For example, one student saw her whiteness as a source of privilege, while simultaneously feeling diminished due to both her gender and her sexuality. For students of color, the difficulty of living in a heteronormative

society was amplified by their race/ethnicity. This was exemplified by one student who discussed the difficulty of being both African American and gay, and another who worried about coming out in a Hispanic family.

Given the demographics of the CAI course, it is important to note that a number of students expressed negativity in describing themselves and their lived experiences due to the being both female and a person of color. One such student noted that cashiers mistakenly assume she is on government assistance. One black female in the class recalled growing up on dirt roads without streetlights, while another also grew up impoverished, borrowing from neighbors to survive. One student remembers moving periodically as a child because her family could not afford their rent or electricity. Conversely, another student recalled her upper-class socio-economic status and its associated special trips and educational privileges, but noted how it made her feel like an outsider among other people of color. One student experienced homelessness for a period of her life, while another discussed her worries about the safety and life chances of her little boy. One Hispanic student even recounted surviving a six-story fall as a toddler; her fall was caused in part by poor conditions in the "projects" where she lived. Additionally, one Hispanic student saw herself trying to stay off the bottom rung of society. Thus, in their own words, a significant proportion of the female students in the CAI course felt acutely disadvantaged, and they connected this disadvantage to the combination of their gender and their race/ethnicity and its associated ranking in the social stratification system of the United States.

Overall, this discussion of the lived experiences arising from the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, and class indicates that by week five (when their sociological autobiographies were due), a number of the students in the CAI course were aware or gaining

awareness of the complex social forces influencing their social experiences. They were able to explore the dis/advantages associated with their social location. This was likely helped by their previous completion of an introductory sociology course, where race/ethnicity, gender, and class, and terms like privilege, discrimination, and stratification are introduced and explored. It was likely further supported by discussions about the social construction of society, the sociological imagination, intersectionality, and social structure and personal agency in the first few weeks of the CAI course. By developing this self-reflexivity, the students were readying themselves to explore structural impediments to individual agency and achievement.

God and Family

The religious experiences of the students were varied as well, but they revolved almost exclusively around Christianity. Several students mentioned being devout Christians, raised as such from birth. A few students emphasized their dependency on prayer, finding comfort and direction in the teachings of Christianity. A couple of students attended private, Christian secondary schools. Some students, despite identifying themselves as Christian, questioned Christian beliefs and practices. One student recalled being allowed to only listen to Christian music, while two remembered being forbidden from any participation in Halloween events. Another student confessed ongoing feelings of guilt in conjunction with her faith, while one felt constant anxiety due to a fear of eternal damnation. One student questioned Christian teachings about mental illness and racism. A few students struggled to reconcile the Christian faith of their families with their own sexuality, finding it difficult to be gay in such circumstances. One student became an outcast from her Christian family after she identified herself as a lesbian.

Another student, gay and Christian, recalled trying to act "straight." Still other students were raised in a Christian denomination, but had since rejected the faith. For those who had been raised in, but then rejected Christianity, they were quite vehement in their criticism of it. For example, one student rejected religion because of how its followers treated her mother, who raised two children on her own. Interestingly, a number of students did not mention religion as a significant factor in their childhood or present life. Those who did, however, generally found themselves on opposite ends of the spectrum, either living devout lives or rejecting their religious upbringing entirely. Therefore, the students in the CAI course held divergent views of the purpose and place of religion in social change and social action.

Family life was an important consideration in understanding the composition of the CAI class. Upon close reading, it became evident that the students in the course spent a significant amount of time talking about how their families, particularly how their parents, grandparents, and siblings impacted their lives. Parental occupations ranged from artists to teachers, from lawyers to bankers, and from butchers to electricians. One student discussed her stay-at-home dad and her mother who went to work every day. One student's mother took in foster children. Although a few students mentioned having a stable family life, many students found growing up as children of divorce to be significantly challenging for their life course. Several students recalled experiencing emotional, mental, and physical abuse at the hands of their fathers, and a couple noted the same about their mother. The father of one student was addicted to drugs, selling her toys for cash. Another student recalled a period of "unhappy holidays" due to family conflict in the home. Several students recalled their fathers abandoning their families, while one discussed being raised by a father, sister, and a grandmother after her mother left. Two students

referred to their mothers as "oppressed" by their fathers. Another student, smothered by an overly protective mother during her childhood, has now internalized the crippling fears of her mother. A few students praised their mothers as hard workers, wanting not to disappoint them. A couple of students mentioned their mothers were also enrolled in the university and completing their degrees. One student credits his grandmother for shaping him into a good person, while another bemoaned the fact that all her grandparents died when she was an infant. The families of two students were broken by the incarceration of a parent, while two other students experienced familial separation due to immigration issues for a significant portion of their childhood. In terms of siblings, or the lack thereof, one student in the class noted the attention she received as an only child, the "miracle baby" born late in her parents' lives, while another still looks after her younger siblings and cousins. Also, one student was a twin, and another student found her whole life altered after her brother was in a vehicle accident. While there is much more that could be said about the families of the students, the descriptives given here provide a glimpse into the dynamics of the childhood years of those who decided to join the CAI course. These results suggest that students were well aware of the impact of family on their lived experiences, and as Bourdieu (1990a;1990b) and Emirbayer and Mische (1998) propose, this likely affected their projectivity regarding both their potential and desire to engage in positive change.

Personal Challenges

There were other struggles and lived experiences that the students drew attention to in their writings that do not neatly fit into the above categories, but are significant, nonetheless. For example, a significant number of students, all of them female, noted their struggle with a mental

illness. In their writings, almost 15% of the students identified themselves as having depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, an eating disorder, or a combination of these diagnoses; without fail, they also noted feeling ostracized because of it. A few students recalled their personal struggles with alcohol and substance abuse. Additionally, two students shared that they had felony charges against them. Also, several students had to learn English as a second language, and two recalled having to translate for their parents. Two students had served in the military, having seen it as the best (or only) option to get ahead. Finally, perhaps one of the most universal experiences noted by members of the CAI course is that of hating middle school, and many were not particularly fond of high school either. This was largely due to bullying, peer culture, failing to measure up to academic standards, and experiences of discrimination. Each of these challenges served to shape the outlook and expectations of those who experienced them.

<u>Why Take the CAI Course?</u>

The final part of the attempt to understanding the students in the CAI course involves examining the reasons they chose to enroll in the course. In the pre-course survey, the students in the CAI course were asked to: "In a few sentences, please explain the reasons why you have decided to take this Community Action and Involvement course, and what you are hoping to learn or gain from this class." As mentioned in Chapter Three, these responses were compiled and, after the initial reading, coded for recurrent themes. The reasons given by students for enrolling in the CAI course generally fell into the following categories: (1) a need to fulfill an academic requirement, (2) the professor teaching the course, (3) a desire for increased

sociological understanding leading to social action, (4) a desire to find one's place in making society better, and (5) to meet a specific need related to social engagement.

I Need the Credit

Several students explained that, at least in part, they had enrolled in the course because it fulfilled a requirement for their degree or their minor. For example, Student Nine stated, "I just needed another class for my minor honestly." Other students made similar comments. Forty-Four noted, "I took this class as a restricted elective for my Bachelors in Sociology," while Thirty-Five stated, "I originally decided to take the course to gain the credits I need for my elective requirement." Forty-Six claimed, "I took this class because it was one of the few offered by [University] that would help me fulfill my Mass Culture & Collective Behavior minor." Even though the CAI course was an elective, Student Twenty-One defined the course as "required": "I chose this Community Action and Involvement course because this course is required for me to graduate." Perhaps it was one of the last electives this student needed to finish his or her degree. It is important to note, however, that every single student who took the CAI course to meet a degree or minor requirement also went on to give an additional reason. In other words, even though these students felt the class fulfilled a requirement, they also provided additional reasons for taking it.

I Like the Professor

A number of students indicated that the professor teaching the CAI course was a reason they felt compelled to enroll in it. For example, some students had evidently completed an introductory course with the professor. Student Twenty-Two kindly stated, "Community Action

and Involvement caught my attention for several reasons, the first being the professor. [The professor] provides more insight that any professor I've ever encountered." Other students felt likewise. Student Five expressed:

> I took one of [the professor's] classes in the Spring, so I know she is a fun and engaging teacher. I might have taken the class anyway, but with her as the teacher I knew it would be fun and very informative.

Similarly, Nineteen noted, "I decided to take this class because my professor from Intro to Sociology was teaching it," and, similarly, Fifty-Two asserted, "I decided to take this course because I had this professor before and I really enjoyed her style of teaching." Student Thirty-Three anticipated a good outcome, based on past experience:

> The real reason I chose to take Community Action and Involvement was because I had already taken Intro to Sociology with the same professor and loved her class. It was engaging and informative, so I knew the Community Action and Involvement would be as equally engaging.

For Fifty-One, the professor was the sole reason he gave for taking the CAI course: "I decided to take this course not only [be]cause I liked the professor but what ideas and change she thought we could bring to the world." Others signed up for the class because they were acting on advice they had received, as Seven did: "[The professor] was…highly recommended." Similarly, Eleven noted, "Teacher had great reviews." Thus, the professor teaching the course evidently factored into the decision of several students to take the CAI course. This finding is reinforced by the fact that sixteen of the students who enrolled in the CAI course (one-third of the class) had previously taken Introduction to Sociology with the same professor.

Focus My Sociological Eye

Beyond the need to fulfill a requirement or follow a professor, several students also indicated that they took the CAI course to increase their sociological understanding, particularly connected to their desire to engage in social change and social action. For example, Fifty took the course hoping to gain a "…better understanding of the society I live in as well as those I do not through a sociological eye…[as] well as guidance to changing my surroundings for the better." Twenty-Six stated, "I'm hoping to be able to think differently about the social world and community involvement, and to understand the complexities of social action so that I can better know how to effectively attempt to change the world." Similarly, Forty-Five noted:

> I decided to take this course because I want to learn more about sociology and how becoming involved in the community can make a difference in society. I'm hoping to gain more information about how I can make a change in my society and create a lasting effect.

In the same vein, Forty-Four hoped, "…to learn more about the social inequality and unjustness that is going on in the world, and how we can make a difference." The desire to increase sociological knowledge alongside its potential application was captured by Thirty-One:

> I decided to take this course because [I] am interested in society and how/why people behave the way they do. I plan to take that information and apply it to my personal life and determine how [I] can influence society in a positive way based on my understanding of social issues and backgrounds.

Additionally, Thirteen expressed:

> I am minoring in Sociology, and I am interested in helping to create a better world. I hope that this course will lead me to better understand the issues with society and how to make a difference within my community.

Therefore, a large number of students saw the CAI course as a chance to increase their sociological understanding, which they expected, in turn, to lead to their own engagement for social change.

I Want to Get Involved

Many of the students were very clear that they enrolled in the CAI course specifically because of their desire to make a positive difference in the society, get involved in social action, and find or fulfill their purpose related to social change. For example, Thirty-Two stated, "I am hoping to narrow down what my personal plan of action can be…" Similarly, Seventeen looked to the course to help him fulfill his purpose:

> I have only one thought[;] the work we will have to do in class will help me to do better to my community when I go back to my country. I always see myself as someone who is on the earth to help others and organize the society as a better place to live.

Twenty-Nine was also looking for a pathway to engagement:

> I wanted to take this class so that I could learn how to become better involved in my community. Recently I have been thinking about switching my career choices so that I could help other people and make a difference in the world in some way.

Forty-One also aimed to find her purpose: "I am hoping to have a better understanding of my purpose in society and the impact/change that I can make," while Nineteen had a similar wish, "I hope to gain better understanding of how I can get involved and make a difference in social issues." Likewise, Fifty-Two stated, "From this course, I hope I can learn how to make a difference no matter how small in someone's everyday life." Considering the multiple interests held by the students noted above (i.e. race or poverty issues), it is not surprising that several of

the students appeared to be searching for a niche, or where they could fit into the work of making

society better. Capturing this sentiment, Thirty-Six stated:

> I have taken this course to figure out the best approach of getting people involved
> and what works for me. I hope to gain information on where I best fit in making a
> difference and the knowledge I need to make an impact.

Further, Twenty noted, "I hope to verbalize and identify what I what I want to create social

change in." Student Ten declared, "I want to feel like I have something to offer in regards to

fixing social problems," and Student Fourteen agreed, "I want to find out where I fit in to help

others in society. I want to learn more about myself and society to better understand what I can

do to help." Finding the path through which they could contribute to positive social change was

therefore a motivator for taking the CAI course. Many of the students thus felt the same as

Thirty-Nine, who succinctly stated that his goal was "[t]o learn how to get involved more and

learn what I can do to better the community."

I Need Something

A number of students entered the course looking for something in particular. First, a few

students felt they need appropriate tools to help them become more socially active. Forty-Two,

who defined herself as socially engaged, hoped, "[t]o gain the tools I need in order to be

involved with different activism movements." Similarly, Eighteen simply stated, "I wanted to

gain [the] tools that I could use to help be part of a solution." Second, several students expected

the CAI course to suggest opportunities for engagement. Forty noted, "I feel like taking this class

will expose me to more opportunities to get involved with social issues." Similarly, Three stated:

> I decided to take this course because it is a course that will not only expand
> knowledge and provide needed credit, but it will also provide opportunities in my

112

field of study (if not directly then indirectly) to become involved and provide experience.

Likewise, Five was concerned about both finding and creating opportunities:

I want to learn how to organize community action and how best to spur social change for the better. I'll be moving out of state once I graduate, and I may not have the same volunteer opportunities where I'm going. It would help to be able to create my own group, if necessary.

Third, a few students enrolled in the CAI course seeking direction for their future and career. For example, Thirty stated she was, "Hoping to gain experience and direction in my career in sociology." Twenty-Two mentioned something similar:

The second reason is in hopes that by the end of this course, I will have developed and thought through a plan as to how I can apply skills that I possess towards my major…in order to better the world in some way, to pace a pathway for my future and gain a better handle on the direction for my life beyond college.

Fourth, and finally, there was hope that the class could provide emotional support. Forty-Six noted, "I also feel powerless and frustrated by learning about social inequalities and injustices and not being able to do anything about it. *They give me all this knowledge and no tools to help the cause*" (italics added). Other students were looking for confidence, as evidenced by Six who stated, "I would hope to gain confidence in order to start making more of a social change" and Twenty-One who said, "I am hoping to gain an extra boost of confidence that will allow me to change the things in society that I see need adjusting." A few were looking for encouragement. Forty-Seven noted, "I hope to gain inspiration to get more socially active to make a change in society," and Thirty-Four stated, "I need guidance and encouragement to accomplish any goals that I have in helping my community and myself." Taken together, it is evident that a small number of students expected the CAI course to meet a particular need they had by providing tools, opportunities, direction, or emotional support.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The descriptives from the pre-course survey, in combination with the qualitative data from early writing assignments of the CAI course, present a rich portrait of the students who enrolled in the class. Each student, of course, had a unique background; yet, there were many similarities that emerged in the social biographies of the students. In terms of gender, a majority of the members of the class identified themselves as female. A majority of the members identified themselves as students of color, and almost half the class was composed of first generation students. Many of the students were Christian, grew up in a suburban area, and leaned liberal in their politics. Half of the students had to work a job. All of the students had taken an introductory sociology course and, as a result, desired greater social engagement, yet the majority of the class members were not majoring in sociology. Most students were in their third or fourth year at the university. In terms of social engagement, they were not overly likely to be involved in volunteer work or on campus organizations.

Beyond these similarities, the students contemplated their social biographies, and they drew on their sociological understanding to express their lived experiences. Many of the students had experienced limitations or discrimination due to the intersectionality of their race/ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. Other students, particularly white males and white females, contemplated their privilege in United States society. Many of the students discussed elements of suffering or challenge in their lived experiences; these included, for example, abusive parents, sexual assaults, poverty, mental health issues, language barriers, and felony charges. Perhaps the challenges served to encourage these particular students to look at the social world with an eye toward changing it. This finds some confirmation as it overlaps both with their feelings of anger

regarding social injustices as well as the relevance they found for their own beliefs and experiences in their introductory sociology course. In other words, for these students, their social location and histories may have created a desire within them to make society better for other people, and the sociological perspective served well to help develop their recognition of dis/advantages.

As a whole, the students in the CAI course entered the class as a willing and eager audience regarding the topic of social change and personal agency. A number of them plainly stated that they enrolled because they liked the professor, they were interested in positive social change, and they hoped to find tools or opportunities they could use to get involved and becoming socially engaged; in other words, they were not just taking the course because they "had to." Generally, the students seemed to be looking for a path to engagement, desiring to gain more sociological knowledge and perhaps transform their social world. They perceived that the CAI course offered them a chance to do just that.

Past experiences and social biographies affect agentic processes (Emirbayer and Mische 1998) and guide the development of the habitus (Bourdieu 1990a; 1990b). Therefore, by reflecting on their social locations and social biographies in the early days of the CAI course, the students were well positioned to begin to engage in projectivity and practical evaluation (Emirbayer and Mische 1998) regarding social action plans and pathways to social change. In other words, if they began the semester with a reproductive view of the social world (Mills 2008a; 2008b), seeing it as fixed and closed to personal agency, they could begin instead to develop a transformative outlook. Or, if they already viewed the social world as changeable and open to their interventions, they could be further supported in their journey.

115

Chapters Five through Ten will present the findings of the qualitative analysis of student writings as well as the pre- and post-course surveys. The next chapter will take a closer look at the perspectives of the students in the CAI course, seeking to determine if they initially saw the world through a reproductive or transformative lens. This will provide a baseline for comparison with student writings toward the end of the semester as well as the post-course survey through which the present study can explore if this set of students was compelled forward toward the initiation or development of a transformative habitus over the course of the semester, and what role, if any, the CAI course had in that movement. It appears that the students who "jumped on" the CAI boat generally hoped to "change the world," as Forty so creatively stated. What remains to be seen is the degree to which they felt able to do so.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE VIEW FROM THE BOAT
EXPLORING STUDENT FEELINGS ABOUT THE SOCIAL WORLD

Before attempting to understand if the students in the Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course were moved toward a more transformative view of the social world and personal agency, it is important to first examine their starting point. This chapter marks the beginning of the findings of the qualitative analysis of the students' writings. The theoretical framework of the present study suggests that students may have a reproductive habitus, meaning that they are fatalistic, seeing the social world as generally fixed and beyond their ability to change (Mills 2008a). Alternatively, students might possess a transformative habitus through which they recognize both the potential for social change and their ability to "*make things happen*" (Mills 2008b:83). Additionally, Mills (2008b) argues that education can and should help to restructure the habitus of students toward a more transformative outlook.

Therefore, to explore this theoretical construct, the early writings of the students in the CAI course were analyzed to determine how these individuals felt about the social world at the beginning of the semester and what they believed about its potential for change. This was expected to help uncover whether their outlooks on the social world were reproductive or transformative in nature and, in part, to address the exploratory research question: "How did the students in the CAI course generally view the social world and their personal agency?" For example, did the students begin the course feeling cynical or hopeful? Further, did they believe in the possibility of social change or did they believe that the social world was closed or resistant to change? The early writings in the CAI course present answers to these questions and therefore

serve as the starting point in understanding the extent to which the students began the semester with a reproductive or transformative view of themselves and their social world.

Cynicism, Hopefulness, or Both?

The early writings of the CAI students indicated that they began the class with feelings of both cynicism and hopefulness about society and social change. This is one of the major categories to arise from the writings. Some students felt exclusively one way or the other, while several expressed a mixture of both cynicism and optimism. During the first days of the semester, the students were assigned a reading on "The Cycle of Cynicism" and the "The Cycle of Hope" (Jones, Haenfler, and Johnson 2007:3), and they engaged in a class discussion of these two cycles. This provided a framework that guided the students in expressing their thoughts in their journal writings; this was evident in the initial coding. The sensitizing concepts that gave rise to this conceptual category include variations of "cynical," "pessimistic," "hopeful," "optimistic," and "idealistic." The majority of the views shared in this section came in response to an early journal prompt that asked, in part: "How do you see the world?...Do you see yourself as cynical or hopeful? Why?"

Cynicism

In the analysis of student comments about cynicism, three trends emerge in these early reflections. First, the students who defined themselves as solely cynical in their early writings tended to blame the vastness of social problems. Second, they bemoaned their inadequacy to change such issues. Third, a few students noted the influence of sociology on their negative outlook. Secondarily, some students were surprised to find themselves cynical, while others

118

wished they were more hopeful. Findings indicate that over one-third of the students identified

themselves as entirely cynical in these early writings.

<u>"The World Is Extremely Broken"</u>

The expansiveness of social problems tied directly to students' feelings of pessimism

about society. For example, Six bleakly stated, "In my opinion, this world is extremely broken.

Most likely broken beyond repair. I know for sure that I am a very cynical [person]." In addition,

Six lamented:

> There are many things in this world that bother me. I honestly feel that our society,
> as a whole world, has declined and continues to decline rapidly. Whenever I turn
> on the television or log into Facebook/Twitter to see the trending news, it's
> always bad. In the words of Professor Hubert J. Farnsworth, "I don't want to live
> on this planet anymore."

Other students felt similarly pessimistic due to the seemingly boundlessness of social

problems. Student Fifty listed the many problems she sees:

> …[I] define my outlook on the world or at least the society that I grew up in and
> live in from a very cynical perspective. Often times I sort of kick myself when
> reflecting on just how negative I can be sometimes, mostly because I know that
> there are so many people who have it worse off than me or have less or no access
> to rights and resources I've had since I was born….Regardless, I see the world in
> a very jaded light, and that's just from my own experiences I've gone through or
> seen right in front of me, needless racism, extremely antiquated acts of sexism,
> homophobia, transphobia, destroying the earth for financial gain, harming animals
> in the name of cosmetics, rare occasions of equal rights, wars, and so on and so
> forth. Growing up to the ripe ole' age of 19 I realize more and more every day just
> how TIRED I am… of everything. This mindset very much fuels the cynicism I
> feel when taking on the world.

Student Nine felt negativity is ever present, leading to a desire to withdraw and "know less":

> Although it's hard to admit to myself, I'm definitely stuck in the dreaded cycle of
> cynicism. As someone who spends a lot of their free time browsing the Internet
> and on social media, I see a lot of depressing news stories online. Living in the

Information Age is really a blessing and a curse because having access to news and information from all across the globe is amazing but it always causes me to literally feel the pain of the world in my own heart [every day]; I constantly feel bogged down by the negativity I see online and it makes me shut down. Wanting to know less about problems in the world is a feeling I experience often.

These expressions exemplify the cynical outlook of many of the CAI students toward the social world. They saw the world as in decline and full of problems and negativity. Of course, one might argue that this is an accurate, eyes-wide-open view of society, or even a natural consequence of seeing the social world through the sociological perspective. As Johnson (2005) notes, sociology can increase student cynicism and feelings of alienation. The students themselves, however, pointed out that such a perspective bothers them, hurts them, and leaves them feeling jaded. It does not inspire them to engage with society. Knowing more is not necessarily better. The comments given here thus capture a fatalism that is suggestive of a reproductive outlook on society (Mills 2008a), as students noted the urge to "shut down" and "know less." Given their comments and their enrollment in the CAI course, however, it also appears they do not necessarily want to adopt an "ignorance is bliss" outlook either.

"No Way For Me To Help"

Beyond the immensity of social troubles, students expressed cynicism about their own feelings of inadequacy to address such issues. Seeing oneself as ineffectual in helping solve social problems can lead one to ignore them instead, as Fourteen noted:

I do feel the cycle of cynicism when I'm watching the news or reading the paper. I then want to help in some way, and then I don't see how I can help. It all feels so impersonal and callous. I do find myself feeling numb to the problems of the world. It's easier to just ignore the problems of the world so that it doesn't affect me as much.

Student Two felt similarly:

> As far as the cynical part of it I match a few of the cycles. For example, there are times when I find [out] about a [problem], then I feel a burning urge to do something to help. However after analyzing the problem, I often feel like there is no way for me to help so I don't do anything about it.

These sentiments exemplify the feelings of several students who determined that they were not adequately equipped or able to challenge social problems. Despite understanding social problems and desiring to help, these students felt unable to find a path to fruitful engagement in the work of social change. They did not recognize "tactics" (De Certeau 1984), or opportunities to "act in ways that can transform situations" (Mills 2008a:106), which again indicates a reproductive view of the world.

Thanks a Lot, Sociology

A few students tied cynicism directly to their study of sociology. Student Four found that sociology classes tend to emphasize the negative:

> All my [sociology] classes have always included studying about the depressing, growing issues that surround us on a daily basis but never gave a clear notion of action that would allow us to help change or stop these issues.

Student One reflected, "…I have admittedly become a slight pessimist over these past few years of studying sociology." Additionally, Thirty-Two connected her negative outlook to her decision to major in sociology, wondering if knowing less about social problems would bring greater happiness:

> My feelings towards sociology and social justice usually begin with the first step on the hopeful cycle of wanting to take personal responsibility...However, the last step on the cycle of cynicism, wanting to know less about problems, deeply resonates with me. I often question my major, the work I do, and if I would be happier (and most likely more ignorant) if I chose to focus on something else.

121

This student may be contemplating the "ignorance is bliss" way of looking at the world, finding the sociological perspective to perhaps be too revealing and overwhelming; however, the fact that she enrolled in the CAI course, yet another sociology elective, suggests she may have been hoping for some relief from such feelings. The students who expressed such sentiments about sociological education had taken more than one sociology class; they were pursuing a major or a minor in sociology and had therefore taken several courses in the field. It is apparent that for these students, prolonged and repeated exposure to sociological education had contributed to their feelings of cynicism about society and social change. This brings the words of Mills (1959:1) to mind, when, in speaking about the promise of the sociological imagination, he mentioned the potential for an increased understanding of the social world to cause individuals to feel trapped. While far from conclusive, these observations from the students in the CAI course confirm the influence of what Johnson (2005) terms the "doom and gloom" of sociology.

But I Thought I Was Hopeful

Interestingly, a few students, upon reflection, were surprised at their own cynicism, having previously thought they were hopeful individuals. Student Fourteen found that the assigned reading and her own inaction helped her define herself as cynical:

> I see myself as cynical. I wouldn't have said that at first, but after reading the cycle of cynicism versus hope I am stuck in the cynical cycle. The cycle of hope is not just feeling good about the world, according to the book it's about doing something about it, about being active. It's easy to feel hope when things are going right in my own life. But when things aren't I feel discouraged and get caught up in myself and my own problems.

Likewise, the assigned reading led Twenty-Nine to a similar conclusion:

> After reading the cynical cycle I realized that I am very cynical. I always thought of myself as hopeful, but all the steps within the cynical process sound too familiar. I recognize problems in the world and they bother me to my core. I can't stand how we have these problems and people don't do enough to try and fix them. At the same time[,] I feel like there's not a whole lot I can do and feeling almost powerless.

Student Twenty-One too discovered she too was more cynical than she had previously realized:

> If someone asked me, "Do you see yourself as cynical or hopeful?" without hesitation I would respond "I see myself as hopeful" but after reading about the cycles I would have to classify myself as cynical. Usually when I find out about a problem, I instinctively want to do anything necessary to help but I do not see how I can so I end up feeling depressed and/or upset because I am incapable.

It was interesting that each of the students in this grouping, having previously believed themselves to be hopeful, reached the conclusion that they were cynical *after* reading about the "Cycle of Cynicism" and the "Cycle of Hope" (Jones et al. 2007). One might suggest that this reading, therefore, opened a space for reflection by offering specific definitions of what it means to be cynical or hopeful. In this space, then, the students examined their outlook (and inaction) and found they felt unable to help solve social problems. This may demonstrate the importance of reflecting upon one's habits of thinking and action, which, if unexamined, can contribute to a reproductive outlook and constrain one's agency (Mills 2008a; Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

But, "I Want To Be Hopeful"

In addition to the students who labeled themselves as cynical or discovered they were cynical upon reflection, some students who defined themselves as cynical wished they were more hopeful. They felt similarly to Thirty-Two, who concluded, "While I always want to see

123

the bright side, I feel as though I am inherently cynical." Others expressed similar sentiments.

Twenty-Two blamed his cynicism on the lack of social change:

> I'd like to say that I'm a hopeful person with regards to the future of the world as a whole but in reality[,] I probably fall into a more cynical category of thinking. This is probably because the ratio of change to maintained status quo in my lifetime is not in favor of change.

Likewise, Twenty-Eight desired to be hopeful, but found it difficult:

> I want to be hopeful and think that all of our worldly complications will someday vanish and everyone can co-exist however, it is difficult to be optimistic. Furthermore, I view myself as someone who is cynical about issues of the world.

Fifty-Two suggested that, despite a desire to be hopeful, her cynicism was deeply

engrained:

> In terms on how I would describe myself when looking at the world, I would like to think of myself as an optimistic person and think the best of people and the world around me, but I know deep down I am a cynical person.

This categorization suggests that some of the students who defined themselves as cynical were

not happy as such; however, they tended to dismiss the possibility of adopting a hopeful outlook.

It is interesting because their comments suggest that they did not feel they had a choice, almost

as if cynicism was part of their very being to the extent that, no matter how much they wanted to,

they could not, through their own agency, become hopeful. This could indicate the presence of

the reproductive habitus (Mills 2008a), as the students lack the ability to alter even their own

view of the social world, let alone change society itself.

To recap, the examples in this section indicate that a large percentage of the students in

the CAI course struggled with feelings of cynicism and pessimism about the social world at the

beginning of the semester. Their feelings were influenced by the vastness of social problems,

their own inability to drive change, and the sociology courses they had taken. Further, some

students were surprised by their own cynicism, while others defined themselves as cynical despite wishing they were hopeful. These expressions speak to the potential existence of a reproductive habitus as Mills (2008a) describes it. Each reason given for feeling cynical suggests a sense of powerlessness. The students felt they were unable to address social issues, resist negativity, or even change one's own feelings. These early entries thus suggest that many the students began the semester with a fatalistic outlook, and it had been reinforced by what they had seen, heard, and experienced. For these students then, a goal of the CAI course was to help them recognize their reproductive outlook and move toward a more transformative view of society.

Hopefulness

Genuine hopefulness and optimism about society appeared less frequently than cynicism and pessimism in the student writings at the outset of the semester. Just a quarter of the students identified themselves as generally optimistic about society and social change. Those who did so based their outlook on a belief that positive social change is possible. A few students also discussed their intentional embrace of hopefulness in direct opposition to cynicism, which they saw as a non-starter. An optimistic outlook can suggest the presence of a transformative habitus (Mills 2008a), or one which recognizes a potential for social change and opportunities to engage the projectivity element of one's agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

Change is Possible

The optimism of several students at the beginning of the semester was rooted in a belief that society has the potential to change in a positive direction. For example, Eighteen declared, "I see myself as hopeful[;] I believe that we can fix problems in the world if we took the time."

Similarly, Twenty expressed a belief that the society could be changed for the better, stating, "I

see the world as a work in progress and subject to change. By this statement alone, I guess I

would consider myself more hopeful than cynical..." Student Thirteen suggested that being

hopeful requires effort, but saw the possibility of individual and social change as cause for

optimism:

> I try to remain optimistic by keeping the potential for social change in mind as I
> work towards creating a better society…Overall, I am relatively hopeful that
> people are becoming more accepting and working towards societal and global
> change.

Although Thirteen does not necessarily provide a resounding endorsement of optimism, she

landed on the side of hope because she saw the potential for change. Similarly, Twenty-Six, too,

saw the possibility of social change as reason to be more positive:

> … I'm more hopeful than cynical. History has shown that the world hasn't
> changed all too much in regards to overarching themes, but I don't rule out the
> possibility that all of a sudden the world can truly change in a more radical way.

Thirty-One presented the hope for change as essential for her outlook and existence:

> I believe that I am a hopeful person…I believe that everyone has a soft spot and
> every person has room to grow and learn from some aspect of life. I think that
> hope is what gets us through the day and helps us look forward to tomorrows… I
> still have hope for the world and I believe that there is a more consensus positive/
> hopeful mindset in the world that outweighs the bad.

Finally, Forty-Four also felt hopeful about the possibility of social change. Unlike those who

found reason for cynicism in their sociology courses, however, she attributed her positive

outlook to an introductory sociology course:

> I see myself as hopeful. I believe that any small action can make a change, big or
> little. If I [were] asked this question two years ago, I would've stated that I am
> cynical. Two years ago, I graduated from high school, had no idea what I wanted
> to major [in], and was closed minded. My sophomore year…I took Intro to

126

Sociology. I feel that taking this class open[ed] my mind and created a positive active mindset.

For these students, it is apparent that their optimism is founded on a belief that social change is indeed possible. Their hopefulness grows out of their views of the world as changeable or as a place where the good outweighs the bad. This suggests, therefore, that these students might have had the beginnings of a transformative habitus, or an outlook that see the potential for alterations in the social world (Mills 2008a) or one's own situation.

Hopefulness Is a Decision

Of those students who identified themselves as hopeful, a few noted their intentional decision to be hopeful and positive instead of cynical. For example, Sixteen declared:

I am far more hopeful than cynical. I like to look at the positive side, hoping for the best-case scenario in every situation that I face or analyze. Why? I'm not too sure why. I guess it is because I would rather look that bright side then be negative and cynical.

Similarly, Thirty-seven painted a glowing picture of the world, resisting its negative side:

I view the world as a beautiful place[;] at least that's the mindset I have of the universe. I view the world as a beautiful place because I admire being [present] on earth and I am blessed to be alive and being able to love others and nature[.] I admire the creativity that surrounds me [and] also the positivity I see in others as well…Although the world has corruption and hatred I try to not allow that to empower the way I view the world.

Additionally, Forty-Five declared her choice: "I will always be hopeful based on my goals and my values," while Forty-Two went as far as to condemn cynicism as the easier path:

Cynical people (in my mind) have become complacent, because it is easy to be angry at the world to an extent that seems like nothing will ever change and this is how things will always be; this mindset requires little to no effort. This idea suggests it is possible that people are cynical because it helps remove the blame from themselves and place it anywhere else. If we believe we are completely

127

removed from the situation, we can hold onto the idea that we play no part in the unjust, so ultimately, there is absolutely nothing we can do to help.

It is almost as if Forty-Two had read the theoretical framework for the present study for herself. She, along with the others who saw hopefulness and optimism as an intentional decision, appears to see the world through a transformative lens, challenging the constraining power of iteration (Emirbayer and Mische 1998) and the reproductive habitus (Bourdieu 1990b; Mills 2008a). One might argue that to choose hopefulness requires an exertion of agency that encourages and broadens the possibility for projectivity, or plans for future action (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

In review, defining oneself as entirely hopeful or optimistic about society and social change was less common than describing oneself as cynical in the student writings at the beginning of the semester. A few students who identified themselves as hopeful did so based on their belief that the social world could be changed in a positive direction, while others presented their optimism as rooted in their choice to reject cynicism. These examples tentatively suggest that a small number of students entered the CAI course leaning toward a more transformative view of society, seeing the social world as changeable and cynicism as something to be rejected. A goal of the CAI course was therefore to support these students in their further movement on the spectrum toward a transformative habitus (Mills 2008a).

Swinging on the Pendulum Between Cynicism and Hope

A significant number of the students in the CAI class identified themselves as both cynical and hopeful, or as Forty-Three described, "a hopeful cynic." The number of students who vacillated between the two outnumbered those who were entirely optimistic, but were less in

number than those who were entirely cynical. Here is a prime example of such an entry by

Student 10:

> I find myself swinging on a pendulum between cynical and idealistic. Sometimes
> I see the beauty and hope in the world, and I am inspired to take steps toward
> social change, and other times I despair. I feel hopeless and shattered, as if the
> current system is impossible for "someone like me" to even nudge toward the
> more equal or fair direction.

In a similar entry, Forty captured the vacillation of feeling by describing how she leaned toward

hopefulness while feeling the pull of cynicism and emphasizing the choice involved:

> Even though I see myself as being [a] hopeful person I would say there are some
> parts of me that I would consider to be cynical. I say that because I can identify
> with some of the points in the cycle of cynicism, such as feeling sad and
> powerless, so even with my hope sometimes I am pulled towards being cynical
> because it is the easiest route to choose[;] hope isn't always the easiest [decision]
> to make.

Student Four too defined herself as "stuck" between cynicism and hopefulness:

> I would consider myself as stuck in between the cycle of cynicism and the cycle
> of hope. I see myself [as a cynic] because I do see the problems that are occurring
> in our world, it upsets me, yet I tend to almost ignore them because I do not see
> how else I could help. It is such an unfortunate way of thinking yet I do find
> myself caught up in my personal life and shutting out my awareness of these
> issues. This truly saddens me as I really sit down and think about it. However, I
> would also consider myself hopeful because I do hope for a better world and have
> created a vision of what it would be like based on my values. I also have
> connected with myself and given myself a goal to act within my own values in
> hope that if I am a good person in society, others will learn to join me as well.

In the writings of the students who vacillated between cynicism and hopefulness, there are

repeats of the themes noted above, such as feeling overwhelmed by the problems in society and

the view of hope as a decision to be made. The marked difference of these students, however, is

that they found themselves torn between two mindsets. Drawing on the theoretical framework,

one might suggest they found themselves pulled between a reproductive and a transformative

outlook, unable to settle on either end of the spectrum.

<u>Context Matters</u>

For most of the students in this category, they noted that their feelings shifted according

to context. For example, a few students expressed hope about the future, but cynicism about

general circumstances in the present or the past. First, Forty-Eight believed social change was

possible, but was discouraged by how people presently behave:

> We can fix all of these problems that are occurring every day. However, I do not
> know if I am hopeful or cynical. I'd like to be hopeful that one day we will have
> no more wars, no more crime or no more hate towards each other but I know that
> will never be true if we keep on acting as we are today…As the textbook states
> "every situation that has been created by humans can be changed [by] humans."
> This passage gives me a little hope that our world is changeable because we have
> already changed it more than we think.

Forty-three felt similarly, yet found hope in the work of social activists:

> I'd consider myself a hopeful cynic. Where I hope there's a better future in store,
> I see the current trend and doubt very likely the right things will be done. Yet I
> still know some activists are out there fighting the good, hard fight.

Present day events also affected Seven's outlook: "It's weird because I consider myself both a

cynic and an optimist[;] it just depends on what has happened recently in the world." Second,

while the three previous entries express concern about the present, Three felt her hopefulness

was hampered, not by "rotten apples," but by past injustices in society:

> No matter how many books are written, protests demonstrated, policies changed,
> knowledge dispersed, there will be those who refuse to acknowledge the changes.
> The rotten apples don't ruin the bunch, contrary to the popular saying. Just
> because those people exist doesn't mean better ones don't. Because of that, I see
> myself as a both a hopeful and cynical individual….I'm hopeful for the future of

our world, but cynical about the past. How do you even make up for the wrongs
that have been done?

Third, context is also provided by one's own response to a particular situation. Student Two saw her personal response to social problems as shaping her general outlook: "I also think I am both cynical and hopeful because sometimes I try to push for change while other times I may disregard the fact that there are bad situations happening in the world." In this case, feeling either cynical or hopeful depends on whether one engages in social action or not.

For these students, context matters in determining whether they feel cynical or optimistic. Focusing on the present frustrations, past injustices, and one's own lack of response to a social issue in a given moment generated discouragement, yet that was counterbalanced by a hope for the future, when things could be better and one might take action to cause change. The sentiments shared by the students help reveal the complexity of their outlooks, as they demonstrate that cynicism and hopefulness are based on views of the past, present, and the future. Such a temporal element is an important consideration for agency, as Emirbayer and Mische (1998) note. This suggests that, to better understand the reproductive and transformative habitus, the importance of social history, present circumstances, and expectations about the future should not be overlooked.

Drawing Distinctions

Adding to the richness of the discussion, sometimes students drew a distinction, finding themselves hopeful about one aspect of society, but cynical about another. For example, while hopeful about individuals, Five felt cynical about humanity as an entity:

> I do my best to be hopeful. When it comes to individuals, I'm generally optimistic about people. I give most people the benefit of the doubt, and I'm not often disappointed…I do my best to promote positive social change, but I remain cynical about humanity as a whole. I can't help feeling that there's significant active opposition to positive change.

As another example, Thirty-Three drew a distinction between the general desire for change and its implementation:

> Personally, I think that I see myself as both cynical and hopeful. I'd like to think that I am optimistic that many factors in society can change. The ideas are certainly there; enough people have voiced opinions about it (in class as well) that suggest there is a current of sorts that is gaining momentum regarding a change in society. There have even been progressive movements that have changed, albeit slowly, over the years. I'm optimistic about the thirst for change, but I am cynical about the execution of it.

Thus, in a manner like those who based their feelings of both cynicism and hope on the context in which they found themselves, these students found their reasons for pessimism and optimism to be dependent on how they defined aspects of society.

To conclude this section, the vacillation of students between cynicism and hopefulness raises an interesting point for consideration. These entries indicate that students' views of the social world are not fixed. This is not simply a matter of students being indecisive. The oscillation is often in response to the context in which students find themselves or their temporal interpretation of the social world. It calls to mind Bourdieu's (1990a:116) claim that the habitus is "endless transformed, either in a direction that reinforces it…or in a direction that transforms." The perspectives provided here provide provisional evidence for the theoretical claim that the habitus is not fixed as either reproductive or transformative. Instead, it may straddle both types of outlooks and shift according to context; this begins to complicate the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. For these students then, the goal of the CAI course was

to assist them in moving toward the transformation of their outlook instead of reinforcing their reproductive outlook.

<u>If They Are Cynical, Why Did They Take the Class?</u>

The largest percentage of students in the CAI course defined themselves as cynical or pessimistic about the social world. A lesser number of students defined themselves as vacillating between cynicism and hopefulness. Identification as wholly optimistic was the least common response. This is somewhat surprising, because one might expect the students who elect to enroll in a CAI course to feel optimistic toward the social world. Indeed, as the results of the pre-course survey (see Chapter 4) demonstrate, these students had, as a rule, seldom felt discouraged, overwhelmed or indifferent due to the topics and discussions in their introductory sociology class, and in addition, they had often desired to engage in social activism and work for positive social change. If one recalls, however, that despite their identification and alignment with the discussions in their introductory sociology course, these same students had lower scores regarding their optimism and their feelings about the potential for social change (in direct response to the introductory sociology course), it makes more sense. In addition, if one considers the reasons students gave on the pre-course survey for taking the CAI course, the intricacies of students' decisions to enroll in the course become a bit clearer. Many of the students indicated that they took the class to increase their sociological understanding leading to social action, find a pathway to positive social change, or meet a specific need related to their social engagement.

Together, therefore, these findings allow one to begin to theorize about the distances, or discrepancies, among feeling and belief and action. First, some students, perhaps those with

outlooks toward the reproductive end of the habitus spectrum, may have enrolled in the CAI course because they hoped to bridge the distance between their cynical feelings about the social world and their belief that it was possible to change a better world. Second, other students, perhaps those who had already begun their progression toward a transformative outlook, may have aimed to shrink the gap between their belief in the potential for positive social change and their own recognition of and engagement in opportunities to work towards and realize that change. With these results, it becomes possible to infer that a significant number of the students who took the CAI class hoped to either shift their own outlook toward a greater optimism in the potential for social change or discover ways through which they could personally begin to realize their desire for a better world. Or, perhaps they desired to do both. Turning now to the students' beliefs about the potential for the social world to change will help to further illuminate the reasoning around such an inference.

<p style="text-align:center;">The Social World: Fixed, Fragile, or Both?</p>

Early in the semester, in addition to identifying themselves as cynical or hopeful, the students in the CAI course were asked to define the world as either fixed or fragile. The term "fixed" indicates that society is generally immovable, as structural intransigence makes it difficult for the individual to cause social change. The term "fragile," in this case, means society is open to change and able to be influenced by the exertion of personal agency. This activity was intended to further uncover whether the students had a reproductive or a transformative outlook on society (Mills 2008s). With the results from the previous section and the nature of the CAI course, it is safe to conclude that, in general, the students in this class saw the social world as in

need of positive change. This section, therefore, will investigate the extent to which the students thought such alteration was possible.

During the first days of the semester, students read and discussed a small section of *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (Enloe 2014:34-36). In this passage, Enloe encourages us as readers to see ourselves as actors, not passive subjects, in a global society that may be "more fragile and open to radical change than we have been led to imagine" (Enloe 2014:36). In other words, Enloe deems the actions of individuals as consequential. Class discussion revolved around Enloe's (2014:35) suggestion that we, as actors, might be "complicit in creating the very world that [we find] so dismaying." Similar to the cycles of hope and cynicism in Jones and colleagues (2007), this reading and discussion provided a frame within which the students could address the question, "How do you see the world? Is it fragile or fixed?" The sensitizing terms that guided the initial coding that gave rise to this category were suggested by this frame, and included variations of "fixed," "fragile," "change," "unchangeable," "progress," "evolve," and "interconnected." These terms tied directed to the theoretical framework concerning reproduction and transformation, as they served to indicate the extent to which students had a fatalistic outlook or, alternatively, an ability to see possibilities which invite agency.

The Social World Is Fixed

Even though the largest percentage of the students in the CAI course felt cynical about the social world in general, not one student saw the world as entirely fixed, or beyond change or the influence of individuals. This is an interesting consideration because if students see society as fragile and open to the intervention and agency of individuals, it is more probable they have or

135

will develop a transformative perspective on social action (Mills 2008a). Given that such a small percentage of the students defined themselves as entirely optimistic in the same journal entry, however, it is somewhat surprising that an overwhelming majority of the students expressed at least some belief in the fragility of the social world. One might have expected cynicism to grow out of a view of the world as unchangeable. Thus, an important distinction arises. This outcome suggests that students feel society can change, but they are less sure of their personal ability to facilitate that change. Or, put more simply, just because the social world can change does not mean that it necessarily will; it also may not change in the manner students might want it to. Nor does it mean that the students feel equipped or able to cause the change. Therefore, the distance between desire and action remains significant. As we shall see, this further complicates the theorization of the reproductive/transformative habitus.

The World is Fragile

In their early writings, the largest percentage of students found the social world to be markedly fragile and emphasized their belief in the potential for social change. Student Twenty succinctly captured her view of the social world as fragile, stating: "I see the world as a work in progress and subject to change." Similarly, Seven emphasized fragility over any feelings of helplessness generated by structural intransigence:

> I feel like the world is fragile. It's very easy to look at the world and think that it's fixed and that you can't change anything, but then I think of how we're supposed to feel that way. There are structures in place to make us feel isolated and helpless. But the truth is that if people are able to recognize that, and understand these structures we can change things.

Forty-Two added a moral element to her view of society as changeable:

> I see the world as fragile; I believe the quote from the [PowerPoint] on Tuesday holds a lot of truth. As a whole, the world seems like too vast and too large of a system to change; the idea of tackling change on a scale that large is extremely overwhelming. However, I feel that "good" will always prevail because "evil" is more often than not synonymous with "unsustainable."

Apart from the above examples, the students who defined the world as fragile in their early writings relied on history and the interconnected nature of society in making their case.

Just Look at History

History provided encouragement for some students who found societal change in the past to be a harbinger of society's continued evolutionary potential. For example, Eleven simply stated, **"**I see the world as a fragile thing. The world has changed drastically since the known start and continues to change." Similarly, Fourteen drew on specific examples to note, "I see the world as fragile because looking back in history[,] things have changed for the better. Things such as women's right to vote, and the abolition of slavery. I think the world can be changed," while Twenty-Nine stated confidently, "The world is always changing and even though social change takes a long time, this fragile world can be changed." Likewise, despite the slowness of progress, Nine believed emphatically that society was changing for the better:

> As we've discussed in class, the world is always evolving in terms of social change but the process isn't always a speedy one. A great example of this slow process is equality in our country; black Americans, women, and Muslims are all still facing discrimination today, and that's only naming a few. I often feel frustrated because of this reality, but the important take-away is that the world *is* changing regardless of the how long it's taking and it's definitely not fixed in its ways.

These views indicate that several students in the CAI course drew on progress of the past as reason to see the social world as changeable. They offered previous examples of social

movements aimed at equality as evidence that positive change is possible. This suggests that it can be helpful for students to be able to draw on examples from the past for encouragement about the present and the future, giving them points of reference from which they can draw encouragement, ideas, and hope, and form positive expectations about social change and their role in it. This finding gave credence to the CAI course goal to provide students with multiple examples of how people engage in the work of social change. Such knowledge can provide students with additional schema to draw upon in their own agentic processes (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

It Is All Connected

Some students emphasized the interconnected nature of society as proof that the social world is fragile and open to change. For example, noting the lasting impact of the actions of the individual, Forty-One concluded, "Personally, I would say that the world is very fragile. Every action that we decide to make leaves its mark." Comparably, Nineteen found that the actions of one person can impact many others, which can cause society to evolve:

> I see the world as a very fragile place…that is easily affected but progresses slowly. As a child I would always think about the connections that I had with other people, and the connections those people had with more people and so on. Essentially the way that I impact one person can impact tens, hundreds or even thousands of people. I have heard so many stories about a friend of a friend of a friend. This shows how interconnected we really are with the rest of the world. Although it may seem like the world is a very fixed, set in its ways place, I truly believe that it has the capability to evolve and be molded.

In much the same way, Thirty-Six presented the effects of daily decisions as evidence for the fragility and interconnectedness of society:

How do I see the world? I see the world as extremely fragile. Every decision we make each and every day impacts the world we see around us. Even something as simple as looking up when you're walking down the sidewalk and saying hi to people as they walk by or even just a simple smile in their direction could make a huge impact on people's days. Now don't forget the larger impacts we make every day that contribute to helping keep our beautiful Earth clean. For instance[,] what we drive, what we eat, where we live, clothes we buy, how much we run our air conditioning in the summer. All of these little daily decisions impact the world more than we know. I think that people don't see it all the time because it is a slower process. We only see…impacts that happen immediately before our eyes.

Finally, Thirty-Three demonstrated the fragility of society by showing economic links, drawing on the class discussion of bananas:

I firmly believe that the world is fragile. Everything depends on something else. The economy depends on the consumers. The consumers depend on the workforce. The workforce depends on its employees. The employees for the workforce are the same consumers that can shift the economy if they so desired. Actually, what comes to mind is the example of the bananas. If families in America decide to only buy fair trade bananas, it will affect thousands of lives in another part of the country. Lives we have never known or met, nor will ever likely know. Yet the delicate balance of the economy relies on the consistency of its buyers. Break the consistency, and you can (theoretically) break the system.

The students who viewed the world as interconnected, ranking individual actions as consequential, presented a picture of the social world as fragile and open to human intervention. They also included themselves in the discussion, using "we" as they mentioned actions that could potentially change the social world. This type of thinking suggests that these students had, to some extent, a transformative outlook, as they saw the world as changeable, and in some cases, they suggested a path through which such change might be realized, from a smile to a boycott of bananas. They were also able to engage with the projective and practical evaluative elements of their agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

139

<u>I Paid Attention in Class</u>

It must be kept in mind that the students might have been influenced by class discussion of the Enloe passage; the preceding reference to a class discussion on bananas exemplifies this possibility. One might argue that different results may have arisen if students had written their responses beforehand. The decision was made to assign the entry after the class discussion so that everyone would operate within the same frame regarding the terms "fragile" and "fixed." Coding revealed that several students referenced the CAI course directly in expressing their view of society as fragile or fixed, finding themselves, as a result of the class, leaning toward a view of the world as changeable. For example, Twenty-Eight noted:

> Previously before the start of this course I would argue that the world is fix[ed] to a certain extent, however the few weeks I have spent in this class I can now say that the world is moderately fragile.

Student One also directly referenced the impact of the Enloe reading and the class discussion on her view of society:

> I 100% see the world as a fragile place…My view of the world as being a fragile place was strengthened after our class meeting…when we were discussing the ramifications of eating bananas. It is astounding to me how little effort it would take for a group of people, albeit an enormous number of people, to create such a drastic change in the world…if only we could all come together for the greater good….The quote from the book "*Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*", by Cynthia Enloe, that [the professor] put forth on the PowerPoint presentation from the same class on 9/6/16, really resonated with me. "…this seemingly overwhelming world system may begin to look more fragile and open to radical change than we have been led to imagine." The world changes, grows, and evolves on a daily basis; so[,] the thought that I once had of the world being an "unchangeable" place, seems a bit silly to me now. And I'm happy about that revelation! ☺

From these comments, it is evident that students felt they had already been influenced by the class discussion and reading, within just a few weeks of the CAI course. One might argue that that the class discussion might have caused a social desirability bias, where no student wanted to

say the world was entirely fixed and impervious to change because it was not the "appropriate" response. It is important to note, however, if this were the case, one must question why the students did not also label themselves as overwhelmingly optimistic after the class discussion of the cycles of cynicism and hope (Jones et al 2007). Because the students initially addressed cynicism/hopefulness and fixed/fragile in the same journal entry, if social desirability bias were present, it would likely have affected both topics. As the results demonstrate, this was not the case. In fact, these results may provide further evidence of an importance nuance: a student's belief that the social world is fragile does not necessarily negate a cynical outlook about the potential that it will indeed change. Also, further considering social desirability bias, it is unlikely that the students who took the class believed the social world to be unchangeable, and perhaps the early readings simply gave them words and examples through which they could articulate their views.

The ability to see the social world as fragile is arguably an important component in the development of a transformative view of society. If students can see the potential for change within society, they will be better situated to begin engaging in that work themselves. This became apparent in the above quotations where students began to picture themselves as part of the "we" that could help cause social change and suggest social actions that might alter society. These results indicate that, even if the students overall were not particularly optimistic about the realization of a better society, a significant percentage of them viewed the social world as open to intervention and change. Given Mills's (2008a; 2008b) theorization, this may be interpreted to suggest the simultaneous existence of a reproductive and a transformative habitus in the students. Further, it may provide further evidence of the complexities underlying the theorization of the

141

habitus, evincing indicators such as feelings and beliefs that must be accounted for in any

attempt to better understand the potential for education to shift students toward a transformative

outlook. The potential for discrepancies between feelings about society in general and beliefs

regarding its ability to change must be taken into account, complicating the theorization and

making the determination about a student's habitus, particularly as to whether it is reproductive

or transformative, more difficult than previously thought.

The World is Both, Fixed and Fragile

Over one-third of the students echoed the thoughts of Student Two who stated, "I think

that the world is both fragile and fixed." This aligns with the tendency of the students in the CAI

course to self-define as both cynical and hopeful, as noted in the previous section. The decision

to term the world as both fixed and fragile generally does not appear to be an attempt to avoid

making a choice. Instead, it reflected an awareness of the agency/structure debate, even though

the students generally did not use those terms.

Let's Play Jenga

Perhaps nothing captured the fragile/fixed debate with more clarity than one student's

analogy using the game Jenga. Student Twenty-Four wrote:

> The world from my point of view is a massively interconnected stacking of
> systems. If I can use a bad analogy, it would be like a Jenga tower, a tall heavy
> Jenga tower. Historically whatever great empire or power is in charge keeps
> pulling from the Jenga tower and stacking it higher and higher to reach more as an
> empire or kingdom until you over reach, you pull too quickly and the
> tower/empire falls. Then you start over with new Jenga tower and build and pull
> at those system[s] again. From the outside[,] it appears fixed but the more you
> move and change and mess with it the easier it is to topple the more fragile it
> becomes. It functions like the diagram of the woman surrounded by the macro

142

systems as you become more aware of it you realize how fragile it can be. This isn't to say change is easy by any means. Society is still a massive, heavy, and dense Jenga tower. It's difficult to move one block on your own, near impossible even.

Similarly, other students also noted the fixedness of social structure as dampening the potential for social change, but left some space for alteration to occur. For example, Sixteen revealed:

If I am being honest, I see the world as both fragile and fixed. Mainly fragile, but when I am feeling especially discouraged by the institutions that are already in place in this society I feel as if it is fixed.

Student Eight saw both fragility and fixedness in the social world:

… I feel as though the world is both fixed and fragile. There are many aspects in life that each individual human being has the ability to change but there are other aspects in life that will remain the same for years and years to come and may never change. Some things can be cracked and rebuilt where others are set in stone.

Student Ten also found the world to be fragile, but proposed that some things resist revision, and thus, change takes effort and time:

I see the world (holistically) as fragile. I find that revolutions, rebellions, and innovation are relatively effective on a large scale given enough time. However, a more "micro" view of society would reveal that certain things are fixed. Policy is difficult to change, and social norms take time and effort to redefine. Social movements take decades, and even then[,] they are not necessarily as effective as they set out to be.

Finally, similar to a number of students who defined the world as wholly fragile, Thirteen saw the interconnectedness of society as the key to change in a social world. Diverging from her classmates, however, she still believed that the social world is quite difficult to alter:

The world is mostly fixed in my opinion, in that once precedents are set, it is difficult to overcome the static mindsets that plague the world. While one must work to make a change, society is also fragile in many respects. For example, one person protesting the inequality against women can lead to more people grasping the concept and will eventually lead to societal change. Everything in the world is

connected in some way even if it is miniscule. With this in mind, a single action
can lead to a domino effect that can change an aspect of the world.

Therefore, the students who viewed the world as simultaneously fixed and fragile often reached

their conclusion by drawing on the structure/agency dichotomy. They recognized both structural

intransigence and individual agency, even if they did not always have the sociological terms at

their disposal to describe it.

The students' comments that define the world as concurrently open and impervious to

intervention might arguably be those that most closely align with sociological perspective. They

present perhaps the most measured and practical response to the discussion of social change,

recognizing its possibility along with its limitations. Attempting to determine if this combination

suggests a reproductive or a transformative outlook is difficult. Does the sociological perspective,

with its recognition of structural intransigence, indicate a reproductive outlook? Or, given its

recognition of personal agency, does it indicate a transformative habitus? Because the

development of the sociological perspective is the goal of sociological education, these questions

emerge as highly relevant and they introduce additional complexity in the theorization.

People Are the Wild Card

Other students grappled with the role of people in determining the possibility of social

change. For example, Three believed society could be changed, yet decided there would always

be conflict because there are people who are power- or money-hungry:

> We live in a world that is centered on ideas as easily cracked as an eggshell. The
> principles that many people, groups, and even countries, base their ideologies on
> are easily broken down…With that being said, our world is fixed in a way that
> creates inevitable problems for people to endure. Someone is always going to
> want power, money, influence, and they're going to want it at the expense of

someone else. There is always inevitably conflict because there is always something new to want, new technologies, territory to want, conflicting views worldwide. As great as it would be for the entire world to come to a realization all at once that allows every individual to understand and accept every other individual for who they are, it won't happen.

Similarly, Twenty-Six further explored humanity as the key component in defining the world as either fragile or fixed:

Frankly, I see the world as fixed, but only to an extent. The way I see it, the world changes, but humanity does not. Instead, when the world changes, people simply make lateral shifts in order to accommodate for the new settings and factors that surround them. Racism, for example, is still just as prevalent today as it was in the twentieth century, it simply manifests itself in different ways. Change comes from the people, but if the people have remained the same, how is any change supposed to occur?

Likewise, Fifty-Two contemplated the role of people in the fragility and fixedness of the social world:

Some aspects of the world are fragile; a ticking time bomb if you will, while other parts of the world are fixed in their beliefs and way of life. You cannot force people to think or act a certain way. Everyone needs to be able to decide for themselves what's best even if you do not agree with it. In this instance, the world can be a fixed place with people set in their stubborn ways. Not only is the world fixed, but it is also fragile. The littlest things can set people off. If someone keeps pushing and pushing until another person can't take it anymore, sooner or later that person is going to push back. It only takes one small thing to cause a giant ripple effect.

Finally, Twenty-One blamed people in "higher positions" for hindering social progress:

In my opinion, I feel like the world we live in today is fragile in some ways and fixed in others. Fragile is defined as easily broken or damaged therefore in reference to the world; it is delicate and vulnerable to adjustments. Alterations are put in place every day forcing our culture to constantly evolve. In the same breath, progression is hindered and sometimes ceased by those in higher positions causing the world to remain fixed….

Thus, people appear to be the wild card for some of the students in the CAI course. Their decisions and the resulting actions are seen to affect the fixedness or fragility of the social world.

These students propose that stubbornness, resistance, greed, and human nature in general dictate the extent to which the social world has and will change. This was an interesting finding because the students discussed the people as separate from themselves; in other words, they did not include themselves in the discussion. In defining society as both changeable and immutable, they projected negative or hostile actions onto others instead of considering their own role.

To recap this section, unlike those who described the social world as wholly fragile, a significant number of students defined the social world as both fragile and fixed. Their conclusions noted the fixedness of social institutions while leaving open the possibility for change, although it would likely require a great deal of time and effort. Students in this category also drew on their views of humanity to surmise that social change is indeed possible, but difficult. Their writings indicate an understanding of the complexity of the difficulties associated with social change, and they avoided overly simplistic explanations.

<u>Society Can Change, So What?</u>

The largest percentage of students in the CAI course defined the social world as entirely fragile, or open to change. A lesser number of students described society as both fixed and fragile. This group comprised over one-third of the class. Conversely, not a single student defined the social world as entirely fixed, or immune to social action aimed at social change. Therefore, to some degree, all the students indicated their belief that the social world can and does change. Whether it is the interconnectedness of society, the examples of history, an endorsement of human agency, or a response to class discussion, the students found reason enough to believe that, even if it seems slow and tedious, social change does take place.

It makes sense that the students who elected to take the CAI course believed that the social world can be changed; one would expect that if they believed the social world to be immutable, they would have been unlikely to enroll in such a class. In fact, this perspective aligned with a few of the reasons they gave on the pre-course survey for enrolling in the course. Particularly, their desires to increase their sociological understanding leading to social action, to find their respective place in making society better, and to meet a specific need related to their social engagement support the finding that they believed the social world to be changeable, otherwise, they would be unlikely to concern themselves with such things.

It is less clear whether such a belief is indicative of a reproductive or a transformative habitus. Generally, the reproductive habitus is associated with an individual's inability to recognize the potential for social change, while the transformative habitus sees possibilities for change or alternative outcomes (Mills 2008a). Within this framework, one might assume that the students in the CAI course must have the makings of a transformative habitus already in the works because they all saw the social world as changeable. It seems important, therefore, to consider that there is a gap between believing the social world to be changeable in general and seeing the opportunities and alternatives as personal, available, and attainable to oneself. As Mills (2008b:83) notes, an indication of the development of a thoroughly transformative habitus is the ability to "*make things happen.*" Therefore, the students can see the social world as changeable, but if they doubt that positive change will materialize due to their initiative, this belief fails to be fully transformative. It is more abstract than concrete. Simply believing that the social can change does not equate to an expectation that it will, nor does it necessarily indicate an absence of fatalism. Students may fail to see possibilities to personal engage or work to realize

147

such change. These findings reveal that beliefs may be important indicators in the theorization of reproductive and transformative habitus. One must consider, however, the difference between an abstract belief (the social world can change and improve) and a concrete and more personalized belief (I can do X, Y, and Z to change society) to better understand and make determinations regarding the existence of a reproductive or transformative habitus.

<u>Uncovering Indicators: Feeling, Belief, and Action</u>

This chapter provided an overview of findings from the qualitative research of student writings early in the semester. Particularly, coding gave rise to two main categories, which together uncover how the students in the CAI course viewed the social world in the first days of the class. In the first category, students described themselves as either cynical, hopeful, or both, and they provided justification for their feelings. In the second category, the students defined the social world as either fragile or both fragile and fixed; again, they provided reasons for their categorization. Together, these two categories capture students' feelings about society and their beliefs regarding its ability to change.

The results are highly relevant in light of the theoretical framework for the present research. First, the largest percentage of students in the CAI course described themselves as feeling partially or entirely cynical about the social world; by comparison, the number of students who identified themselves as wholly optimistic was quite low. This suggests that there was a general feeling of disillusionment among the students; even of the several students who expressed a hopeful outlook, a significant number tempered it with pessimism. Cynicism clearly emerged as a block for some students. Combined with the results of the pre-course survey, one

can tentatively conclude that the students who elected to enroll in the CAI course might have done so in hopes of overcoming such a feeling; this also suggests that such a course must be attentive to this issue. Second, in a finding that, on the surface, appears counterintuitive to the previous one, all the students in the course believed that the social world is fragile, or changeable to some degree. Not one student saw the social world as entirely fixed, or immutable, which suggests that, in general, the students accepted and believed in the process or possibility of positive social change. Although some students tempered their beliefs with a significant degree of hesitancy by noting several things, including structural intransigence and human nature, that, in their opinions, stymied social change and caused some aspects of the social world to remain fixed, they did not divert from a belief in the potential for change. Combined with previous results, this suggests that the students who enrolled in the CAI course may have hoped to find pathways though which they could help bring about the change they believed to be possible, which in turn might serve to challenge their feelings of cynicism and strengthen their hope.

The results thus raise an important distinction between students' feelings of cynicism or hopefulness and their beliefs regarding the fragility or fixedness of the social world. Upon close inspection, these two results are not necessarily in contradiction. First, together, they reveal a distance between students' feelings about the social world and their beliefs regarding the potential for a better society. For example, it is intuitive that students can <u>feel</u> cynical about the world *and* <u>believe</u> that the social world is fixed, or immutable; such a feeling and belief seem to go together, and the discrepancy between them seems minimal. This might suggest the presence of what Mills (2008s) describes as a reproductive habitus. Alternatively, a student might also feel hopeful about the social world and believe it can be changed. This might suggest the presence of

what Mills (2008s) describes as a transformative habitus. It is also possible, however, as these students show, to feel cynical about the social world (i.e. "I don't want to live on this planet anymore") and yet believe that the social world is fragile, or open to human intervention and positive change. In this case, the discrepancy between feeling and belief seems much greater. It raises questions about how this dynamic combination of feeling and belief affects a student's outlook; is this, for example, symptomatic of a reproductive habitus, or does it suggest that a step has been taken toward a transformative habitus (Mills 2008a)? This discussion is further complicated when one delineates belief into abstract and concrete categories. What if students feel optimistic about society and believe the social world can be changed for the better, yet do not believe they personally can facilitate or engage in such change? Is this a reproductive or a transformative outlook? Such nuances complicate the theorization.

Thus, as noted above, these results indicate the importance of uncovering the complexities that feeling, belief (both abstract and concrete), and action bring to the reproductive and transformative habitus. Together, these findings begin to uncover some complexities in the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. The writings of the students discussed above indicate that there may be marked discrepancies between feeling and belief, between feeling and action, and between belief (abstract or concrete) and action, and to use any one indicator to define a student's habitus as reproductive or transformative may be problematic. This is particularly relevant in light of the overall aim of this research to determine if this CAI course served to move students away from a reproductive habitus, where there is significant discrepancies among these three elements: feeling, belief, and thoughtful/intentional action aimed at social change, and instead shift students toward a transformative habitus, where the

150

three perhaps align more closely. The next chapter will shed additional light on the students'

feelings toward and beliefs about social change, uncovering another level of frustrations and

blocks that hampered these students in developing a transformative view of the social world. The

findings will add additional complexity to the interplay among feelings, beliefs, and actions,

which complicate the theorization of the dialectic of the reproductive and transformative habitus.

CHAPTER SIX: TRAPPED ON THE BOAT
EXPLORING CONSTRAINING THOUGHT PATTERNS

In addition to discussing their feelings about society in general and their beliefs regarding the fragility, or changeability, of the social world, the students in the Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course were asked to reflect upon their thought patterns, particularly those that constrained or discouraged their engagement in the work of social change. This self-reflection was facilitated and structured by an assigned reading and a class discussion revolving around that reading. Within the first few weeks of the semester, the students were asked to read a section entitled "The Ten Thought Traps" in *The Better World Handbook* (Ellis et al. 2007:4-12), where "thought traps" are defined as patterns of thinking that prevent people "from making a difference in the world." The thought traps include: (1) "That's just the way the world is," (2) "It's not my responsibility," (3) "One person cannot make a difference," (4) "I can't make enough of a difference to matter," (5) "This seems totally overwhelming," (6) "I don't have the time or energy," (7) "I'm not a saint," (8) "I don't know enough about the issues," (9) "I don't know where to begin," and (10) "I'm not an activist" (Ellis et al. 2007:4-12). These thought traps became the basis for a class discussion, and, in a journal entry, students were asked to consider whether or not they identified with any of the thought traps.

The reasoning behind this assigned reading and the subsequent journal prompt is found in the theoretical component of the present study. Patterns of thinking are central to the conceptualization of the habitus. Bourdieu (1990b) argues that these patterns guide individuals in their outlooks and actions. Generally, as both Bourdieu (1990b) and Mills (2008a) propose, the habitus is reproductive and fatalistic, and students tend see themselves as constrained or lacking

agency. Through the aforementioned thought traps, the students were given phrases and explanations of those phrases by which they could reflect on their own thought patterns regarding social action. In this way, the students were able to describe their perspectives on social action, or particularly, what inhibited their feelings of agency and kept them from getting involved in the efforts of social change. In other words, they could articulate frustrations and blocks that dampened their outlook on society and its potential for change. This, in turn, helps further expose the complexities within the paradigm of the reproductive and transformative habitus in relation to desires, feelings, beliefs, and action. Additionally, the findings discussed in this chapter help define the "hump" that sociological education struggles to traverse, where students leave action-oriented sociology courses, like this CAI class, unable to articulate or project a personal pathway for engagement in action aimed at social justice. In other words, the writings of the students in the CAI course can help determine with greater precision the thought patterns that constrained these students and prevented them from seeing the social world and their own agency through a transformative lens.

The use of the thought traps in the journal prompt gave students a standardized way to discuss what deters them (if anything) from engaging in social action. Therefore, this category arose from using the thought traps themselves (or a slight variation of them) as codes. The thought traps became a point of reference, as students periodically mentioned them later in the semester during class and in their writings. Students' use of the thought traps in their writings occurred by and large, however, in response to an early journal entry that asked, "Do any of the thought traps from *The Better World Handbook* resonate with you? Which ones? Why?" as part of the prompt. Given the confines of space, the decision was made to here discuss seven of the

ten thought traps, focusing on those most commonly cited by students. Specifically, "This seems totally overwhelming," and "I don't know where to begin" will be considered together. Additionally, five thought traps, "One person cannot make a difference," "I can't make enough of a difference to matter," "That's just the way the world is," "I'm not a saint," and "I am not an activist" will be considered together in the second section of this chapter. Together, these seven thought traps appeared to have been very useful in leading students in self-reflection about their social involvement. Additionally, they helped to answer the exploratory research question: "How did the students in the CAI course generally view the social world and their personal agency?"

<div align="center">Overwhelmed and Lacking a Point of Embarkation</div>

The two thought traps that were mentioned most often by students were "This seems totally overwhelming," and "I don't know where to begin." They will here be discussed together, because the findings indicate that the students often intertwined the two in their journal entries. Jones and colleagues (2007:8-9) describe the thought trap, "This seems totally overwhelming," as the struggle individuals encounter when trying to align the desire to build a better social world with personal actions. This struggle can lead to frustration and feelings of hypocrisy as individuals try to engage in positive social change. They feel they cannot and do not do enough, which results in feeling overwhelmed, thereby reinforcing patterns of thought and action that help reproduce social problems instead of challenging or changing them. This ties directly to the thought trap, "I don't know where to begin." There seems to be so much to do and students might find it hard to determine how to get started in intentional action aimed at social change. Feeling overwhelmed by social issues can thus prompt one to feel uncertain as to where to begin,

<div align="center">154</div>

and vice versa. In such circumstances, transformative desire is likely to remain separate from transformative action.

"This Seems Totally Overwhelming"

A significant number of students in the CAI course focused specifically on the thought trap, "This seems totally overwhelming." In fact, in their early writings, students used this phrase to describe their own thought patterns about social change more than any other of the ten traps. In explaining the reason they choose this phrase, the students, without fail, referenced the expansiveness of social problems in their reasoning. This echoed the reasoning a number of the students gave for their cynical view of society, as noted in the previous chapter. Thus, the more they understood the vast and entrenched nature of social problems, the more likely the students were to feel cynical and overwhelmed, and this, in turn, inhibits their ability to ascertain a point of embarkation for their own course of social action. This serves as a reminder that the sociological perspective is not necessarily a catalyst for creating a positive or transformative outlook.

Students often expressed feeling overwhelmed by the vastness of social problems that need attention, and defined their own efforts as largely inadequate to cause any significant positive change. For example, Student Four captured the struggle of aligning individual actions with one's own values while attempting to live a socially conscious life. This struggle was heightened by an awareness of the extensive number of social problems, leading to those feelings of frustration and hypocrisy suggested by Jones and his colleagues (2007):

> The fifth thought trap that states[,] "this seems totally overwhelming[,]" resonates
> with me the most. I know a big part about making a drastic change is starting with

155

one's own life and changing one's own lifestyle. This to me is the hardest part because I do find it overwhelming at times and I do find myself living in contradiction to many of my values. For example, I am extremely against animal cruelty yet I find myself still buying my favorite makeup products that unfortunately are not cruelty-fee and I also find it impossible to go vegan or vegetarian. There are so many issues that I would like to contribute to fixing, but when I think of how I would be able to go about it and would make the most impact out of, I find it extremely overwhelming.

In her comments, Four also defined change as something "drastic," which may further discourage her from engaging in change-oriented action. Similarly, Fifty thought that her individual effort was not enough to change society, and suggested that even if she did more, it may not make a difference:

I feel like I can always do more, or truthfully, what I am doing is never enough, and even if I doubled or redoubled my efforts, how would I even know that it changes anything at all. With this in mind, I often feel really overwhelmed and under equipped to change the world.

In light of the vastness of social problems, Twenty-Nine too found it difficult to select a single social inequality to care about from among the many:

I can't speak for others, but I think this happens with everyone they care about issues and social injustices going on in the world, but the world is always changing and there is constant news and social injustices happening all over. It's hard to always keep focus on just one social inequality and sometimes it can get overwhelming.

Likewise, in a manner reminiscent of Hancock's (2007) "Oppression Olympics," Forty-Six questioned how to rank social issues in order to focus on those that are most important:

I also relate to trap #5, which is, "This seems totally overwhelming." There are multiple important issues in the world today that need our attention, but how do you decide which ones are more significant than others. I struggle with choosing which issues to pursue. Many topics are near and dear to my heart, and focusing on them all at once wouldn't be beneficial.

There are, for these students, too many social problems. This recognition rendered the students frustrated as they struggled to determine and embark on any course of action that might help solve even a single problem.

As a final example of how the overwhelming nature of social problems affected the students in the CAI course, this one is perhaps most poignant. The breadth of social problems caused Forty to question if change is even possible and therefore worth the effort, suggesting instead that ignoring the issues might be preferable to social awareness:

> There are many [thought] traps that I can identify with[;] the first one would have to be number 5 which is "This seems to be overwhelming." Sometimes social issues can seem so much bigger than I am that it makes me just want turn blinders on and say everything is okay and maybe I am just overreacting. Feeling overwhelmed just throws you into a sea of questions[,] like will things ever change? *Or is it even worth it?* (italics added)

In other words, perhaps it is better not to know and not to try. This quotation captures well the doom and gloom the sociological perspective can evoke in our students (Johnson 2005). Questions like "…will things ever change?" and "…is it even worth it?" signal both frustration and resignation. The students who wrote comments similar to those cited in this section in the early days of the semester felt overwhelmed by all the social issues, and despite caring about their society, they struggled to find what they could define as a fruitful path toward action. The result was a discrepancy between their desire for a better society and the recognition of any path toward any change-oriented action.

I Am So Overwhelmed, Where Do I Begin?

A number of students in the CAI course indicated that, upon reflection, they found themselves caught in two thought traps. They not only felt overwhelmed by the immensity of

157

social problems, they also found themselves unable to determine a point of entry by which they could begin to try to "make a difference." Or, perhaps more precisely, they could not find a starting place *because* they were overwhelmed, a sentiment Fourteen expressed:

> I do feel completely overwhelmed because [there are] so many problems out there and so many organizations. I feel I need to find the perfect one and either go big or go home. And I feel like where do I begin? This goes hand-to-hand with feeling overwhelmed. How do you start? And where do you start?

Similarly, several other students expressed that feeling overwhelmed linked clearly to their inability to discern a starting place from which they could enter into social action. For example, Thirteen found the interconnectedness of social issues difficult to unravel, making it hard to find an entry point for social change: "…[S]ocial change is too overwhelming to partake in. There are so many issues that are part of a larger web of inequality and injustice that it is very difficult to know where to begin to make a change." Likewise, Seven described the difficulty of choosing what issue to deal with and deciding where to begin:

> When we were going over the different thought traps there were a couple that I felt I have thought or tend to think of sometimes. The main one being: where do I start? I often feel like the reason why I might not be able to change anything is because I don't know where to begin. This I feel ties into the other thought trap that there is so much to deal with and it can be overwhelming. It's especially difficult to escape these thoughts when you feel so passionately about multiple issues. Intersectionality of course is the way to approach issues, it's important to understand how certain issues play into others. But I feel like it's hard to change everything at once, how do you determine what you focus on first? Why is any movement more or less important than the other? It's just a difficult dilemma to process.

Student Six, too, connected both thought traps as she defines social problems as cyclical and perpetual:

> …two other thought traps that goes hand in hand are "This seems totally overwhelming" and "I don't know where to begin". If I had to make a list of every problem that needed to be fixed in this world, I'd be an old woman on my

158

deathbed, still trying to finish the list. The reason why I say this is because as problems are fixed, more problems are created. To me, it is a never-ending cycle.

In other words, just listing the social problems that need to be solved is difficult, let alone beginning to address them. Even having resources such as time and money may not be enough for others who, like Twelve, felt overwhelmed just thinking about how to start social change and get results:

The biggest thing for me is that I do not know where to begin. Even if I had a group, the money and time I would not know how to start the change. I guess starting small would be [all right], but at the same time after giving all your time and energy into something you would want to see results. I know the basic things I would need but besides that I do not know anything else. Just thinking about everything is making it seem overwhelming, and maybe that is why some people don't try.

Finding a starting point to engage in the work of social change was of primary concern for the students in the CAI course at the beginning of the semester. As Thirty conceded, "To change the world, you have to know where to begin, and I don't know how to do that." Their inability to find a point of access, or a way into social action, caused frustration and even resignation, as Twenty-One conveyed:

The idea of not knowing where to begin is definitely an idea that holds me back from somewhat acting out on my beliefs because if orchestrating a means of making the world a better place, I would want it to go perfectly or precisely how I envision it. By not knowing my exact starting point, I would then become discouraged and I ultimately would no longer want to take action.

It appeared that for students in the CAI class such as these, the difficulty of determining exactly how and where to begin was both caused and heightened by the overwhelming breadth of social problems, and this in turn may have prompted them to enroll in the course. Thirty-Two captures this point, appearing hopeful that the CAI course would help guide her toward a starting point, or more specifically, an individualized plan of action:

> At the [beginning] of the semester, we discussed how it is important to find what plan of action works best for each of us. I think this will be super beneficial to me because I am often overwhelmed by how to have meaningful impact and end up doing less than I would if I could simply figure out what works best for me.

Cutting through the weightiness and extensiveness of social problems to discover a point of embarkation from which they could launch their social engagement was thus an important undertaking for a number of students enrolled in the CAI course.

To recap the findings of this section, in their early writings, a substantial number of students indicated that they felt overwhelmed by the vastness and interconnectedness of social problems. This made it difficult for them to select a single issue to which they could direct their efforts and feel as though they were making a difference. Additionally, a number of students described themselves as unable to find a starting place for social action; this often worked in tandem with feeling overwhelmed. These two thought traps thus appeared to be a lethal combination for a significant portion of the class at the beginning of the semester, generally minimizing their sense of agency. The students appeared to struggle to engage the projective element of their agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998), unable to see or suggest pathways for their engagement in action for social change. Similar to the discovery that prompted the research of Cornelius (1998:190), these students were unable to "compose a menu of tactics from which to choose" a starting place for their engagement. This combination of feeling overwhelmed and unable to identify a starting point discouraged them from taking action. Within the theoretical framework of this research, such feelings might indicate a reproductive outlook on society. Feeling overwhelmed does not necessarily negate a desire for society to be improved, however, nor does it render void the students' desire to play a part in that improvement. In fact, the preceding student comments generally suggest the opposite is true. This thus introduces the

question of how desire factors into the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. Desire alone is obviously not enough to suggest a transformative outlook on society, but arguably, without desire, change is unlikely. Therefore, it is important to now include desire as an indicator that, along with feeling, belief, and action, demonstrates the complexity of the dialectic of the reproductive and transformative habitus.

What Can One Person Do?

This section examines the findings for five thought traps including, "That's just the way the world is," "One person can't make a difference," and "I can't make enough of a difference to matter," "I am not a saint," and "I am not an activist" (Jones et al. 2007). The decision was made to group these five together based on their similarity and the tendency of the students to link them together in their writings early in the semester. Also, due to the manner in which Jones and colleagues (2007) present these thought traps, it makes sense to combine them. The thought trap, "That's just the way the world is," challenges the conceptualization of society as socially constructed, and it leads naturally to the two thought traps, "One person can't make a difference" and "I can't make enough of a difference to matter," for if students do not see society as socially constructed, the role of the individual in shaping society is, for them, greatly minimized. In this case, the individual becomes virtually powerless to challenge social inequalities and structural intransigence. This prompts a connection to the other two thought traps, "I am not a saint," and "I am not an activist," as the social activist, or a person who appears able to change society, is rendered an extraordinary individual, having perhaps inborn abilities or special talents that allow him or her to impact society to a greater degree than "ordinary people." Thus, even if students

believe that "one person can make a difference, in theory," (Jones et al. 2007:6), internalizing this notion to the point that they believe they can personally make a significant difference in the social world is even more difficult. In other words, though it might be possible for one person to make a difference, in the minds of students, such a person would have an extraordinary nature (or, in other words, the Nelson Mandelas or Mahatma Gandhis of the world) or position; alternatively, to believe the same about oneself may border on the Quixotic. Inborn abilities and/or extraordinary character becomes essential for change-oriented action, and students see themselves as lacking in both.

The relevance and connectivity of these three thought traps thus revolves around the social construction of society. If a student believes the social problems she sees are inevitable and simply essential aspects of human society, she may be less inclined to believe that she, or anyone else for that matter, is able to cause change in any meaningful way. On the other hand, if a student accepts that society is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966), or that, "Every situation that has been created by humans can be changed by humans," (Jones et al. 2007:4), the world can no longer be dismissed as "just that way," and the other thought traps must also then be called into question. Instead, the social world becomes a place that any individual is capable of changing to some degree. Seeing the social world in this manner might prompt a transformative outlook and a belief that one's own actions are consequential in the reproduction or alteration of the society.

That's Just the Way It Is

A sense of fatalistic resignation arises from the writings of those students who found that these three thought traps, particularly "That's just the way the world is," resonated with them. For example, Fifty-Two expressed resignation based on her belief there would always be opposition to one's work:

> While reviewing the thought traps, there was one that really resonated with me. This trap was "That's just the way the world is." Like I have mentioned previously, we cannot [impose] our own beliefs onto others. We can share our opinions and hope someone will listen and work with you towards a common goal, but no matter what time period we're in, there will always be at least one person who will form a resistance.

This sentiment was echoed by Thirty-Five, who suggested that the world will remain divided between those who want change, and those who do not.

> A thought that resonates with me about this world is that it is what it is. Although we have made great strides towards a better tomorrow there is still a great divide. Even if we could change things about the world it still doesn't change the fact the not everyone is in agreement with those changes. There is a good group of people that are stuck with tradition and a good group that wants to get out of it…I feel although certain events have changed the way we continue to go about our daily lives today, it doesn't change the fact that the world is what it is.

Six also expressed resignation, believing that, although change might occur, it is never enough:

> The thought trap that resonates with me the most is the first one. "That's just the way the world is." The reason why this trap speaks to me the most is because of my cynicism. I do acknowledge changes that [have] happened throughout society, but I then focus on how the change still is not enough and how people still react to it.

Such feelings of resignation were common in the entries of those who questioned the potential to change the social world in a significant manner.

These quotes, similar to those referencing cynicism in Chapter Five, indicate a sense of pessimism generally associated with a reproductive outlook on society. Even though these

students believe that change is possible and does indeed occur, they doubt it will take place to any significant degree. They expect and anticipate resistance to any attempts to positively affect society. Their statements, however, are not inaccurate, and instead, suggest a realistic understanding of the social world. Therefore, again the question is raised as to the relationship between the sociological perspective and the dialectic of the reproductive and transformative habitus. If the aim is to shift students toward a transformative habitus, it is important that students have a grasp of the complexities of the social world, and not approach social action with a simplistic or naïve outlook, lest they be ill-prepared or set up for disappointment. In theory, perhaps such an understanding of the social world marks the beginnings of a transformative habitus. Thus, this complicates theoretical predictions.

Can One Person Make a Difference?

Many students questioned the ability of one person to make a difference in society. In most cases, they questioned the extent of their own agency and minimized their individual abilities to make a difference in the work. This likely enhanced the feelings of resignation noted above. For example, Twenty-Eight noted, "I think the thought trap that resonates with me the most is I can't make enough a difference to matter. I have always felt that way…," while Thirty-Three stated emphatically, "I have definitely thought that 'I can't make enough of a difference to matter'…Sometimes, I think that I can't do enough by myself...." Sometimes, students indicated that these thought traps were reinforced or instilled by others. For example, Eleven recalled how a person in a position of authority dampened her youthful idealism and encouraged inaction:

> "That's just the way the world is". This thought trap is probably what killed the inclination of hope I once had when dealing with the vast number of homeless

people in Washington D.C. I was…thinking up ways we could help the homeless through the upcoming Winter when one of my supervisors told me, it was hopeless to do anything. He stated that there will always be homeless people and nothing…[I] could do would change any of that. So being the impressionable 19-year-old I was, I agreed with him. What would I be able to do?

Other students focused on being a lone individual, lacking the resources or connections

necessary to create change. Twenty-Three, for example, stated, "I am just me":

> Out of the thought traps in the [*Better World Handbook*,] the idea that as one person it is harder to create change is one that affects me to the greatest extent. I am not a corporation, a nonprofit, or even an effective activist in a group of likeminded individuals. *I am just me*, a college student with definite ideals sure but no way to create any change. (italics added)

Similarly referencing resources, a lack of money prompted Forty-Six to define herself as

ineffectual for social change:

> Thought trap #4 also resonates with me: "I can't make enough of a difference to matter." Sure, if I'm earning $50,000 more each year, I can definitely say I have the power to affect change. But right now, I can't invest any money in the "right bank," I can't make impactful consumer choices[;] I don't have any spare change to donate to my favorite causes.

As a final example of students questioning the potential for an individual to make a difference,

Twenty-One was daunted in the face of a highly populated world:

> Other thought traps that resonate with me are "one person cannot make a difference" and "I can't make enough of a difference to matter" which somewhat go hand in hand. People are told to be the change they want to see however, in a world populated by over seven billion people, it is kind of difficult for just one person to do so.

Thus, a common thought pattern among a number of students was the dismissal of the potential

of the individual to be an agent for social change.

Unlike the previous group, a number of students who drew on these three thought traps

believed that an individual could indeed make a difference in society. They did not, however,

feel that the influence a lone person could have on society would ever be enough to cause significant or immediate change. They felt they could make a change, yet defined the magnitude of their actions as minimal, at best. For example, Eight defined her individual efforts as causing change while simultaneously dismissing them as largely inadequate, given the scale of society:

> The two thought traps from BWH that resonate the most with me are: "That's just the way the world is" and "I can't make enough of a difference to matter." As said before, I feel like I can make slight changes in the world and impact the lives of a few people but nothing ever seems good enough. Society will always be more powerful than one simple act of kindness coming from one small college student.

Likewise, Nine found her individual efforts at social change to be trivial in light of "the bigger picture":

> This brings me to the next thought trap: I can't make enough of a difference to matter. As the book stated, we're merely drops of water in a vast ocean. How can one person's minor changes matter when looking at the bigger picture?

Similarly, Twenty-Two downplayed the likelihood that one individual can change society enough so as to eradicate a social issue at the macro level:

> In most cases I would consider myself in this regard as having the "one person can't make a difference" problem. While I think there are instances where a single person can make a difference, history shows that the acts of one person have never truly eliminated a problem. Change has occurred but not at the scale necessary for what I (and probably they) think is needed to impact the world.

In other words, change can occur thanks to the individual, but it will not be of a significant or sufficient scale. In addition, it might not happen quickly enough, as Twenty-Six noted:

> In relation to the above, it's very clear that I fall victim to thought trap number four ["I can't make enough of a difference to matter"]. I am an incredibly impatient person. Even though I understand that the way the world works cannot change at the drop of a hat, I still never fail to get frustrated when change does not occur as quickly as I want it to. Obviously, if everyone had this mindset, nothing would get done, so clearly an individual can make enough difference for it to matter. Still, it is all too easy to get discouraged when it seems like one's efforts are all for naught.

Though these students believed that the individual could make a difference, they struggled to believe that the scale, size or immediacy of the change was enough to matter, creating discouragement and resignation for them in relation to social change. These results demonstrate the discrepancy between abstract and concrete belief, which complicates the theorization of the reproduction/transformative habitus. Belief that society can be changed suggests a transformative outlook, while resignation about the extent to which one's own abilities (or those of any one individual) can change society evinces a reproductive outlook. Thus, to better understand the existence of the two outlooks as simultaneous potentials within a student, these results demonstrate that it is important to further explore the intricacies of belief as an indicator of either.

<div align="center">That Person Must Be Exceptional</div>

In their writings, several students in the CAI course painted a portrait of a social activist, or any person who intentionally engaged in change-oriented action, as a unique individual, markedly different from the students themselves. They entered the CAI course with an idealized vision of people who cause social change. In other words, they believed one person could make a difference in society, but only if that person was extraordinary in some manner. This vision was captured by Twenty-Nine, who stated, "Some people are just born to do great things…" Student Twenty felt similarly, finding courage to be an exceptional trait:

> …we all tend to think alike when it involves changing the world for the better. That being said, we may all think similar but it may only be a few of [us] that are brave enough to speak out about it.

Twenty-Two opined that one could not have much impact without first being in a position of power and influence:

<div align="center">167</div>

I wonder if any of us…will ever have enough influence to induce change. This is not, of course, to limit the arena for change to only those in power who can show influence, however, I think we can all agree that it definitely does not hurt to have influence in the higher ranks of society (ew[,] I can't believe I just reinforced the class system).

Likewise, they periodically dismissed their own potential for influence due to their own imperfections or inconsistencies, as Student Nine did:

A third thought trap I remain in is thinking that I'm not a saint, so what's the point of trying to become an activist? I love animals but I still eat meat and wear leather bags. I care about the environment but I'm too lazy to walk the extra steps outside to recycle a can or bottle. I passionate about mental health but haven't made any effort to speak out about my experiences or help those in my community who are also struggling.

Nineteen expressed a similar sentiment:

One of the biggest thought traps that I fall into is "I'm not a saint." We have seen it time and time again, where an activist, politician or celebrity has all their dirty laundry dragged out for everyone to see. It makes living a simple, socially active life practically impossible.

In such a way, meaningful and significant social action became something possible only for those few individuals blessed with special gifts or positions.

This idealized picture of activism was persistent; this thought trap remained evident after a class discussion about Dorothy Day several weeks into the semester. In their journal entries, several students appeared to be in awe of Day's work. They used terms such as "extraordinary," "heroic," and "selfless" to describe her. For example, Eighteen said, "As the saying goes there are not many cut from that cloth." Thirty-Six was overwhelmed by her "courage, faith, and strength," calling Day "remarkable." Eleven termed Day as "rare," and then went on to dismiss most ostensible altruistic actions as inspired by selfish motives:

Dorothy Day is a rare character. Though I'm sure she would hate being called rare, it is true. Not many people devote themselves to helping others. We are selfish and most of what we do even if it benefits others, often benefits us as well. For

example, someone could devote countless hours to community service, but then put it on their resume. Is it really a selfless act or is it a strategy?

Thirty-Seven referred to Day as a "a magnificent work of art," and said the activist had a "pure soul for society." Student One found herself intimidated by Day's life of social activism:

> Honestly, when I think about Dorothy Day and all she's done to better society, my first reaction is a feeling of intimidation. How could I alone change the world like she did, or be as selfless and motivated as she was?

To a large extent, therefore, the students' responses to Day tied clearly to the thought traps regarding the ability of one individual to "make a difference" in society. Generally, one person can change society, but only if they are of exceptional quality and character.

Interestingly, however, not every student saw Day as extraordinary, and from this they drew inspiration for their own potential. Thirty-Nine was inspired by what he saw as Day's ordinariness:

> Dorothy Day actually made it noteworthy that anyone can change society in [his or her] own little way. She showed that people do not have to be like Martin Luther King or Malcolm X in order to initiate revolutions, or to cause social change, the main thing Dorothy Day did was write, she did what she did best to bring awareness to the social injustice that was taken place. She also proved that anyone can do it. That social activist[s] [are] not the heroes with capes, that stand in front of trees screaming "Down with power!" That social activist[s] can be anyone regardless of their past, present, or even distant future.

Sixteen too appreciated the normalcy of Day: "Learning about Day was refreshing to me because she never claimed to be perfect, and accepted herself just as human as anyone else."

Similarly, Thirty kept a foot in both worlds, finding Day's to be extraordinary to some degree, yet still a "normal person:"

> I would say that Dorothy Day was an ordinary person with extraordinary character. Although she just viewed her herself as a regular person, she was much more brave than she imagined….It's not often that people stand up for what they

believe in or how things should be done, but she did it while just being a normal person.

Thus, it seems that a few students, by defining Day as "ordinary" or "normal," were inspired regarding the potential for one person to alter society in a meaningful manner. These students were, however, the exception. It should be noted, however, that it was their interpretation of Day as "normal" that inspired them, suggesting that they might have been intimidated by those activists they define as exceptional.

While a few students found themselves inspired by their realization that a "normal" person could cause social change, a greater number saw social change as the work of extraordinary individuals or those in positions of power or influence. The inability to see one's own ability to cause social change is indicative of a reproductive habitus. As a transformative outlook requires that students to recognize alternatives to current and expected social arrangements (Mills 2008a), an idealized vision of social activism as the work of special people (not oneself) may countermand any belief in one's own ability to be an agent of social change. Thus, the belief in a romanticized concept of social activism, unlike the progressive beliefs previously mentioned (I believe that the social world can change), may work against the development of a transformative habitus. This serves to further uncover the complexities present in the theorization of the habitus, as it demonstrates that though some beliefs may signal a movement toward a transformative outlook on social change, other beliefs, particularly those of an idealistic nature, may challenge such movement. In other words, students may simultaneously hold reproductive and transformative beliefs. The results suggest that if teachers are to "battle to engender more transformative dispositions" (Mills 2008a:105-106), then it is important to

separate out these potentially conflicting beliefs and work to dismantle any idealistic visions of social change.

To summarize this section, many students in the CAI course doubted the ability of any one person to affect the social world, or "make a difference," in a meaningful and significant way. This applied both to a generic other and themselves. Additionally, a number of students believed that for an individual to do so, she or he had to be extraordinary in some way. As Mills (2008a:83) argues, this inability to see oneself as able to "make things happen" in the social world suggests a reproductive outlook, as the student lacks an ability to recognize tactics to "poach" in the "cracks," or "manipulate events" to create opportunities to change society (De Certeau 1984:37). Of course, one could point out that this is a realistic view of society. What could one young person with no resources reasonably do about the problem of homelessness in Washington D.C.? For example, could she challenge the power elite and the stratification of society? The sociological perspective at times aligns with common sense (Bengston and Hazzard 1990). Thus, although it is often expected that the sociological perspective will prompt a transformative outlook toward society and enable students to "have an impact upon the world" (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016), it does not necessarily do so. The desire to challenge social inequalities, which is what McKinney and colleagues (2004) terms a transformative value, may not result in change-oriented action. For instance, sometimes it may just lead to a greater understanding of how society influences individuals and the prevalence of social injustice. This discrepancy between desire and action, two indicators that might be used to define a habitus as either reproductive or transformative, further uncovers the complexity in the theorization.

It Is Complicated

In this chapter, the analysis of student writings, particularly those from the early days of the CAI course, uncovered thought patterns regarding social change and the role of the individual in that effort, particularly those that constrained or discouraged the students' personal engagement. A significant number of students noted feeling overwhelmed by the expansiveness of social issues and their interconnectedness, finding it difficult to identify how or where to begin their own involvement in change-oriented action. Though there were a few noted exceptions, a sense of resignation arises from the writings, as a number of students in the CAI class dismissed the ability of a "normal" individual to cause social change, leaving such efforts instead to the "extraordinary" people in society. Using the "thought traps" provided, students generally articulated a vision of the social world as complicated and overwhelming while presenting a portrait of social activism as something exceptional and not the work of common folk.

When combined with the findings in Chapter Five, the results discussed in this chapter provide a general understanding of the desires, feelings, and beliefs of many of the students who enrolled in the CAI course. Despite their view of the world as at least partially "fragile" and open to change, as a rule, the students lacked a sense of total optimism. They were given largely to cynicism, or, at best, vacillated between cynicism and hopefulness depending on context. Many of them felt overwhelmed by the immensity of social problems and were uncertain as to where they could begin to work for positive social change. Additionally, many students found themselves constrained by thought patterns that caused them to question the extent to which one individual could "make a difference" in the world, or perhaps more accurately, enough of a difference "to matter." There were also, as noted, students who were optimistic about society and

its potential to change for the better, but they were fewer in number. Within the theoretical framework of the present study, these results suggest discrepancies between the desire for a better world, feelings regarding society in general, and beliefs regarding the fragility of the social world and the ability of one person (exceptional or not) to make a significant difference in the society. Further, even if the students desired and believed that society can change, they were less certain of their own potential to advance, promote, or be part of that change, likely leading to a pessimistic outlook in general.

These findings uncover some of the complexities and intricacies that contribute to the "hump" faced by sociological education in its action-oriented courses (i.e. Rondini 2015) and the theorization of the reproductive and the transformative habitus. In regards to the "hump," the students in the CAI class, by drawing on the given thought traps, were able to articulate some thought patterns that they believed constrained their willingness and ability to engage in change-oriented behavior. These thought patterns included a perception of the web of social problems as overwhelming, preventing their ability to find an entry point (could this be the hump?) from which they could project their agency to effect change. Thus, discouragement and doubt in the ability of one person to make a significant difference hampered their outlook on society, and in several cases, led to feelings of cynicism regarding society in general.

The writings of the students in the CAI course present data that complicate the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. Particularly, identifying indicators and uncovering the intricacies of how the indicators are connected proves to be a complex process. While it might initially seem straightforward to categorize student responses as evidence of either a reproductive or a transformative habitus, the results thus far indicate that such

173

designations are anything but simplistic. Desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions have all emerged as potential indicators of the type of habitus an individual has. These, however, have revealed themselves as complex; they often appear to be in opposition with each other. For example, a student may simultaneously (1) desire to see society change, (2) feel pessimistic about its potential to do so, (3) believe positive social change is possible, (4) believe she is incapable of causing meaningful social change because she is not extraordinary, and (5) engage in change-oriented action, like working in a soup kitchen. Similarly, another student may (1) desire to see society change, (2) feel positive and hopeful about its potential to do so, (3) believe positive social change is possible, 4) believe he is capable of causing meaningful social change, and (5) not engage in change-oriented action due to an inability to figure out where to start. How would we categorize these two students? Does the first example represent a reproductive outlook on the social world? Maybe, but the student believes social change is possible and she is capable of causing it. Does the second example represent a transformative outlook on the social world? Maybe, but the student does not recognize opportunities or tactics to cause social change. Therefore, the writings of the students reveal a great deal of complexity that must be taken into account in the discussion of the dialectic of the reproductive/transformative habitus.

The two previous chapters focused largely on understanding the perspectives and thought patterns with which the students entered the CAI course. The purpose of these chapters was to establish the starting place of the students regarding society, personal agency, and social change; these findings will serve as the basis for comparison with the results from the end of the semester. Additionally, the analysis in Chapters Five and Six uncovered desire, feelings, beliefs and actions as potential indicators of the reproductive and transformative habitus and exposed

discrepancies and complexities among those indicators. These findings served to expose the complexities of any attempt to ascertain the presence of a reproductive or a transformative outlook in students. The next chapter will further complicate the theorization by incorporating agentic considerations into the discussion. In other words, it will examine student writings to determine whether the students viewed themselves as agents of change. More specifically, the analysis in the next chapter will uncover those thought patterns or missing resources that create distance between the students' desire and belief that the social world can be changed and their own intentional action toward positive social change.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DRIFTING OR ROWING? EXPLORING THE STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT

Early in the semester, the students in the Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course contemplated their feelings and beliefs about social change. Even though they viewed society as at least partially fragile, or open to change, most students generally lacked a sense of total optimism. They were given largely to cynicism, or, at best, vacillated between cynicism and hopefulness depending on the context. A significant portion of the students felt overwhelmed by the immensity of social problems and uncertain where they could begin to work for positive social change. Additionally, some students found themselves constrained by thought patterns that caused them to question the extent to which one individual could "make a difference" in the world, or perhaps more accurately, enough of a difference "to matter," or to warrant the effort. These results suggest discrepancies between the desire for a better world, feelings regarding society in general, and beliefs regarding the fragility of the social world. Even if the students desired and believed that society could change, they were less certain of their own potential to advance, promote, or be part of that change. Even those students who began the semester with an optimistic outlook were not exempt from such discrepancies. While it might be more likely to prompt a student to engage in social change than cynicism, an optimistic or hopeful outlook does not necessarily result in intentional social action. It also does not negate the need to be equipped with those resources and tools that are helpful for social change.

While the two previous chapters focused largely on the indicators of desire, feelings, and belief in the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus, this chapter more fully incorporates agentic considerations into the discussion. In other words, it will draw on student

writings to explore whether the students viewed themselves as agents of change and to uncover additional thought traps and missing resources that might create distance between their belief that the social world can be changed and their own intentional action toward positive social change. To draw upon the boat metaphor, it will help one understand whether students had oars, or resources with which they could find their way to and into social engagement, or if they were just drifting, unequipped to navigate the waters of social action. The metaphor also helps one consider whether the students in the CAI course defined themselves as socially active and if they felt equipped to engage in the work of social change.

In her theorization, Mills (2008a:100) proposes that students with a reproductive habitus see themselves as having little or no agency, while those with a transformative habitus "tend to look for opportunities for action in the social field." Thus, according to Mills, the students' perceptions of their agency are highly relevant. So too are their evaluations of what might facilitate or block their agency, as these may help explain what students feel they need from a CAI course to support their desire to engage in the work of social change. Further, as Schussman and Soule (2005:1086) explain, personal efficacy may be negated by factors such as age, skills, interest, and interpersonal networks, which discourage action aimed at social change. These findings will be helpful for answering the exploratory research question, "How did the students in the CAI course generally view the social world and their personal agency?" and further exploring how the elements of desire, feelings, beliefs, and action fit into the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. The responses of the students can also provide a point of comparison for the writings collected at the end of the course, to see if there was any change

over the semester in the students' views of their agency and the extent to which they felt equipped for social action.

<div align="center">Were They Socially Active?</div>

At the beginning of the semester, the students in the CAI course were asked to discuss whether they defined themselves as socially active. Additionally, they were asked to explain the reasoning behind their answers. The students were provided a journal prompt so that they would specifically address this question. The portion of the journal prompt to which the students responded read as follows: "…Do you see yourself as socially active? Why or why not?" It is important to note that the students were not given a standardized definition of "socially active," and this was done intentionally in order to allow students to define it for themselves instead of imposing a definition upon them. This approach resulted in some variance as to what the term meant for each individual, but the manner in which they defined "socially active" proved important for their self-assessment. After the initial reading, the coding that gave rise to this category was guided by sensitizing terms and phrases including variations of "socially active" or "not socially active," such as "see myself as socially active," "do not see myself as socially active," "am/am not a social activist," and "not as socially active as I would like to be." The purpose of discussing these responses lies in the importance of further illuminating the starting point of the students in terms of their patterns of thinking. It is helpful to ascertain whether or not students defined themselves as social agents, or social actors engaged in changing society, at the beginning of the semester, as this can serve as an avenue for further exploration of the reproductive and transformative habitus dialectic.

<center>"I Deem Myself Socially Inactive"</center>

By and large, the students in the CAI course defined themselves as socially inactive at the beginning of the semester. Often, this self-evaluation was connected to negative feelings such as embarrassment and pessimism. Some students felt that even though they were taking some action, it was not enough to earn the "socially active" designation. Those students who concluded that their use of social media did not constitute social activism made this particularly clear. For some of these students, their lack of social engagement was deemed a temporary state that would end when conditions became more favorable for their involvement. Together, however, most students felt unable to define themselves as socially active at the outset of the CAI course.

<u>"I Am Not Socially Active"</u>

Over two-thirds (approximately 70%) of the students pointedly defined themselves as "not socially active" at the beginning of the semester. A few students did so in a neutral, matter-of-fact manner. For example, Thirty defined herself as similar to others in her situation: "I don't see myself as a [social] activist…I'm just like any other twenty-two-year-old college student." Twenty-Six noted the issue of transitioning from social awareness to social action: "I don't think I'm very socially active, just socially aware. I see problems in society, of any and every nature, and I recognize that they are problems, but that is where it starts and stops." Similarly, Forty-Four states:

> I personally don't see myself as socially active, because I haven't done anything to cause a change in our society. I feel that to be socially active you have to be involved in certain things that cause a difference and raise awareness.

<center>179</center>

In contrast to the neutrality of the preceding remarks, defining oneself as socially inactive was periodically connected with negativity. For example, here, Forty-One questioned her motives and is blatantly self-critical in answering the question about being socially active:

> As an individual[,] I don't think that I am currently socially active because I am so self-involved. I am always worried about my future and where I am today that I don't stop to think that society is part of my world both in the now and in the future. I tend to volunteer for self-awareness[,] which I think is selfish.

In a similar fashion, Three associated feelings of discouragement and embarrassment with her lack of social engagement:

> My lack of outside involvement and inconsistent effort is discouraging and frankly embarrassing. Because of this, I deem myself socially inactive. I'd very much like to get involved with social issues more. I write and learn about them all the time in my classes, but *I somehow always miss the part about going out in the world and doing something*. (Italics added)

Despite an obvious interest in social change, Three defined herself as inactive; it is interesting to note that she dismisses writing and learning about social issues as inadequate for calling oneself "socially active." Negativity also emerges in this entry by Student One, who connected pessimism and a lack of hope to her hesitancy to define herself as "socially active":

> I do not necessarily think of myself as socially active, not for lack of caring, but honestly due to a slightly pessimistic viewpoint of people not having much social mobility (if any), which over time has left me with a diminished amount of hope that we are able to overcome our social constraints and reduced my motivation to "be the change you wish to see in the world"

Thus, these quotes indicate that some students defined themselves as wholly inactive in relation to social change. A few of the students described their lack of social engagement in a dispassionate manner, while several noted an emotional response, including embarrassment and pessimism. All of them failed to note any social action for which they gave themselves credit. In fact, one student found her inaction to be motivation enough to take the CAI course. Twenty-

Nine stated, "I am not socially active by any means and that is something I want to change, hence why I decided to sign up for this course." This supports the results from the pre-survey regarding the reasons the students enrolled in the course; particularly, they were looking for a way to get involved, or to connect their desire for social change with action to bring it about.

The theorization of the transformative habitus is centered on the ability of students to see opportunities for action in the social field instead of accepting the outcomes of the current social arrangement (Mills 2008a). Therefore, to determine the presence of a transformative outlook, one would likely look for an indication of action, where a student would engage and improvise as a social agent, changing situations and using circumstances to his or her advantage. As the majority of the students in the CAI course noted that they were not socially active at the beginning of the semester, it is tempting to conclude that very few of them had a transformative habitus when they entered the class. In light of the previous chapters, however, this inference would be too simplistic. Action is only one indicator of the reproductive/transformative dialectic, emerging alongside desire, feelings, and beliefs. For example, several students noted feelings of guilt or embarrassment because of their inaction. These feelings might have prompted them to take the CAI course; at a minimum, their inaction bothered them, and they wanted to become more socially active. Therefore, even though these students were not seizing opportunities for social action, their feelings could indicate a developing transformative outlook.

"I'm Not Doing Enough"

Unlike the students in the previous section, the students in this category described themselves as "doing something," but believed their actions were not enough to define

themselves as socially active. Therefore, despite engaging in activities that some might see as social engagement aimed at social change, they saw themselves as coming up short when compared to the picture of social activism in their mind. For example, Fourteen felt unable to define herself as socially active despite voluntarily mentoring a young girl:

> I don't really see myself as socially active. To be honest, I mentor a foster child who lives at a group home and find it hard to see her because I don't know how to interact with her or relate to her. I had no training to mentor her, and I often feel socially and emotionally awkward around her. I feel guilty that *I'm not doing enough*, that I'm not qualified enough. (Italics added)

Similarly, recycling, volunteering, and maintaining a social awareness were not enough for Forty-Seven to self-identify as socially active:

> I don't particularly see myself as a socially active person. Other than the fact that I recycle, hate wastefulness and volunteer. I also find myself trying to influence youth through my job by teaching them better social habits. I do attempt to be more socially active by staying updated with local and national news…

Likewise, Fifty sounded very involved in social issues but was not content to define herself as socially active, believing she could do more:

> As I stand right now, I don't really believe that I'm as socially active as I could be. I do little things like recycle in the interest of preventing pollution, I don't eat meat, spend money at SeaWorld or buy clothes or cosmetic products that are associated with harming or killing animals, and in the interest of protecting the rights of individuals in the LGBTQ+ community as well as female and Human rights in general I occasionally will donate to charities or more likely participate in activities to raise awareness and support of concerning issues. Despite that, I don't feel like I'm doing enough.

Fifty's sentiments were echoed by Thirteen, who, despite being socially engaged, judged her efforts to be inadequate:

> I am very interested in helping to create a better society. I am passionate about equality, and I try to speak out when I feel strongly about an issue. I am part of the LGBT community, and I attend Pride events to help raise awareness of the need for equality. I occasionally post on social media when I believe people need

> to hear my thoughts on issues such as the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement. While I make some attempts to try and make society better, *I would not say that I am entirely socially active.* (Italics added)

Thirteen's conclusion that she was not "entirely social active" demonstrates the tendency of several students to think of social action in terms of degrees. Similarly, another student felt that defining oneself as socially active meant doing something in each and every situation that presents itself. A missed opportunity troubled Eleven, despite her other efforts:

> I do not currently see myself as a huge social activist. I have assisted the poor here and there such as volunteering in soup kitchens and buying homeless people on the street food however, I do not always stop to help. An example of this would be when I went to Guam this past May. Outside of one of my aunt's houses there was a dog locked up in a cage with no water or food in 100 degrees plus weather. Being an animal person, I went over to try to help the dog. The cage was forced shut with bars and the buckets that once had water, stored dirty rainwater and leaves. The dog looked hungry and was panting. No one else around me was [fazed]. They stated the dog belonged to the neighbors and they would take care of it. I thought to myself[,] how can they just ignore this and feel good about themselves. I looked up animal abuse agencies, but convinced myself that they would not help and it would be a waste of a call. I continue to think about that dog today. I believe I am similar to the majority of people who see something wrong, but choose not to take action.

Thus, to identify oneself as socially active, it was important for several students that they were able to point to action that was both substantial and unwaveringly consistent. Because they were unable to do so, they hesitated to define themselves as socially active despite naming specific actions they had taken.

Interestingly, despite being able to list ways in which they were engaged with social issues, these students tended to define social activism as something bigger than their own actions. Like Fifty and Eleven, they defined their attempts as "little things," suggesting that they did not live up to their vision of social activism as something "huge." With these sentiments, it is apparent that some students defined "socially active" as something that results in obvious and

significant change. Their "little" actions, therefore, were not enough to qualify. This ties to the findings in Chapter 6, where some students felt that the actions of an individual were largely inadequate for changing society, unless that individual is an extraordinary person. This romanticized vision of social action and the activist affected how the students evaluated themselves and their own abilities and engagement. Generally, it led to self-degradation; in other words, several students in the CAI course felt they could not or did not live up to the standard of social engagement they had in their head. Their writings indicated that a significant number of students viewed social change as the result of big, inspired actions instead of "little" ones.

Social Media is Not Enough

The trend of struggling to see one's actions as "enough" to count as social activism is further documented by the introduction of social media in several of the students' entries. For example, Forty questioned the effectiveness of social media for driving change in society:

> I would not consider myself to be socially active. I say so because I have never really participated in an event that allowed me to feel like I was making a difference…I have however been involved via social media whenever I get the chance, but I often wonder what difference am I really making behind a computer screen? Am I just tagging along because it is what is buzzing for the week or do I truly want to see a change?

A number of other students focused on their use of social media and debated whether or not using social media alone was enough to define themselves as socially active. They generally concluded that conversations, both on social media and in person, are not enough, especially when compared to more physical forms of social engagement. The students appeared to judge themselves against a stereotypical image of the social activist. Here is a prime example from Seven:

> I'm not sure if I would label myself as "socially active". When I think of socially active people, the first thought that comes to my mind is people who protest in rallies…I do my part on social media and face-to-face conversations with friends, family, and strangers….I feel that I would need to be more active and impactful to label myself as socially active.

In this case, Seven helps explain the stereotypical image of social activism against which she judges herself. Her definition of social action as engaging in protests and rallies meant that engaging in social media was not enough to define oneself as socially active. Similarly, Nine saw the use of social media as inadequate:

> Although I definitely have strong beliefs about many topics of concern, I'm not much of a socially active person. I don't often vocalize these beliefs any further than sending out a mere tweet or Facebook status…Although I sometimes share my thoughts about different issues in the world via social media, I haven't used my voice to attempt to create change in a way that would really create action.

In general, the students who introduced social media into the discussion did not equate its use with social activism. They concluded their work behind a computer screen was not enough to label themselves as socially active. They defined a tweet or a Facebook post as something "little" that would not create change or generate action. Regardless, it is interesting to see that they raised social media in their attempts to define social activism; this was not part of the journal prompt. Therefore, this suggests that some of the students saw social media as a potential tool of social activism; even if they define it as not a "huge" or particularly meaningful part, perhaps it was something in which they felt capable of participating. Also, by introducing social media into their answers, a few of these students might have been creating a space in which they could say they were "doing" something in a journal entry where they did not want to indicate that they were wholly inactive. Either way, like those in the preceding section, their remarks indicate the importance and impact of how "action" is defined, and this is relevant to the theorization of the

reproduction and transformative habitus. If the transformative habitus is characterized by action (Mills 2008a), what exactly counts as action? Is there such a thing, as students seem to indicate, as "little" action and "huge" action? Or, is there a continuum of action, ranging from small to big, and if so, exactly how much social action must be taken to qualify as "doing something?" This further complicates the understanding of where action ceases to be reproductive and becomes transformative, and it raises the question as to what type of action is most accurately associated with a transformative habitus, thus increasing the complexity of the theorization.

"Eventually I Will Change That"

A number of students defined their lack of social action as temporary. They anticipated doing more in the future, believing conditions would become more favorable for their engagement. For example, Forty-One stated concisely, "I do see myself as socially active in the future." Forty-Two found that her time was currently spoken for, but saw her present effort as an investment for future social engagement:

> In this moment, no, I would not consider myself socially active because I work full time on my own business and go to school full time. However, I am going to school in order to become educated about the issues that mean the most to me. I feel that this is my "downtime" to become educated before I can properly make a difference.

Similarly, using the phrase, "at the moment," Thirty-Three suggested her lack of social engagement was a transient state:

> At the moment, I would say that I don't see myself as socially active. All I do is go to school, go to work, and then I come home. I might go out once or twice a week, but it isn't nearly enough to influence anyone but myself.

Twelve appeared eager to get started, but felt limited, "only" able to work towards earning a degree: "… I do not feel like I am a social activist yet. I want to be a victim advocate, but the only thing I am doing to help this cause is going to school to get my degree for it." It is interesting that she minimized the work of getting a degree in defining her social activeness, instead of seeing it as foundational to a life of engagement. Likewise, in a manner reminiscent of the previous section, Twenty-One defined a social activist as someone who does more than social media, prompting her to anticipate increased social engagement in her own future:

> Currently, I am not as socially active as I would like to be. A social activist to me is someone who willingly and consistently volunteers their time towards bettering their community. Although social media is a great outlet for voicing thoughts and opinions, I would hope to be more hands-on and physically committed when handling social issues. I want my actions to match my words and my attitude to match my appearance. Looking ahead, I do see myself becoming more socially active than expressing myself on Twitter. Since I am a bit more outspoken than the average Jane, I know what I am capable of and I know that devoting my time towards helping society is something I could easily grow to obsess over.

Finally, despite defining himself as socially inactive, Thirty-Nine expects to "eventually" become more socially active in the future:

> Am I considered socially active? I have to answer with an honest no, and that's because I do not do anything to cause a change to this world…I consider myself and others to be living in the problem and not recognizing and solving the issue at hand. Eventually I will change that.

Thus, these perspectives indicate that a number of the students in the CAI course began the semester by defining themselves as socially inactive, however, they expected that, at some point in the future, they would become more socially active. This suggests that these students, to some degree, were able to engage in projectivity, one chord of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). In other words, they were able to look into the future and expect things to be different, projecting a general path for themselves that would lead to increased social activism. This could

187

indicate a transformative outlook as well (Mills 2008a). One must pause, however, to remember that there is a distance between desire and action. Being able to see a future that is different than the present, where one is generally more socially active, is perhaps a starting point, but it does not necessarily translate to an ability to recognize and articulate specific actions, tactics, and opportunities that can be used to challenge and change social situations. Nor does it guarantee that one will ever get to the point of feeling like they are finally "ready" to become socially active. A generalized expectation is not the same as a delineated plan for engagement. This disparity adds further complexity to any attempt to differentiate between a reproductive and a transformative habitus.

To recap, the majority of students in the CAI course defined themselves as socially inactive. While a few students were matter-of-fact in their self-assessment, some connected their inaction to negative feelings, including embarrassment and discouragement. A small number of students articulated a vision of themselves as socially active in the future, but found themselves hampered by their current circumstances. Through their comments, it became evident that the students tended to define social action by degrees. For example, a post on Facebook was "little," while marching in the streets was "huge." Thinking of social action by degrees prompted several students to dismiss their engagement as minimal or "not enough."

Uncovering the distinction between "little" and "huge" actions and considering it within the theoretical framework of the present study further complicates the interpretation of what distinguishes a reproductive habitus from a transformative habitus. A reproductive habitus suggests an inability to exert one's agency in an intentional manner to cause change, while a transformative habitus indicates an ability to do so (Mills 2008a). The reproductive habitus is

defined by habitual, reproductive action, or "iteration" (Emirbayer and Mische 1998); the transformative habitus is defined by the recognition and employment of opportunities to challenge reproductive tendencies. What is unclear about these definitions is whether the extent or size of the action matters. For example, is a "little" action enough to indicate the presence of a transformative habitus? Or, would one expect to see "huge" action? Also, does the outcome of the action matter, or is intention most important? Regardless, it is evident that several students in the CAI course saw their "little" actions as largely ineffectual.

Perhaps, on the surface, the size and outcome of action might not factor into the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus dialectic, but one could argue it should because it ties into the practical-evaluative chord of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998), which would see students able to use present circumstances to evaluate the potential outcome of various actions they project for themselves. If students are able to intentionally undertake a small action aimed at social change, such as posting a tweet and understand the limitations and minimal (perhaps!) scope of their action, are they exhibiting a reproductive or a transformative outlook? One might instead argue that they are developing their sociological eye, recognizing the limitations of their own actions and agency; in other words, they are achieving a primary objective of sociological education (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016), and it gives them a realistic and balanced view of the extent to which they can alter society. This becomes a bit tenuous, serving as a reminder that the development of the sociological perspective might serve to reinforce a reproductive outlook; it is not necessarily transformative (e.g. Mills 1959; Johnson 2005). Also, considering the idea of social construction, if an individual believes he is socially active, then he is, and then, one might question if actively seeking change is necessary to truly be

189

a social agent. These considerations further complicate our understanding of the distance or difference between the reproductive and the transformative habitus and the use of action as an indicator of either.

<center>"I Do See Myself As Socially Active"</center>

The number of students who defined themselves as socially active at the beginning of the CAI course is markedly smaller than those who did not. Less than one quarter of the students (N=11/47) saw themselves as socially active. Those who did, however, were able to point to specific actions they had or were taking that allowed them to describe themselves as engaged in social action. Similar to those in the previous section, however, despite identifying themselves as socially active, a portion of students qualified their answers by suggesting they could still do more. This further documented the tendency of the students to define social action in terms of degrees.

The students who saw themselves as socially active generally gave specific examples as proof of their engagement. For instance, Forty-Eight pointed to her work with children as evidence of her social involvement; in other words, she saw her job as a conduit for social action:

> In certain ways[,] I do see myself as socially active, I always stay active in society with it being in the workplace, I try to volunteer my time any chance I get. I also work in a daycare so when the children ask certain questions about the world; I try to inform them the best way I can to a young person.

Similarly, working with youth prompted a self-definition as "active" from Eighteen:

> I see myself as active as I came to [State] to be a part of a chance to give back. I volunteer…with inner city youth…I see myself as being active as I engage with these children and have been for the past 2 years. I see kids that have gone to middle school and left the program who come back and visit and parents who

<center>190</center>

appreciate someone investing time into their child to help fulfill their dreams for their child.

As a final example, Forty-Five deemed her efforts to "make a difference," particularly through volunteer work, as reason enough to define herself as socially active:

> I, personally, do see myself as socially active because I'm a person who strives to make a difference in society whether it be a small change or big change. I enjoy giving back to the community by volunteering my time to various organizations such as the Mental Health Association and [County] Sheriff's Office. The most rewarding thing for me is knowing that I did something to improve the world we live in. When I see things that need fixing, I can't sit back and do nothing about it.

It is worth calling attention to the fact that the last two students noted the rewards they received from their social action, suggesting that this is important to them.

A couple of the students who identified themselves as socially active indicated that although they were engaged, they felt they could do more. For example, Four believed that additional opportunities for change-oriented action were available:

> To be honest, I do see myself as socially active[;] however[,] I know I could be more. I consider myself socially active because I do involve myself in lots of volunteer work and am always inviting others to help. However, I know there are numerous different ways I could become more socially active like changing certain things about my lifestyle.

In a like manner, despite his obvious involvement in social action, Five saw the potential to do even more in the future:

> Yes, I'm socially active. I volunteer with an animal sanctuary. I push for tolerance and equality on social media, and I attend rallies & fundraisers. I keep an eye on politics and push everyone around me to vote – not just for the president, but on local matters as well. I try to increase awareness of important issues. I try to use the privilege of my position to benefit others…Do I do enough? Well, our goal is always to do more next year than we do now.

In other words, one's efforts aside, a couple of students felt that there are always opportunities to become more socially engaged.

The number of students who identified themselves as socially active was quite small when compared to those students who deemed themselves socially inactive. Those who did so were able to point to specific examples of their involvement, yet a few students felt, despite their obvious involvement, that they should be doing more. One might suggest that this small group of students began the CAI course with a transformative habitus already in place. They desired to be involved, they believed what they personally did mattered, and they engaged in action intentionally aimed to change society in a positive manner. Also, in an earlier journal entry, these same students defined themselves as holding a view of society that was at least partially optimistic. For these few cases, it appears that the indicators of desire, feeling, belief, and action generally aligned on the transformative end of the spectrum, resulting in a realization of one's potential and the intentional implementation of action aimed at making a difference. This is perhaps the most accurate picture of what Mills (2008a) terms the transformative habitus.

To summarize this section, the vast majority of the students in the CAI course did not see themselves as socially active at the beginning of the semester, while only a small number defined themselves as so engaged. For some of those students in the majority, theirs was a dispassionate observation, while others connected negative emotions such as embarrassment with their inaction. Others felt that although they were doing "something," it was not enough. From attending rallies to using social media, many students dismissed their own efforts as inadequate. A number of these students, however, expected that the day would come when they would become more socially involved. For those students in the minority who felt they were socially active, they generally pointed to their current or recent work as evidence; among them, however, there were still a few who felt they could do more.

These results add to the complexity of the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus by incorporating action as an indicator. Like belief, it is important to further dissect action, because action is not necessarily transformative, as Emirbayer and Mische (1998) note. Action can be habitual and reproductive; it is tempting to disregard habits and term them non-agentic (e.g. Bourdieu 1990b), but they are indeed part of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Action can be opportunistic and transformative as well, especially if it is intentionally aimed to "make things happen" (Mills 2008b:83) in society. Therefore, in the attempt to determine what type of habitus the students carried into the CAI course, it is not simply action itself that must be considered, but also the type of action, and its intention. Action is a complicated indicator, and the other indicators, desire, belief, and feeling, affect the degree to which it is transformative. A student could, for instance, volunteer in a soup kitchen on a weekly basis to fulfill a required service learning credit. If that student did so begrudgingly and/or did not believe that his or her efforts made a difference, this would not necessarily, based on the findings of this research, indicate a transformative outlook. Including the question of impact also adds complexity. For instance, is possible that students could undertake actions aimed at social change, but, given their geographic location (i.e. a rural, conservative area), their actions or words have little or no impact; this lack of influence or measurable change, however, does not negate the transformative nature of their intentions and behaviors. Alternatively, one might argue that students who are socially inactive have a reproductive habitus. Yet, it is possible that a desire to get involved, a feeling of general optimism, and a belief that one's actions are consequential might combine to form a transformative outlook, needing only resources and a starting place to translate into action aimed at the alteration of social

arrangements. Thus, the extent to which the students feel equipped for action becomes an important consideration.

Do Students Feel Equipped for Social Action?

Perceiving oneself as a social agent likely involves more than simply defining oneself as socially active, as was discussed in the previous section. Whether or not one feels adequately equipped with the tools necessary to engage in social action is inextricably linked with one's perception of self as socially active or inactive. If students feel equipped for social change, they may be more likely to engage in social action, and, as a result, it is more probable that they will see themselves as social agents. Given that action is an indicator of the type of outlook a student might have, acquiring adequate resources and finding points of entry for social engagement become important considerations in the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. Further, feeling equipped for social change may allow students to more closely align their desires, feelings, and beliefs, leading to the action of which they wish to be a part. In other word, "I desire to get involved in social change" becomes linked to "I know how and have what I need to get involved," prompting a more transformative and empowered outlook. This section, therefore, will explore feelings of the students in the CAI course regarding how equipped they felt for social action in the early days of the semester.

Mills (2008a) proposes that the inability of a student to recognize opportunities to change situations is evidence of a reproductive habitus. On the other hand, a transformative habitus is synonymous with agency and action, as one sees the potential to "*make things happen*" (Mills 2008b:83). This draws on the projective element of agency more so than the element of iteration

(Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Therefore, an early journal entry asked students to reflect on the extent to which they felt equipped to take social action. A portion of the prompt asked: "Do you feel equipped to cause social change? Why or why not?" This prompt served to frame student responses, and therefore, it served to provide a sensitizing guide for the focused coding that gave rise to this category. The key terms include variations of the terms "equipped," "ill-equipped," and "unequipped." The category also includes phrases, "I do not feel equipped," "I don't feel equipped," "better equipped" and "I do feel equipped." Additionally, other phrases emerged, such as "I need," "I lack [resource]" or "resources I lack." Also, some students drew on the thought traps of "I don't have the time or energy" and "I don't know enough about the issues" from Ellis and colleagues (2007), so this also framed responses and provided a code. The results from the analysis of these early writings indicate that though a small number of students in the CAI felt equipped to engage in action aimed at social change, the majority of the students felt unequipped to some degree.

I Do Not Feel Equipped to Cause Social Change

Well over half the students in the CAI course indicated at the beginning of the semester that, to some degree, they felt unequipped for social action. Similar to the earlier comments about cynicism and thought traps, several students felt the vastness of social problems overshadowed the potential of their individual efforts. Others indicated that they lacked the necessary understanding or resources to get involved. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of students hoped to feel more equipped as a result of the CAI course.

<u>Overwhelmed and Underequipped</u>

Stating, "…I often feel really overwhelmed and under equipped to change the world,"

Student Fifty captured the sentiment of those students who found themselves intimidated by the

broadness and persistence of social problems to the point that they felt unequipped to do much

about them. Here, Thirteen noted the longevity of social issues as a reason for feeling ill

equipped and powerless to cause social change:

> I do not feel equipped to cause much social change because the world has been
> dealing with these issues for so long, I don't think at this point that I have the
> power to massively change the direction these issues are going.

Likewise, Forty-Seven was discouraged by the vast number of social problems and their

persistence despite the work of social activists:

> This may be why I feel like I am not equipped to create social change. It's hard to
> feel like you can make a difference. When you know there are people out there
> putting their all into social movements, for example Black Lives Matter or
> Animal Rights, and yet we still have so much wrong in society. It's almost
> defeating.

The overwhelming nature of social problems caused some students to feel frustrated and unable

to find a way to get involved. For example, upon reflection, Two felt impotent regarding social

problems:

> For example, there are times when I find put about a [problem], then I feel a
> burning urge to do something to help. However[,] after analyzing the problem, I
> often feel like there is no way for me to help so I don't do anything about it.

Echoing the other students in the CAI course who defined social action by degrees, or more

specifically, as something "large-scale," Twenty-Six admitted to wrestling with exactly what

social change is, as well as how to do it:

> I do not feel equipped to cause social change, maybe because I don't really know
> what constitutes social change. To me, "change" implies something on a large-

196

scale. Whether social change actually needs to affect the entire world, or just a few people, I don't know, but I have always [taken] it to mean it has to have a widespread-impact. And I not only don't think I can cause a widespread impact, I have no idea how I would even go about doing it.

Other students voiced similar sentiments. Student 7 stated, "I don't really know what I can do in my community or for issues that I feel passionate about, I would like to have more information about what I can do." Twenty-Eight declared:

Currently I do not feel equipped to cause social change because I view social change as being physically and actively working towards a cause and I don't feel as if I know where to begin implementing social change.

Sixteen similarly questioned what she could possibly do as a college student:

I don't feel equipped to cause social change, mainly because I don't know how I can at this point of my life. Between going to school, working, and trying to immerse myself new experiences often, it is hard to make the social change I would like to say I am contributing to.

In this manner, several students felt unequipped for social action, being overwhelmed by the immensity of social problems and therefore unable to discern a starting point or path to action.

The perspectives in this section demonstrate that students felt unequipped to engage in social action because they were overwhelmed by the immensity of social problems and were frustrated by their inability to find a way to get involved. Similar to the findings of Kapitulik (2010) and Rondini (2015), they were unable to recognize opportunities or alternatives through which they could challenge things they disliked about society. In other words, they were unable to find "tactics" (De Certeau 1984:37) and "act in ways that can transform situations" (Mills 2008a:106). This inability suggests a reproductive habitus, which discouraged students from getting involved. Statements like Forty-Seven's, "It's almost defeating," indicate a fatalist outlook. While one might argue that this is a pragmatic approach (what can one person really do,

197

anyway?), in light of the theoretical framework of this study, if such an outlook renders students inactive, discourages their belief in their own potential as social agents, reinforces a pessimistic feeling about society, and causes them to feel ill equipped, then it is far from the "meaningful, engaged, and productive lives" (McKinney et al. 2004:1) sociological education desires for students. In such cases, the sociological perspective may serve to confirm a reproductive outlook instead of producing a transformative one.

"Small Fish in a Big, Big Pond"

Beyond concerns about the vastness of social problems and the inability to find a starting point, many students in the CAI course were troubled at the beginning of the semester by what they felt they lacked in terms of resources. Those who believed themselves lacking one or more key resources tended to label themselves as unequipped or ill equipped for social action. One might expect university students to lack time and energy, and indeed, this is evidenced by the writings of the CAI students. A concern about the absence of adequate funds is present as well. Beyond these three, however, some students noted their need for increased social capital or social support, while others noted a need for greater knowledge or specific skills. A few noted a need for increased confidence or motivation. Often, however, the students listed several resources they believed they lacked, as exemplified by Eight, whose lack of resources caused her to feel diminutive despite her passion for educational reform:

> … I do not feel equipped to cause social change. As silly as it sounds, I sometimes feel like a small fish in a big, big pond. I feel as though I don't have enough power, time, money, energy, or experience to change something so massive like our education system. Maybe those are all just excuses and I just don't have the confidence but either way it would be difficult to do so.

Similarly, Fifty presented a laundry list of things she lacked:

> When I think about things that prevent me from being equipped for social change, they include my lack of money and time to give to certain causes, my lack of exposure and knowledge of specific needs and problems and also that I don't feel like I have enough or the right connections to get others involved.

Understanding what resources students feel they need to engage in social change is important for supporting the movement of students toward a transformative view of society.

Lacking Time and Energy

A large number of CAI students indicated that they lacked the time and energy they believed necessary for engaging in action aimed at transforming the social world. Many university students juggle a range of responsibilities, including employment, course load, family life, participation in university organizations, and community service. As Forty-Seven noted, "…I also fall into the trap of "I don't have the time or the energy", which I feel is common for students because they're also trying to get internships, jobs, and balance their schoolwork." In addition, some nontraditional students may add the maintenance and support of a family to their list of duties. The commonality of this response may have been exacerbated by the fact that almost half the class was composed of first generation students. Even maintaining an active social life can be a drain on one's available time and energy. Although some students see this as a temporary state (meaning, they expect to have more time and energy when they finish their education), it featured largely in their early semester evaluations of what they need.

The demands placed upon their time and energy can cause students to feel overwhelmed and unable to dedicate themselves to social change, even if they wish to. Student Five captured this succinctly: "I often feel overwhelmed, and rarely feel like I have time or energy enough to

spare." Similarly, the possibility of adding something extra (like social action) to one's schedule was hard for Forty to fathom:

> I work full time hours in addition to going to school and volunteering so adding more to my plate right about now just seems crazy. There are many other things that I would love to be a part of as well but can't simply fit them into my schedule.

The emotion and frustration associated with the lack of time and energy for social action clearly comes emerges in the students' writings. Twenty-Five reflected:

> At times[,] I feel overwhelmed with work and courses alone. I'm beat by the end of the day. And then to add something much greater than that on my schedule has me wanting to come home to a cognac some nights.

Likewise, Fifty-One voiced his frustration, "As a student sometimes [I] feel overwhelmed with class load and social life and feel no matter what I try I will leave no lasting impression at all."

Further, the busyness of one's day can get in the way of engaging in transformative social action, particularly if such work is seen as big commitment:

> …I continuously think…: "I don't have the time or the energy." I have an utmost busy schedule. Every morning, I begin my day by showering, dressing, feeding, and dropping off my nieces and nephew. Then I have to go to school and work. Later in the day, I go home to have dinner and study. It is a big challenge for me to see myself producing and executing a social action. I think that to make a big difference, an individual has to put all their effort and time into that action/activity. It brings a lot of commitment to be a part of such a big, and even small social change.

With such comments, Forty-Four again highlighted the tendency of the students in the CAI course to define social action as something "big," requiring "all their effort and time." Beyond feeling overwhelmed or frustrated, a common thread that emerges here is a view of social action as something extra to be added to one's schedule. Such a view of social action prompted these students, as well as others in the class, to doubt their abilities to commit time or energy to social action. Thus, at the beginning of the semester, for a number of students, social change was not

viewed as a part of daily living or daily decisions; instead it was a mammoth task that likely

required more than an average college student can give.

It is interesting to note that some of the students believed their lack of time and energy

was only temporary. Stating, "I hope to, at some point in my life, have the sufficient amount of

time to get involved or be a part of a social change," Forty-Four captured a sentiment that

appears in the writings of others in the class. There is a sense that in the future, once they have

finished their university requirements, they will have more time and energy to devote to social

change. Forty-One made this point clearly, "…I definitely resonate with not having enough time

or energy to make a change. This…I think is only temporary in my life right now." Forty-Two

noted a similar feeling: "…'I don't have the time or energy.' Luckily, I believe this…is only

temporary." Again, students present social action as separate work that requires extra time and

energy. Of course, one can question the accuracy of the students' expectation that they will have

more time and energy in the future, when the demands of career, family, or perhaps graduate

school, ramp up. If they are postponing social action for some future date when their lives are

better suited for it, the possibility is that they will be disappointed, as life's demands may

continue to trump their desire to engage in social change.

Other students indicated that with proper time management, they believed they could

focus on those social issues about which they were passionate. For them, it was a matter of

shifting one's priorities or making space in one's schedule to accommodate the work of social

change. For example, Seven divulged:

> I personally wish that I had the organizational skills and time management to
> make time in my schedule to attend events/meetings with organizations pertaining
> to my passions. Between work, school, and down time, it's hard for me to fit more

into my schedule…I would like to be more involved but I often feel that I do not have the time to focus on these passions. (7)

Setting school and work as top priorities means that social change falls to the bottom of the "to do" list. One could potentially overcome this with better time management skills, as Twenty-Eight explains:

> What I need to exert a change is time management skills…. I feel that my time management is not effective enough to carry those changes. At time[s] I have the desire to volunteer in homeless shelters, domestic abuse shelter and even volunteer time in…[a] school, however unfortunately I always seem to be too exhausted after a long day of labor and school. Therefore, my priorities at the moment [are]…school and work but if I may be able to manage my time effectively enough, I can infuse volunteer time in shelters and after school programs.

Thus, with better time management skills, several students believed they could make space in their busy schedules to fulfill their desire to get involved in those social issues about which they were passionate. They saw their lack of such skills as blocking their pathway to action.

While an absence of time and energy might be quite genuine for some students, others may incorrectly attribute their lack of social action to such a set of circumstances. In other words, "I'm too busy," becomes a convenient, albeit "lame" excuse, as Student One admits:

> Now, "actual involvement" in community is something that I regretfully do not spend much time doing. I wish that I had more time to give to others in need and to volunteer…but I do feel like the "I'm too busy" excuse is kind of lame.

Eleven further debunked the practice of claiming a lack of time or energy, raising the possibility that perhaps students have more time for social action than they think.

> … I'm guilty of using…, "I don't have the time or energy". Motivation isn't always high so when I see something that I should take the time to stop and give energy to, I tell myself I have no time. I use excuses like I have too much schoolwork or I just simply have other stuff to do. The truth is I have lots of time in my schedule. I use that time to relax and scroll through my social media feed or

Pinterest. *It seems as though I do need to rework my schedule to fill it with things I value most.* (Italics added)

Similar to the previous quotes, these students present social change as something extra that must be fit into one's schedule or another demand on one's time. This calls into question the issue of priorities. For example, do students really lack the time and energy necessary to engage in the work of social change? Or, is it also possible that many students use "I don't have time or energy" as an excuse for themselves, to assuage their feelings of guilt due to a lack of social engagement? Or, perhaps, they do not recognize the time and energy they "waste" on other activities. As indicated in the above quote, the claim, "I don't have time or energy," may serve as a more acceptable reason for not engaging in action for social change than simply stating, "I lack motivation." The first claim allows one to blame external circumstances, while the second requires the individual to admit to a personal lack of will or interest.

Such complexity makes it difficult to completely understand what discourages students from engaging in social action, and in turn, further complicates the attempt to distinguish a reproductive outlook from a transformative outlook. A lack of time and energy, perceived or real, proved reason enough for students to not involve themselves in the work of transformative social action. Even if they articulated a desire to get involved, several students found their present circumstances prohibitive. Given the demanding and rapidly changing nature of modern, Western society, a responsible pedagogy aimed at social engagement must take this issue into account, providing a holistic approach that both helps students cope (Keesing-Styles 2006) and minimizes feelings of guilt (Rondini 2015). The distance between desire and action may be too great to cross for some students, depending on their circumstances. While it might be tempting to dismiss such students as having a reproductive outlook, full of excuses, that may be quite

203

inaccurate. This again reinforces the necessity of considering all indicators when theorizing the dialectic of the reproductive/transformative habitus. A strong desire to engage in the work of social change may exist in a student, along with a belief that society can change, and yet, given personal, temporal circumstances, it might be quite impossible for that same student to fulfill that desire. As Emirbayer and Mische (1998) note, one's present situation affects the agentic process. Therefore, discrepancies between the indicators of desire, feelings, beliefs, and action are due, in part, to one's circumstances, or at a minimum, one's perception of those circumstances. With these issues in mind, students may benefit from learning how to incorporate efforts of social action into their lifestyle instead of viewing it as an additional requirement. For example, volunteering at a shelter with friends can double as a social activity and social activism, and making a small change in one's consumer decisions (i.e. "I will only buy bananas that are fair trade certified") can help integrate positive social action into one's daily life. Seeing social activism as something that is possible to integrate into their already busy lives may help students feel better able to intentionally affect society.

Beyond Time and Energy

As a needed resource, time finds itself grouped with assets besides energy that students feel they need in order to be equipped for social action. For example, time was often combined with money as students contemplated what they required. The lack of time and money is perceived to limit the active pursuit of one's passion for social change, as Forty-Five explained:

> My interest and passion for social change is totally there, but what's lacking [are]
> the resources of time and money. Social change doesn't just happen overnight,
> and it's a tedious and on-going concept. If I dedicated 100% of my time into a
> universal social change, it would most likely happen, but that isn't realist[ic]. I am
> a full-time college student with a major, minor, and certificate in the works. I also

204

have a full-time job, an internship, and volunteer with various organizations and clubs in the community. I am currently researching graduate schools and programs to apply to, perfecting my resume and CV, and studying for the GRE. Although it may seem like I am giving excuses, I mean it when I say that I use my time very wisely. There are so many changes this world could use, but time is an essential part of that change.

Money is pretty self-explanatory. In order to get the ball rolling, I would need an unlimited amount of funds to pay for flyers, signs, places to hold events and speak at, etc. If money [weren't] an issue, it would make a social change a lot easier for sure. We live in a world where people rely on money, no matter what. It stinks that it's such an important part of living, but it is. Without money as a resource, some individuals might feel helpless, including myself. I believe more people would join together and make a difference in the world with some extra money in their pockets.

With such a statement, Forty-Five identifies time and money as *the* essential components to social change and necessary tools for individual involvement.

Some students indicated that social networks or social capital were resources they were lacking. Often, time, money, and connections were presented as intertwined and wholly necessary to change society. For example, Thirty-Four observed, "As for as finances, networks and time, I am presently limited on all three at this time." Similarly, Twenty-Two noted the need to invest time in making connections, as well as gain economic capital:

… I will need the proper connections to achieve such ambitious goals [i.e. upsetting a deeply rooted social norm]. I realize that connections/networks are not just handed out and that they will take time to create but I am invested enough in the underlying ideals of my goals to sacrifice the time to create it. And of course, money. Until the system is uprooted, being financially equipped will be the essential factor to achieve, well, any goal.

Similarly, alongside time and money, political connections were seen as vital, as One explained:

While I was reflecting on the question of what resources I have and don't have to exert my personal agency, I came to the conclusion that I have the education and drive to want to influence my social world; however, I lack the means (and by that[,] I mean time, money, and mainly political connections) to physically change the world.

Student Three found that, in addition to time and money, supportive connections should be added

to the list of important resources:

> Which brings me to what I currently, and will probably always lack; time and
> money. Lacking important resources like those is what intimidates me about
> beginning a journey towards social change. …Besides monetary support, I also
> lack social support (from family, friends, and groups)...one of the most
> overlooked resources is a community of people with the same interest as you.
> Without this, it's hard to feel comfortable and motivated to put yourself on the
> line with a controversial opinion…Without the support from a group like this, I
> would hold back from attempting to implement social change.

Similarly, Fifty-Two combined the need for a supportive network with the requirement for

money:

> …now it is time to determine what it is I need. For starters, being surrounded by
> like-minded individuals who share the same desired outcome, or even people who
> don't share the same beliefs but are open to listening to them and contribute their
> own input, are essential to come about change. Learning to cooperate with one
> another and overcome our vast differences can heavily impact the world around
> us. In today's day and age, sadly, another thing we need to come about change is
> money. It is unfortunate but this society is ruled by money. Most organizations
> that that thrive are those that are widely funded by many sponsors or even one
> benefactor. (52)

Other students focused on their needs for adequate social support systems or networks to support

their actions for social change, separate from any mention of time or money, as Forty-One did:

"When it comes to resources, I think I need a strong community to back me up and help me get

back on my feet when I feel [too] fearful to do any social action." Also, Fifty-One stated: "I feel

I still lack certain tools to carry out a social action plan…for my social action plan to be

successful I will need the support and influence of other members to influence change in my

community." Finally, with this impassioned review, Ten fully captures the difficulty of

compiling the resources necessary to take care of oneself, let alone engage in the social action on

behalf of others:

> Considering what holds me back, there is a lengthy list. Despite being an over-achiever in high school, I find myself burned out in college. I lack time, money, experience, and communication skills to make connections. I lack connections to start a movement. I am not a natural leader, but rather a Byronic hero struggling to find a reason to be my own protagonist—how can I be expected to fight for others when I have trouble finding the energy to fight for myself?

Thus, beyond time and energy, the students in the CAI course articulated a need for several other

resources, including money, social capital, political connections, support systems, and

communication skills.

At the beginning of the semester, the students in large part felt ill equipped for engaging

in social action, identifying several things that blocked their path from desire to transformative

action. This is a very important consideration for the theoretical framework of the present study.

In order to support and facilitate the development of a transformative outlook, action-oriented

sociological education must contemplate how it can best help students gain the resources they

feel they need. This may require, for example, a different presentation of what transformative

social action includes. If students view social action as something "huge" that requires a great

deal of time, energy, money, or other resources, they are probably less likely to feel able to

engage in it, especially in conjunction with their beliefs about the ineffectiveness of individual

effort. Therefore, it may be necessary to reframe social engagement as "small," daily actions that

help to slowly change or challenge norms, drawing on a framework such as that used by Enloe

(2014) in her examination of the global politics of gender. In it, she emphasizes the importance

of everyday life in constructing and changing society:

207

> …it requires seeing how one's own family dynamics, consumer behaviors, travel choices, relationships with others, and ways of thinking about the world actually help shape that world. We are not just acted upon; we are actors…. One discovers that one is often complicit in creating the very world that one finds so dismaying. The world is something that has been and is being made every day. (P.35)

Thus, an understanding of society as socially constructed becomes particularly important for helping students move from desire to action. In this way, social activism is reduced from its position as the business of extraordinary people to a sort of lifestyle activism, where students can consider how their daily choices affect themselves, those around them, and broader society. This approach may help students move from seeing all the resources they lack to recognizing what is immediately available to them. In this manner, an action-oriented sociology course may be better able to help students find "tactics" (De Certeau 1984) that turn daily events into opportunities for change, thus helping students bridge the gap between desire and action more easily, supporting both a transformative outlook and a transformative approach to life.

"I Don't Know Enough"

Beyond time, energy, money, connections, and the other resources already mentioned, a substantial number of students indicated that they needed to increase their knowledge about the social issues about which they were interested. Recognizing knowledge as a necessary resource, several students appeared to feel ill equipped in this area, as Twenty-One demonstrated by stating, "Not knowing enough about the issues is also a trapping thought. In order to make a difference, I imagine a person must be highly knowledgeable about both current and past events." The complexity of social issues caused students to feel they lacked knowledge, which discouraged their belief in their potential to cause social change. For example, Forty-Seven notes:

The first trap I fall into with bigger social issues like terrorism, immigration, black lives matter, etc. is…"I don't know enough about the issue" because those types of issues are so complex and hard to impact because of how strongly tied into other social institutions, like government.

Interestingly, a few students linked their lack of knowledge about the issues to a fear of

getting something wrong or being seen as uninformed by others. For example, Five divulged:

…I also feel dissuaded from being active in my community if I feel like I don't know enough about the issue. Especially if I meet people who seem to know more about a subject than I do and talk down to me for not being as informed.

Similarly, Forty expressed, "…'I don't know enough about the issues'… can really put a person

into a fearful place because you want to seem prepared and not look like a fool in front of others."

Thirteen echoed those sentiments:

… I am stuck under…the feeling of not having enough information about the issue. I often want to share my beliefs, but I am a person who thinks about my message and phrasing before speaking. I am afraid to misunderstand an issue or to share my opinion without being fully informed.

Fear of looking uninformed in front of one's peers also caused Three to feel intimidated:

…The most resonating example for myself is…, "I don't know enough about the issues". This saying makes me think of one of the classes I'm taking this semester…. When I'm at home, doing independent research and required readings I always think to myself, "Wow _____, you're going to do great next class. You've assured that you know enough to speak up." Then I get to class and want to say something about, for example, ISIS, I think of a statement and before I speak I realize everyone knows a lot more about it than I do. There's a guy that knows Arabic and all I've got is a few articles from a news source. I'm discouraged to speak and only one side of the view on ISIS is brought up and discussed. Once again, I don't know enough to inform the class on other parts of the issue, or I do but I'm scared that I will look like I don't. I can never conduct enough research to ensure that I know enough.

Unlike Three, who felt no amount of research could be enough, Fourteen noted the importance of

understanding the issues, while recognizing that the desire to know everything about an issue

may render a person inactive.

And I am stuck in the thought trap of "I don't know enough about the issue." I feel like in order to change something you should know a lot about it. I think to know about the issue is important. To change something[,] we should understand it. But it becomes a trap when all you do is study the issue, instead of taking action.

Thus, several students in the CAI course identified their lack of knowledge as inhibiting their social engagement, creating feelings of fear (i.e. I don't want to look foolish) and inadequacy that seemed to paralyze them to some extent.

The knowledge that arises through sociological education opens students to the complexity of society, and in developing the sociological imagination, students learn to see private issues as public troubles (Mills 1959). While this is enlightening, it can also raise doubts within students about their own ability to understand society, let alone change it through their own agency. Sociological knowledge, in this sense, can be a double-edged sword. The realization of how much they do not know works in tandem with their learning more. The more one knows, the more one realizes how much remains unknown. It is important that students realize the limitations of their own knowledge, but those limitations should not become paralyzing. Sociological education needs to be aware of this issue, because, as the above student comments demonstrate, increasing sociological knowledge may trap students into feeling discouraged about or unequipped for social action. This may limit the ability of students to transition from desire to action, especially if the knowledge they gain generates feelings of cynicism, dampens their desire to get involved, or leads them to believe that they are ineffectual social agents. On the other hand, knowledge may change their outlook, support their desires for and beliefs in the possibility of social change, and translate to action. In other words, as a resource, knowledge can reinforce a reproductive outlook as well as support a transformative

outlook. Along with the other issues raised by the students, this is another complexity in the dichotomy.

I Am Not Now, but "I CAN Be Equipped"

At the beginning of the semester, several students entered the CAI class feeling unequipped for social change, and expressed a desire and a potential to be better equipped. Student Twenty asserted, "I do feel like I CAN be equipped to cause social change. That word 'can' is very important because at this point in my life I am still learning and experiencing all the world has to offer." In a similar vein, Forty-One saw social change as part of her future:

> I do not believe I am ready and equipped to start social change just yet but I can envision it in my future. I would like to believe that my purpose in life is to make a change and not be a pawn in society.

Several students counted on the CAI course to help them in this endeavor. Thirteen said, "I hope that through this class I will become more knowledgeable and equipped to cause more social change." Student One expressed similar feelings of hope that the CAI course would help her feel better equipped:

> I hope that by the end of this class a bit of hope is restored to my outlook and that I am better equipped with the knowledge on how to become more of a "doer" in terms of being involved in social change.

Similarly, Thirty-Four stated:

> I do not feel as if I am equipped to cause social change at this point in my academic career. However, I am working on getting the academics tools from my "Community Action and Involvement Course". This will allow me to [become] more knowledgeable in areas that would allow me to make positive influence to my community.

This belief that the CAI course could provide needed resources was shared by Thirty-Seven:

> In all honesty[,] I don't feel I have any resources for social change…to take the initiative step I will like to proceed with…Therefore that is the main reason I decided to enroll in this course of community action and involvement for guidance into taking the initial steps to conquer these assets.

These students, though they did not feel equipped for social action at the beginning of semester, believed it was possible for them to gain the resources they needed.

In a manner, these quotes demonstrate the projectivity element of agency in that the students foresaw social engagement, as well as the practical-evaluative element, as they evaluated their current readiness to engage and decided they needed additional resources to do so (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Several of the students expected that the knowledge they would gain from the CAI course would enable them to be better prepared and able to engage in social change. These findings align with one of the reasons that prompted their enrollment in the class: to meet a specific need related to social engagement. This again speaks to the importance of such a course in the sociological curriculum; it targets the need of those students to desire to gain knowledge and resources for social action alongside the development of their sociological perspective. Mills (2008a) sees education as essential to helping students develop a transformative outlook on their personal situation and the broader world, and therefore, uncovering what the students feel they need and then providing it becomes a central task.

Concisely stated, it is evident that many of the students felt they were not adequately equipped to cause social change. Some students felt overwhelmed by the social problems they saw. Others believed they lacked the ability, understanding, or key resources necessary to get involved in social action aimed at altering society. Still others were hopeful that the CAI course would help them gain the tools and knowledge they felt they needed to engage in social action. Their writings early in the semester thus add to our understanding of what prevents students from

getting over the "hump" in our action-oriented classes; in other words, they help explain what students believe keeps them from self-organizing and engaging in social action on their own.

From their writings, it appears that students require assistance to bridge the distance between their desire to "change the world" and intentional, transformative action. It has become evident that transformational desire does not necessarily translate to transformational action. Analysis of their writings suggests that students may have to overcome other issues for this to happen. They may have to vanquish feelings of cynicism, develop a concrete belief in their abilities to change things they dislike about their personal situation and in broader circles, gain knowledge, advance their sociological perspective, discover a starting place, or find time and energy within their busy schedules. Of course, this assumes they start with a desire to change society, which may or may not always be the case with students who enroll in an action-oriented course. Further, as it is difficult to determine exactly how one indicator affects the others, it is unclear where to start. Should students be sent out to do transformative action (as defined by the professor) if they are cynical about society in general? This action could indeed help to transform their outlook and make them more empathetic to the needs of others (Rondini 2015); however, it could also reinforce a reproductive outlook, as they are confirmed in their belief that a single individual cannot do much to help a "big" problem. Thus, with the inclusion of action, and all the things that keep students from minimizing the discrepancy between their desire to engage and the action to fulfill that desire, the theorization of the reproductive/transformative habitus gains greater complexity. It becomes more difficult to determine the extent to which students have a reproductive habitus or a transformative habitus, and it further problematizes the role of

sociological education in what Mills (2008a:107) terms the work of "'countering' in the sense of counter-hegemony" to engender transformative outlooks in students.

I Do Feel Equipped to Cause Social Change

Not all the students in the CAI course indicated that they felt unequipped at the beginning of the semester, but those who entered the course feeling adequately prepared were much fewer in number. Less than a quarter of the students (N=11/47) in the CAI course expressed that they felt duly equipped to engage in social change. Of those that did, a few couched their comments in the belief that everyone can cause social change. Others noted particular tools or abilities they had on hand that caused them to see themselves as equipped. Also, despite believing they had resources and potential, a few students in this category still reflected on their need to be better equipped.

A couple students believed themselves equipped for social action by default, believing that it is possible for anyone to cause change. By way of example, Three stated, "Anyone can cause social change, therefore everyone is equipped." Likewise, Nine believed everyone was capable of causing social change, as long as they figured out their own "plan of action:"

> Even though I don't see myself as very socially active, I definitely think that I am equipped to cause social change. I think everyone has the ability to cause change and it's simply a matter of figuring out what will work best for that individual and what the best way to go about the social change is. We all have the ability to create a plan of action.

Interestingly, both Three and Nine identified themselves earlier as at least partially cynical, yet here, they believe that anyone can cause social change. This provides further evidence of the

discrepancies between indicators, such as feelings and beliefs that can complicate the

theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus.

The possession of particular traits and resources caused a few students to view

themselves as well equipped for social action. Personal fearlessness mattered for Forty-Five, who

noted, "…I feel equipped to cause social change because I'm not afraid of going after what I

want in life." Another student, Thirty-One, prized her gregariousness and sensitivity:

> I do feel equipped to cause social change because I am a very outgoing person. I
> get along with people easily and I tend to understand as opposed to judge. I feel
> like that is something that cannot be taught and I just so happened to get lucky
> enough to have that small ability.

As another example of the importance of resources, having a support system and access to social

media helped Twenty-One feel prepared for social action:

> I do feel equipped to cause social change for many reasons. To start, I have an
> awesome support system[,] which is important because that is the foundation of
> motivation. Whenever I feel like taking on a project that I might personally deem
> to be overwhelming, my family and friends reassure me as well as encourage me
> to continue going for what I believe in and that nothing is ever too much when
> you have a sturdy structure.
>
> In addition, with the Internet being as easily accessible as it is plus a major source
> of information nowadays, getting one's point of view across to a wide array of
> people is less of a hassle. Media vents allow total strangers with similar outlooks
> to comment and share ideas. My social following as of now is not immense but it
> is enough to get concepts traveling possibly unto the impressions of someone with
> a legit fan base.

By focusing on resources available to them, these few students were exceptional, because, as

demonstrated above, the majority of students focused on what they lacked.

Identifying oneself as equipped for social action did not necessarily exclude a desire to be

better equipped. For example, Thirty-Six expressed a desire for more tools:

I do feel equipped to cause and contribute to social change. Even just in conversations I have with like-minded people I have seen them make changes by sharing my opinion and knowledge on certain topics. However, I would like to be able to add more tools or approaches into sharing my lifestyle and how it has affected me and how it affects the environment and what changes it actually makes.

Also, Thirty-Three expressed a need for more time and a specific plan in order to be better equipped:

I feel as though I can cause social change. What I lack at the moment is time and a plan of action. I am a determined young woman. I know what I am capable of and I understand that when I want something, I fight to make it happen with every resource I have at my disposal. That being said, I believe that I can incorporate my knowledge, the resources I have around me, the people I know, and my determination to cause social change.

Finally, despite feeling "somewhat equipped," Forty believes an increased awareness of social issues as well as a narrowing of her focus may help her feel better equipped:

I feel somewhat equipped to cause social change. I say somewhat because I don't feel like I am aware of all of the issues. It can be kind of overwhelming, because there are so many issues in the world and I don't want to feel like one trumps the other. It makes me wonder if I should just pick what I am most passionate about and go from there.

These students, though limited in number, serve to demonstrate that even those students who feel equipped for social change believe they could benefit from increasing the resources available to them.

Only a limited number of students in the CAI course defined themselves as equipped for social action. For a few of the students, this was belief rooted in the idea that anyone can cause change. This belief was rare among the students, who, as it was noted previously, tended to believe that it is only exceptional people that prompt social change. A few students pointed to a special ability they possessed that caused them to feel equipped. Even among the small number

of students who self-defined as prepared for social engagement, there were a few who desired to be better equipped. These results again draw attention to the importance of such a class in the sociological curriculum. As Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016) note in their Sociological Literacy Framework, undergraduates are expected to develop their application and evaluative skills in order to impact the social world. Determining how to best help students feel equipped to engage with their social world is therefore an important task of sociological education.

Conclusion

As a large number of students entered the CAI course feeling cynical about the social world, overwhelmed by the immensity and seeming permanence of social problems, and uncertain how to begin the work of social change, it follows that a large percentage of the students also defined themselves as socially inactive and unequipped for the work of social change. While there were exceptions, which have been noted, the majority of students found themselves to be non-agentic, or at least, less agentic than they wanted to be. While a small number of the students in the CAI class stated that they felt well equipped for social action, the majority indicated that they felt ill equipped, lacking resources they felt they needed to get started. Additionally, many expressed a desire to be better equipped, which may have prompted enrollment in the course, as some of the students noted. It is not surprising that several students looked to the CAI course to gain tools and information that would help them feel better prepared to cause social change. In fact, one might argue that the students who self-selected to take this elective class did so because they felt unequipped to translate their desire for social change into meaningful action. These results indicate that it is important for action-oriented sociology

courses to provide students with a space for self-reflection in which they can articulate if and why they feel unequipped for social action. This also raises the prospect that a course designed to meet this need should perhaps be considered an indispensable offering in the undergraduate sociological curriculum, or, at a minimum, a conscious effort should be made to integrate such a space into other sociological courses when it fits with the topics and materials.

The results discussed in this chapter further reveal the complexities inherent in the attempt to define the habitus of students as either reproductive or transformative. The students' writings about their social involvement, or perhaps more accurately, their lack of social involvement, and the extent to which they felt equipped to work for social change, uncover the wide gap between a desire to make society better and intentional action aimed at doing so. They may have the desire to engage, but doubt their own ability to do so, and therefore, do not risk taking any action. Feeling ill-equipped and lacking knowledge likely inhibits the ability to sort through the vastness of social problems and find a starting place for social action, a problem also evident in the early writings. In this case, the desire to create a better world, if it remains stymied and disconnected from transformative action, could lead to feelings of frustration, a cynical view of the social world, and self-doubt. Without an outlet for meaningful social engagement, students will, as both Bourdieu (1990b) and Mills (2008a) predict, likely select actions that serve to reproduce social inequalities instead of challenging them. To put it another way, the indicators of desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions may each shift toward the reproductive end of the spectrum, trapping students in a "cycle of cynicism" (Jones et al. 2007:3), perhaps generating and sustaining a negative momentum. Thus, determining what the students feel they need to get started in the work of social change and then either providing it for them to the greatest degree

possible or presenting them with alternative perspectives about how society changes, becomes important work that may affect their long-term view of self and society. For example, students may need additional knowledge or help finding inlets for engagement, which sociology can provide. They may also benefit from an increased understanding of the fragility (Enloe 2014), or the social construction of society, the importance of "little" actions for the reproduction or alteration of society (Bourdieu 1998a), and a view of social change that includes the contributions of "non-extraordinary" people.

As Bourdieu (1990a:116) notes, the habitus is in the continual process of being reinforced or transformed. Therefore, the indicators of the reproductive/transformative habitus that have emerged throughout this study are interwoven, and one can affect the other. Desire, feelings, and beliefs are tied to action, because action will reinforce or challenge patterns of thinking, affecting one's personal circumstances as well as societal arrangements. Thus, helping students gain the resources necessary for social action may better support the development of a transformative outlook by encouraging them to become socially engaged, which will serve to reinforce any shift in their desire, feelings, and beliefs toward the transformative end of the spectrum. Student Thirty, in identifying the resource that would help her translate her desire to change society into transformative action, stated, "[W]hat I really want is to have someone guide my first steps along the way," suggesting the need for social activist mentors. It might be helpful to think of the students in the CAI course as bodies of potential energy. Many of them desired to change society (that is why they enrolled in the class), yet they remained largely stationary due to their cynicism, a lack of confidence in their own abilities, a lack of the resources they deemed necessary, or some combination thereof. This lack of motion led to negative feelings, such as embarrassment

and frustration, and likely served to tilt students toward the reproductive end of the spectrum. If, however, students can be guided in their "first steps along the way," they might be set in motion, their potential energy turning into kinetic energy, thereby gaining momentum that can carry them forward. In other words, sociological education has the potential to help students—particularly those who have a desire to change some aspect of the social world, from their personal situations to the global society—generate transformative momentum. With this in mind, it is time now to explore the extent to which the CAI course helped students shift their desires, feelings, beliefs, and action toward the transformative end of the spectrum.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ROCKING THE BOAT
EXPLORING CHANGES SINCE EMBARKATION

The previous chapters established the starting point of the students in the Community

Action and Involvement (CAI) course in terms of their desire to see a better social world, their

general feelings about society, their belief in the potential for social change, their views of their

own social engagement and what roadblocks deterred them from taking action. Most students felt

at least partially cynical about the social world, but all of the students believed that the social

world was open to change. Despite their belief in the fragility of society, many students found

themselves overwhelmed by the immensity of social problems, doubting that one individual

could make a difference and unable to find a starting place to get involved. As far as social

engagement, most students identified themselves as "not socially active" and "unequipped" for

the work of social change. A small number of students felt optimistic and hopeful overall, and a

few were socially engaged. An equally small number felt equipped to be activists. Even these

students, however, generally were looking for greater engagement and increased tools and

resources for change. Having established this overview, it is now time to turn to those writings

collected later in the semester to explore if the students changed in any of these areas.

The middle section of the CAI course, from weeks 6-12, served as a gestation period

during which students were exposed to and engaged in discussions about different methods of

social action. The in-class discussions, readings, and assignments in the middle weeks of the

semester focused on better understanding the tools of social change. For example, the class

focused on spending habits, forms of physical engagement such as sit-ins or marches, the role of

social media in social change, and political power. They also participated in sharing examples of

music and art aimed at social change. The potential of both the spoken and written word to affect change was also considered. Additionally, students were asked to think about how different groups and individuals work together (i.e. strange bedfellows). The writings in the middle of the semester were designed to allow students to reflect on and evaluate these different methods of social engagement. The students completed journal entries and social action tools during this portion of the semester, linking the social issues in which they were interested to the tools for social change about which they were learning. During this period, the students conducted research into social issues of their choice, projected how different tools and methods could be used to cause positive change in those areas, and evaluated both the usefulness and limitations of each method selected. The students also had opportunity to use the online discussion board to share and comment on current issues and social activism events. These are the types of learning activities in which students were involved in Weeks 6-12; they may have helped the students to potentially experience change.

Originally, it was thought that the writings from this middle section of the course would provide clear examples of the students "moving" toward transformation. This, however, was not the case. Analysis of the writings from the middle of the semester did not reveal definitive information about how and when any type of change occurred in the students' outlooks, feelings, beliefs, or actions. While they do show student reactions to topics such as social media and politics, the writings in the middle of the semester did not provide any uniform or linear line of movement toward transformation. In other words, there are no clear moments of clarity (such as "Ah Ha!" moments) or any epiphanies captured in these writings. This may be due to the framing of journal prompts, which did not elicit responses that could contribute significantly to

the understanding of the process of how students were changing in terms of a reproductive or transformative outlook. It also may be due to the elimination of four journal entries during the semester, as it was determined by the instructor that the workload was a bit too heavy at times; their inclusion might have provided additional insight. Student reflections at the end of the semester are more helpful than the writings from the middle of the semester in suggesting the ways in which students changed over the semester. As this is the central concern of the present study, this chapter, Chapter Eight, draws on those more telling writings from the closing weeks of the semester. Further, although the writings from the middle weeks are not particularly informative about the process of transformation, to help address the gap between the beginning and the end of the semester, later, Chapter Ten draws upon student reflections at the close of the class to provide a more detailed overview of those aspects of the CAI course that students found particularly helpful for facilitating changes in their perspectives on engaging in efforts for social change.

With the above concerns in mind, this chapter turns to students' writings from the closing period of the semester to explore the extent to which the students changed over the four months they were in the CAI course. By revisiting themes discussed in previous chapters, areas of change emerged as the semester progressed. When compared to the students' writings at the beginning of the CAI course, it becomes evident that many students experienced change to some degree during the semester. Some, for example, found themselves more optimistic. Others began to breakdown their overly idealistic vision of activism and activists to find that individuals, including themselves, could make a difference in society. Some discovered that changing themselves was an entry point into the work of social change, and several came to see the value

of "small" acts. Many students spoke of feeling better equipped, having gained tools and resources they needed to get involved, and most of them articulated, at the minimum, a plan to increase their engagement. Conversely, there were a few students who remained cynical, noted no increased involvement, and remained frustrated in trying to narrow down their interests. As a whole, the results provide a glimpse into whether and how the students changed over the course of the semester, addressing the exploratory research question: "Did the students in the CAI course change significantly over the course of the semester in their general attitudes and behaviors toward the social world, particularly regarding social engagement and social change?"

Uncovering Transformation

The degree to which the students in the CAI course changed over the course of a semester is of central importance for the theoretical framework of the present study. If education is indeed able to cause students to shift toward a more transformative outlook, as Mills (2008a) suggests it can, it is critical to evaluate and measure such a shift. For example, by the end of the semester, had the students become able to recognize and seize opportunities to engage in efforts to change society and challenge current societal arrangements? Such determinations are not straightforward, however. Given the complexities inherent in the development of the reproductive and transformative habitus, particularly when one considers the indicators of desire, feelings, beliefs, and action uncovered in this study, it becomes difficult to measure if students have indeed shifted toward a transformative outlook as a result of a single course. This is due in part to the difficulty of discerning exactly where they started given the complexities engendered by the four indicators

uncovered in this study, as well as the vagaries related to establishing where the reproductive habitus ends and the transformative habitus begins.

With these difficulties in mind, the present study includes an analysis of the students' writings from late in the semester in comparison to those written early in the semester in order to discern any differences. During the process of course design, the decision was made to allow students to articulate for themselves the degree to which they either did or did not change over the semester, and an activity was set up to facilitate this. The students were asked to complete a second self-assessment in the final days of the CAI course. In this graded assignment, students reevaluated their first self-assessment, an activity in which they had explored the extent to which they felt prepared for the work of social change and evaluated what resources they needed as well as what they already had on hand. In the second self-assessment, the students were asked to indicate any ways in which they felt they changed over the semester, and then add an appendix to explain those changes. Their explanations did not have to refer to the CAI course; however, most students did so voluntarily. The students also had the option to leave their first self-assessment unchanged, but they were still required to add an explanation of why it remained unchanged.

To further collect student responses to the CAI course itself, students were given an open-ended question on the post-course survey, which asked, "Please describe in a few sentences how what you learned in the Community Action and Involvement course has affected (or not affected) the way you see yourself and the social world." The students were not required to complete the question or the survey, and they did not include their names on it; it was ungraded and completed during the final exam period. With the combination of the second self-assessment and this question on the post-course survey, students were provided space in which they could

comment on any changes they had experienced over the semester, speak to any aspect of the CAI course, and discuss their experience in any manner that felt appropriate to them. They also could choose not to comment on or refer to the class. Therefore, the answers provided were not as neatly framed as the early writings. By and large, however, the coding used on these later writings mirrors the terms and phrases used in the analysis of the early writings; in other words, the coding that gave rise to the categories discussed in the previous chapters guided the coding of the later writings. The results indicate that the students often revisited the same issues they expressed earlier in the semester, and this allowed sequential comparison that uncovered areas in which the students indicated they experienced change over the semester. Many students spoke of changes regarding their feelings about society, their belief in their own abilities to change society (or changes to their romanticized visions of social change), and the actions they had undertaken or planned to embark upon as a result of the class. There were also a few cases that may be defined as negative, which will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

It "Reversed My Mindset"

At the outset of the CAI course, many students indicated that, at least part of the time, they found themselves holding a cynical view of the social world, while only a few held an entirely optimistic outlook. They had drawn on the "cycle of cynicism" and the "cycle of hope" in Jones et al. (2007:3) to frame their early responses. At the conclusion of the course, several students chose to revisit their earlier comments on cynicism and hopefulness. While no one referenced the cycles directly, it was evident that these students felt changes in their own cynicism or hopefulness were significant enough to warrant attention at the close of the semester.

Here, only those who found themselves less cynical are discussed, while the few who remained or became more cynical are presented at the end of this chapter.

There were several students who defined themselves as less cynical and more positive as a result of the CAI course. For example, Eight described the change as minimal, but indicated it was change nonetheless: "I think that this class has made my outlook on social change a little more positive." Four was more adamant about the impact of the class, stating, "If anything has changed about me, it is that I have become less cynical and even more hopeful about opportunities that I can take on myself to contribute towards making social change." Forty-One shared that the CAI course, by affecting her outlook, altered her demeanor,

> At the [beginning] of the semester I felt very negative and hopeless about being able to be change things in society as an individual. This class has allowed me to see that even small things are a part of making change. It helped me alter my attitude to a more positive side instead of being so closed off and quiet.

It is helpful to also draw attention to Forty-One's comment that the class had helped her see that "small things" matter in social change, helping her overcome her earlier hopelessness had arisen from a doubt in her own ability to make a difference. Her words connected directly to the "thought traps" and the view of activism as something extraordinary discussed in the early writings. For this student therefore, the CAI class undercut those thought patterns. In an even more emphatic manner, Twenty-Two spoke of a sea change in her outlook, which she attributes directly to the CAI course:

> Community Action and Involvement has taken my limited knowledge of sociology and expanded it into a tool for change. This course has enabled me to understand the way I view society as well as improve and broaden my scope when looking at the world around me. Optimism regarding change was something that I did not enter this course possessing, especially when it came down to doing so with nothing more than oneself. *This course has targeted that negativity and*

227

completely reversed my mindset, turning my understanding into a positive good for society. (Italics added)

Therefore, for these students, the CAI course helped them generate a more optimistic outlook, to varying degrees.

A common thread that ran through the student's comments about their increased optimism at the end of the semester was an increased belief in their abilities to cause social change. The thread is evident in the quotes by Four, Forty-One, and Twenty-Two above. This suggests that for some of the students in the CAI course, their feelings about society in general were contingent upon their belief in their personal ability to make a difference in society. With increased belief came increased optimism. In her theorization, Mills (2008s) argues that students with a reproductive habitus see themselves as having very little agency, and in feeling unable to alter society, they develop a fatalistic outlook as their default position. Indeed, this description appears to have well fit these students at the beginning of the semester. It is not enough, however, to simply encourage students to be more hopeful and optimistic; given the interwoven nature of desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions, specifically targeting students' feelings about the social world will not necessarily shift them toward more transformative thought patterns. The manner in which the students themselves articulated the change they had experienced suggests that through the generation of a more transformative and concrete belief in their ability to affect society, these students also shifted in their feelings about society in general. Thus, the change in one indicator, belief, prompted a change in another indicator, feeling. These comments help confirm that if a class like CAI aims to help students develop a more optimistic outlook on society, it must determine how to best uncover and affect the other indicators that contribute to and are bound up with that outlook.

Extraordinary Not Required

From their early writings, it was apparent that many students entered the CAI course with an idealized vision of social action, romanticizing both activism and activists. In particular, they generally dismissed the ability of one person to significantly alter society unless that one individual was an extraordinary person. Many students also defined being socially active as doing "huge" actions, and largely disregarded the potential of what they deemed their own "small" actions. In other words, many students at the beginning of the semester believed social change occurs because extraordinary people do big things. This section, therefore, will present comments from students that denote the changes they experienced by the end of the semester regarding this vision of social engagement as extraordinary work by extraordinary people. As the results demonstrate, many students came to see the potential for one person to make a difference in society, and several students saw changing themselves as the impetus for broader social change.

So, One Person *Can* Make a Difference

The early writings of several students in the CAI course documented their disbelief in the potential for any one person to "make a difference," in society, particularly if this person was not extraordinary or imbued with some special gifts or skills. In addition to struggling with the abstract belief that some generic person could change society, by and large, they summarily dismissed the more concrete belief that they themselves were able to do so. Because belief emerged as an indicator of the reproductive and transformative outlooks, it can here serve as a tool of comparison to explore the extent to which the students' writings at the end of the

semester represented a change. Indeed, at the end of the semester, several members of the class indicated a change in their belief regarding the potential of a single individual to cause social change. They applied this potential to themselves and their own actions as well.

In their final writings, several students pointed to the CAI course as prompting changes in their belief about the ability of one person to change society. For example, Student Eight attributed the change in her outlook to the CAI class, stating, "It's easy to feel caught up in the notion that we as individuals don't have an impact but *over this course* that feeling has deteriorated" (italics added). Likewise, Forty-One moved from doubt to a realization of the potential for her actions to affect others: "…*this course* has affected me in many ways. Personally, I was doubtful that I could make a change in society and now I can see that it is a kind of snowball effect" (italics added). In a similar fashion, Nine cited a new recognition about the prospect of her own influence: "*This course* has changed the way I see myself in that I realize how what I do as an individual can affect those around me" (italics added). In a similar manner, Fifty-Two noted, "*This course* has made me realize how important it is to get involved with something you're passionate about. It has shown me that one person has the possibility to change the lives of many" (italics added). These comprise just a small sample of the many students who directly referenced the influence of "*this course*" on their outlook. There are several more examples included throughout this chapter.

Several students indicated that they had acquired a greater awareness of resources and opportunities for engagement that supported their increased belief that one individual can make a difference. For instance, Student Four expressed;

> I know there is so much to be done, and although I may be just one person, one
> person can make a big difference in the end…I now see I have potential to create

change. There are so many resources given to us and now we just need to learn to use it to our advantage.

Likewise, Forty-Five documented an increased awareness of the potential of one individual and a greater openness to opportunities to get involved:

> This course has affected the way I see myself and the social world because…I had no idea how much of an impact only one person could have, and after seeing that made me more open to changing the world. This course has made me more open minded and appreciative of the opportunities I have and what I can do for other people. I want to help others as much as I can, and I believe I have the power to do that. I just needed this class to push me in the right direction and think positively no matter what.

Fifty too came to believe in the potential of one person to make a difference, citing a new recognition of multiple ways to have an influence:

> I have learned so much from this course; it is incredible. *I started this class with the mindset that one person is not enough to cause social change*, I viewed myself as someone who was open minded and more or less aware of what was going on around me in the world, and I thought I had a grasp on the limitations on me for being an activist. I was so wrong! *I am so impressed with not only knowing but seeing for myself how one person or a small group of people can cause social change on so many levels*, I have joined a few activist groups and met people who had the same goals as me and I feel like it is so much easier to change the world with others supporting me than trying to do it on my own. Even more, through the activities and projects in class, like the social toolkits, I have found so many more ways to be an agent of social change that I didn't think could cause that much of an influence. (italics added)

Thus, the recognition of opportunities and methods for involvement pushed these students toward a greater belief in their own ability to cause social change.

Other students found themselves more personally "empowered" as an individual interested in social change. For example, Thirty-One stated, "I feel more empowered to go out and make a change in my community. [The class] helped me to understand how [I] can be useful in my community even though [I] felt powerless before the course." Similarly, Forty-Two found,

"Things that I have learned throughout the course have empowered me to attempt to create and cause social change. From completing the course[,] I feel that one person can really make a difference." Forty-Seven too defined herself as more empowered in her work with children:

> …in my first assessment[,] I saw my position in childcare as only satisfying temporary needs and support, almost only putting "a band aid over it". I have found this to be so inaccurate. This class has showed me that just by…exerting my social agency to work with kids is a step in social action. I go to work every day with a purpose of using my agency to positively impact my kids knowing that my influence could go a long way. The kids I impact may go on to impact not only each other but [also] others in the community. I am grateful that I have already been able to see this personally unfold before me.

Thirty-Four found empowerment in the realization that her individual actions could cause a ripple effect, stating:

> All it takes is to step outside my own issues and think of others. If I just speak up there may be others with the same ideas and are willing to stand with me. If not, I alone can make a stand and the [e]ffect could ripple through history where one day someone would pick it up and carry if on. I learned one person could make a difference.

Similarly, Thirty-Nine enthusiastically shared:

> Have I really change[d] this much sense the beginning of this semester! Reading over my last Self-Assessment it is amazing to see how much I have grown as a person in only a few short months! Funny to me I only talk about materialistic things when it came to providing a social change to the world around. I am much different now I realized that I do not need all those things in order to make a difference, I can still do things that better the world around me just by giving time and energy and to not give up. I realized that money is not the big demon that runs the world, and that any can make a difference. If I have the passion and surround myself with others that have the same passion that I have to make a change that will benefit the entirety and not just one group of people the social structures can be changed and made anew…

> [T]he reason why I signed up for this class and wrote all those amazing papers have come down to this last week, and it is a bitter sweet moment. This class has made my whole [university] experience worth[while] because I learned something, I learned more than just theories, and people in history, and numbers. I learned about myself, I mingled with people from different backgrounds, from different

232

walks of life, some people that I would have never considered on being a part of something with, but I joined and as a class we became something more, as a person I became something more. We are all social activist[s] in our own right.

These comments demonstrate that several students realized that they, as individuals, were capable of causing social change, found this new belief to be liberating, and believed the CAI course helped facilitate this for them.

It is relevant to note that a few students, while changing their view regarding the difference an individual can make in society, still tempered their belief. For example, Thirty-Three spoke of the power of the individual; however, she also considered the limitations and frustrations that are inherent in the work of social change:

> I certainly understand the limitations that exist and I know that I cannot take on too much at once, since it may take me down a road of frustration or futility, yet I believe that I can exert my personal agency to create change. I believe that, at one point in time, I acknowledged that one person can make a difference but I didn't understand the magnitude…[of his/her] effect. I believed that it took one person to change, but an army to make a large-scale effect. I now recognize that one person has unimaginable power.

Likewise, Eleven documented a change in her outlook over the semester based on a realization of her potential for impact, but she still found herself overwhelmed by the vastness of social problems:

> Before the class, I thought I could not create social change without money. I now see myself as a powerful tool of social change in society. I am still overwhelmed with the numerous social problems our society has however, I am now better able to focus on "what bugs me". I was not aware of all of the social problems we learned during class therefore, my focus changed once I learned about them. In conclusion, I thought there was no way I would be able to change our social world, but I have come to see our social world as fragile.

In such a manner, students noted that their newfound excitement about their role as "powerful tool[s] of social change" was still accompanied by frustrations and concern due to the immensity of social issues.

A belief in the ability of an individual to change something in society is arguably essential if students are to develop a transformative outlook on the social world. It is important in its abstract form, "any individual can change society," and perhaps even more so in a more concrete manifestation such as, "I can change society." Believing oneself capable of shaping and altering the social world can increase the likelihood of taking action intended to do that; understanding society as socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966) can lead to and support such a belief. It can also allow students to draw on different schema in projecting how they can direct their agency in the future (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Such a belief can change what students see as possible for themselves and envision alternatives to the current social arrangement, as students come to see their potential to "*make things happen*" (Mills 2008b:83; italics in original) and understand their actions to be consequential. It can also help students develop a more optimistic view of society and fulfill their desire to make their personal situation or that of broader society a "better" place. Believing one individual, especially oneself, can change society is therefore intertwined with the indicators of desire, feelings, and action, and thus an important consideration in the attempt to help students develop a more transformative outlook. Evidently, one resource that some of the students in the CAI course needed was a belief in their own potential to change their world, and to some extent, in their own words, the class helped them to develop one.

<u>When in Doubt About Where to Start, Change Yourself</u>

The writings from the beginning of the semester indicated that some students struggled to find a starting place for social engagement. They discussed feeling overwhelmed and often cited the presence of the "I don't know where to begin," thought trap (Jones et al. 2007:10). Unable to determine how to get started, they remained, in their words, non-agentic, or "not socially active." By the end of the course, however, several students had apparently found an entry point: Change oneself first. They expected that by focusing on making themselves better people, they would positively influence others, which could potentially improve society overall.

For several of the students, addressing one's own issues and becoming a better person was the most obvious way to enter into the work of building a better society. For example, Forty-Four divulged:

> What I have learned in the Community Action and Involvement course has affected me in the way I see myself, in that I now think more positive of social actions I can personally take on and execute. I have learned that I can begin by changing myself, and from there on influence others to do the same.

Similarly, Twelve learned that changing oneself is a perfect entry point into social change:

> This course has taught me…The best way to start is to start with changing, or making a better version of yourself…I just have come to realize that sometimes you do not need to change the whole world, just start with yourself first and social change can follow. If you change yourself then this could change the people around you, and with a group of you that is when you could change the world.

Fifty felt similarly, stating, "I have learned that by changing and inspiring myself I can also do so with the people around me as well as my own community." Thirty also credited the CAI course with prompting her to evolve and change, and thereby contribute to society:

> I see myself contributing to the social world as much as I know I can. I'm continuously evolving to a person I didn't know I could be…and I thank this class for reminding me I have to do something new in order to get different results.

Nine, too, saw changing oneself as the clearest path toward changing the world and a reason for

hope:

> We have spoken a lot about how every change makes a difference no matter how
> "big" and how every change starts with you. In order to start making changes in a
> community or even the actions of those closest to us we have to start with
> ourselves…I truly think that having the simple hope of being a good person is still
> a relevant hope after this semester. There is so much that needs to change in our
> world but the one thing I'm sure of is the fact that I can continuously strive to
> improve myself, which will in turn improve the world.

Nine referred to the value of seeing all change as consequential, thereby challenging the

small/huge action issue in earlier writings. Likewise, Four references the importance of doing

those things that seem "little," such as changing oneself, as she identifies what was for her the

"biggest lesson" of the CAI course:

> I noticed that in my personal mission statement, I included that I must be the
> change that I want to see in the world. This goes along with the biggest lesson I
> learned from this class. Although it may seem little, starting change starts from
> within. You must change your own way of living and your own way of thinking
> before making a difference in the lives and thoughts of others.

Finally, Student One clearly expressed how she changed her view of herself as an agent of

change over the semester, discovering that elusive "first step":

> Before taking this course, I did not see myself as an active agent of social change.
> Now, I know that everyone is in charge of their own personal agency; and the first
> step is to change your own daily actions which become habits, that could
> ultimately change the world around you.

These students, and others like them in the CAI class, articulate a shift in their views over the

semester. They came to value their own habits and actions as influential. In doing so, they

determined that if they changed themselves for the better (or, continually strove to be a "good

person," as Nine expressed), they could affect not only themselves, but others as well. In

improving themselves, they could improve society. This then, was the starting point for which several of them had been looking when the semester began.

Referencing the theoretical framework of the study, it appears that these students were engaged in what Mills (2008a:104) terms as "self-enhancement" or "self-renewal," as they learned to move away from thoughtless reproduction and instead recognized the potential to change themselves, which they expect in turn to change society. Despite seeming limited in scope, such an approach can both benefit the individual and potentially challenge or counter current societal arrangements (Bourdieu 1998a). Students with a reproductive outlook see themselves as having little to no hope of improvement or agency, feeling unable to affect their social world (Mills 2008a; 2008b). As Bourdieu (1977:77) argues, transformative aspirations remain "unthinkable," and expected outcomes appear inevitable to someone with a reproductive outlook. To shift away from this pattern of thinking, it is helpful to first see oneself and one's own thoughts and actions as consequential. By recognizing the need to address their own habits, the students in this section appear poised to do battle with their reproductive outlook. Having developed a belief in themselves as important in both the reproduction and alteration of society, they have uncovered a starting place for the development of a transformative outlook.

Small is Huge

One of the findings that emerged in the early writings of the students in the CAI course was their tendency to define social change as something big or huge. Because they were intentionally not provided a definition of "social change" at the outset of the semester, the students offered their own descriptions of what it meant to them to be "socially active." As noted

previously, a result of this approach was the discovery that many students designated social change and/or social action as something very significant and impressive in its scope. And then, because they were not engaged in anything "big," many students indicated that they were not socially active or socially engaged. It was interesting to see, however, in the analysis of the writings at the end of the semester, several students revisited this discussion. In doing so, they described a change in their view that social activism was comprised solely of large and impressive activity; they came to believe instead that their small actions mattered as well.

Several students changed their definition of social action as something "huge" and monumental to something more attainable for the "average" individual. For example, Forty learned to focus on the potential inherent in a small action, like helping one individual, which can have a "ripple effect":

> Through this course, I have learned that there is power in helping one person. Social change is not about changing the entire world, or institution, rather it is changing the life of one person, and through that a ripple [e]ffect can begin.

Forty-One also came to see the value of "small things," over the course of the semester, stating, "This class has allowed me to see that even small things are a part of making change." Twenty-Eight agreed, and also acknowledged the potential for negative outcomes, stating, "[The] most important thing I learned in this class is everyone matters [in] society [and] our action has consequences, good or bad." Six expressed similar sentiment, "…throughout the course, I started to see more than I can do. I did realize that there are things, small things, that I can do." For a few students, this view of social change appeared to relieve some pressure, as Twenty-Six noted; she found value in her discovery that her actions did not have to cause a revolution, along with promise in the thought that they could:

238

What I learned in this course has affected the way I see myself and the social world because it helped me gain a better grasp on personal agency and how that relates to institutions. I'm still not sure if what I do will make a widespread difference, but *this course has taught me that what I do doesn't have to cause revolutionary social change*. This course, however, has also shown me that it can. (italics added)

Seeing everyday actions as consequential represented a shift in the students' view of social change. This change appears to have left them encouraged and more aware of how their decisions and actions shape society.

For a few like Fourteen, who expressed, "I've learned one person can make a difference, and that it doesn't have to be a big action to make a difference. Small acts do make a difference…," the importance of small actions led to an increased belief in the potential of the individual to make a difference. Forty-Four agreed, stating, "I have learned that my actions do not have to be big to make a difference in others and our community," as did Fifty-One, who wrote, "I have learned that by using my everyday actions I can affect change in the community around me." Four found reason for hopefulness in her realization that "little actions" matter:

Before this class, I knew that social change has been made in the past and knew the process of only a few, but now I feel more hopeful that it can be done and can be started by little actions done by me as an individual in this society.

Citing a specific example, Twenty-Eight also reconsidered her previous belief that her "small actions" were inconsequential:

I learned that my decision in life to exert change and challenge social institutions matter[s] in all aspect[s]. [There] are consequences for my decisions as a consumer; those decisions will impact my community and communities beyond my [border]. I had always neglected small action that I have done as an individual because they are second nature to me[;] this class has educate[d] me to view them as being social actions.

239

Finally, despite her ongoing struggle with thought traps at the end of the semester, Thirteen concluded, "I still find myself facing thought traps such as not having enough information about the issue and social activism being overwhelming, *but I have come to realize that change can start with a small, simple action*" (Italics in original). Thus, some students, in realizing the impact of small actions, also changed their view regarding their ability to make a difference in their society, believing themselves more able to do so as a result.

Similar to those students who saw that they could embark on the work of social change by changing themselves first, a few students found their starting point for social engagement in their realization that small actions matter and can lead to bigger things. For example, in his second self-assessment, Twenty-Two discussed his rejection of a statement from his first self-assessment that referenced his inability to cause significant social change, replacing it with:

> The final change, removing the sentence about my inability to induce change, stems also from what I have learned throughout this course, that every single person is equipped to create change. Change begins within and we all have the means to change ourselves, therein laying the groundwork for social change on a larger scale.

Fourteen too shared her realization that small acts of kindness can be starting points for social change and social involvement, finding these within her realm of possibility:

> I've realized that social action doesn't have to [be] big. And I don't have to change the world right now. I've gained more knowledge on how one small act of kindness can make a difference…through this class I've learned that showing kindness and allowing myself to care about others is what I can do right now in my life to enact social change. It's where I can start, and who knows where it will lead.

Therefore, similar to those students who found their entry point for social engagement in changing oneself, a few students discovered over the course of the semester that they could begin

to cause change through their small actions, which could perhaps, in turn, lead to actions of even greater impact.

To recap, for a number of students in the CAI course, learning to see the importance and potential of what they had previously dismissed as "small" actions proved helpful; the course appeared to help them breakdown the stereotype of social activism. In their realization that social action does not always have to be something "huge," these students grew in their belief that they could cause social change through their daily actions. The importance of all actions, including those that seem small, connects to the theoretical framework for the study. Focusing exclusively on a train driver's decision to reject the xenophobic leanings in his country, Bourdieu (1998a:21-23) argues that those actions which are seemingly small, in fact, can be significant in both reproducing and challenging the categorization and hierarchies of society. Similarly, Enloe (2014:35) argues that the social world "has been—and is being—made every day," and therefore, it is vital that we recognize that we are actors complicit in creating and shaping it. Thus, actions that are seemingly small or insignificant are in fact consequential. It appeared that many of the students in the CAI had been conditioned to see social change as the result of monumental, extraordinary action, but this thought pattern was, according to the students themselves, challenged by the class, causing a shift "in a direction that transforms it" (Bourdieu 1990a:116).

Challenging and Changing Beliefs

As evident in their comments, the students' newfound belief in the value of small actions linked to their belief in the power of the individual as well as their belief in the importance of changing themselves; together, these three beliefs supported a view of society as not only

changeable, but subject to their personal actions. In fact, in a few of these quotes, such as the one shared by Twenty-Two in the previous section, these three beliefs are interwoven to the extent that it was hard to untangle them and place them in one category or the other. Together, however, these beliefs represented a shift in some of the students over the course of the semester. Their beliefs, moved from the reproductive end of the spectrum, toward the transformative end. "One person cannot make a difference" and "I cannot make a difference" became "What I do matters," and "My actions, no matter how small, can affect society." As their beliefs shifted, the students became able to recognize points of entry into the work of social change, such as changing oneself and examining one's daily habits. While several students still noted the limitations on their agency, they balanced them with the expectation that things could indeed be different and they could help to make them so.

Given the complexities of the theorization of the reproductive/transformative habitus, it is difficult to say with certainty that these students, despite their overwhelmingly positive comments regarding a change in their beliefs, had developed a transformative outlook. This is largely due to the aforementioned interplay between the indicators of desire, feelings, beliefs, and action. It does appear that several of the students experienced a shift in their beliefs, and within the theoretical framework, it is therefore possible to propose they shifted toward the transformative end of the spectrum. A reproductive habitus is marked by the acceptance of limitations, an inability to recognize opportunities to exert one's agency to alter the social world, and a fatalistic outlook, while a transformative habitus is evidenced by the ability to look beyond limitations to see possibilities to improvise and challenge situations and understand how to intentionally employ one's agency to cause change (Mills 2008a; 2008b). As these students

noted their increased belief in their own value as a social agent, seeing themselves and their actions as significant for changing society, they appear to have developed a more transformative outlook. The degree to which this occurred, however, remains unclear. Did it, for example, marked the beginning of transformative thought patterns that could replace reproductive thought patterns? To answer that question, it would be necessary to integrate desire, feelings, and actions into the discussion, as well as attempt to understand if this change in beliefs was temporary or permanent (which would require longitudinal study). On must keep in mind that Bourdieu (1990a:116) sees the habitus as being "endlessly transformed," so such a change may be only short-term unless it is reinforced over time. By their own words, the CAI course affected what these students believed about social action, but it is not clear if this necessarily led to increased action or a more hopeful view of society; nor is it clear if these beliefs effectively dislodged the reproductive patterns of thinking and action that many of the students had attested to just four months earlier. What it does show, however, is that there was, at a minimum, a temporary shift by many of the students toward recognition of the transformative potential of their own agency.

<u>Equipped for Change</u>

The research generally shows that even if students develop empathetic outlooks by completing a semester-long action-oriented course, they often remain unable to identify paths through which they can personally become involved in the work of social justice after the course ends or recognize the tools for social action that they have at their disposal. Instead, they more commonly express a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness (i.e. Rondini 2015). As many students in the CAI course noted in their early writings, they too felt cynical, unable to make a

difference, and unequipped for social change. This is a "hump" over which action-oriented undergraduate sociology classes struggle to traverse. Students may leave a course unable to "see" their way to social action despite having increased their sociological knowledge and developed their sociological perspective. In fact, it is possible that the sociological perspective could instead discourage or frustrate their desire to change society (Davis 1992; Johnson 2005). In other words, students will not necessarily develop a transformative outlook simply by completing such a course. Therefore, this section will explore whether the students in the CAI course felt better equipped at the end of the semester and could find a path to social engagement.

<p style="text-align:center">Packing My Toolkit</p>

At the beginning of the semester, the students on the CAI course identified the lack of resources as a major obstacle to their involvement in the work of social change. This was a common feeling expressed by a vast majority of the class, as well as the reason why some students elected to enroll in the course. As Student Nine reflected: "Before taking this course, I didn't have the knowledge of what tools I could use to begin taking action or getting involved in my community;" this captured the general sentiment of the students at the outset of the semester. By the end of the course, however, there was a discernable change, as students credited the CAI course with introducing them to or providing them with tools and resources they felt would help them become involved in social change. A few students also noted that, beyond gaining an awareness of new resources available to them, they recognized some that they had all along, but had not previously realized.

Several students attested that they had gained tools and resources over the semester, seeing in them a path to engagement. For example, Student One stated, "I have acquired countless social action tools, with which I now know how easy it is to get involved in my community (and society at large)." She went on to say:

> I have also been equipped this semester with an abundance of social action tools which range from random acts of kindness, to marching in the streets for a good cause, to volunteering, mentoring, counseling, etc. All things that anyone, regardless of their social standing, can take part in to positively cause social change. The only thing stopping someone from exerting their personal agency is themselves and their unwillingness to try.

Forty-Four similarly noted, " I now see the many resources and tools I can use to make a difference in the social world, and make an impact in the lives of many." For Four, it was the discovery of the resources she already had on hand that was most helpful:

> …after taking this class…I now know that there are several different options and resources out there for when I am ready to embark on my journey to creating social change….Before, I never really thought about the hundreds of resources that are offered and available to me as a college student on campus. There are so many different organizations and ways to get involved in which others share the same values and same goals in mind. This was an option I never took into consideration as a social action tool.

Fifty-One believed his newly gained resources would help him project his agency: "This course has helped me to gain new tools to express my social agency." He went on to say:

> Through this course, I have gained new tools that will make my plan for social action much more effective. Some of the tools I have gained are protest, petitions, letters, and lobbying to name a few. Along with the new tools I have gained I have also learned how to make the tools I already have more effective. I learned that by combining tools I can increase their effectiveness. I feel that I now have the necessary tools not only to create a social action plan but [also] implement it and make a lasting change in my community.

In a like manner, Thirty-Four felt the class presented tools that were helpful for finding one's path toward social change:

The changes that [have] been made are the resources I have inquired from my Community Action and Involvement course. This class broaden[ed] my horizon and [gave] me tools that will direct me to where I can get the necessary information, hand-on experience, and the environment where there are like-minded people that may direct my path.

Nineteen, too, noted having learned the tools and means that would allow her to get started in the work of social change:

This course has taught me the tools and methods that I can use to have an impact on the world. I am no longer looking and asking other people and institutions to make the changes I want. Instead I have been taught the means to initiate those changes myself.

Forty-Five identified similar gains, stating, "I now have a better understanding of the organizations and issues I can get involved in." Also, Thirty-Nine stated: "This course has taught me how to assert my agency in social movements and provided tools for me to use and ways I can utilize these tools to help me in causing great social change." For several students, then, the CAI course led to an increased understanding of the tools and resources available to them for social action, and this increased their understanding of how to get involved and "assert their agency."

For some students, the discovery of tools for social change did more than provide options, it also revolutionized their entire worldview or their self-concept. Thirty-Six, for example, felt affirmed in her importance as a member of society and felt better prepared to convert her potential into action:

This course has truly affected my outlook on the social world and given me the tools that I need to begin to carry out my mission. Before the class I had all these things that I merely only cared about. Now, with the knowledge that I have gained, I know how to actively get involved, what outlets I can use, and what impact I can truly make by my actions. The world is very fragile, I will never forget that, and I will continue to teach that to people I come in contact with. I see myself as a glowing light, in a world that needs to be illuminated with compassion and

commitment. I also see myself as a piece to a vast puzzle of our social world, without me or any piece for that matter, the puzzle would be incomplete.

Similarly, Three emerged from the course with tools and an understanding of agency that lead to a view of the world as more fragile than previously thought:

> This course highlighted the tools available to individuals on a daily basis. What I found to be the most memorable point in the semester is the discussion of agency and our self-reflection in finding our own (via social tool-kits, self-assessments, etc.). This new insight has caused me to see the world in a more fragile way. Essentially, I learned that what can seem unchangeable and permanently disheartening, doesn't actually have to stay that way.

Likewise, with the resources gained from the class, Thirty-Seven felt more hopeful overall:

> What I learned in Community Action has affected the way I view the social world because it has provided me with plenty of knowledge and resources to utilize and be able to have hope that we can change the social world by simply beginning to get involved and utilizing our sources.

Finding tools, including an understanding of structure and agency, led Thirteen to believe herself more capable of engaging in positive social action:

> This course taught me about institutions in society, agency, tools for social change and much more. Before this class, I was lost on how to become involved in my community and how to make a difference, but I believe I now have a higher skill set in being able to positively impact society.

Forty-Six too felt emboldened by the tools she gained through the CAI course:

> This course has given me tools to tackle social problems and empowered me to take things into my own hands if I ever want to see change. It has taught me to speak up and has empowered me to help others do the same.

The recognition of tools and resources on hand led Twenty-Nine to an increased awareness of her own capability:

> Since last year I have often been questioning things about the world and what we are doing to try and better it. On my first self-assessment[,] I really started questioning what I should be trying to accomplish with my life and how I can get more involved. I also mentioned how I wanted to push myself out of my comfort

247

zone and gain a little more confidence and not hold myself back from what I want to do. I have always felt that I never really had the resources to do get involved. I now recognize that I do have tools to help get myself more involved I just have to go out and actually use them. I am more capable then I give myself credit for and that's an entirely different thing I have to work on.

Thus, gaining an awareness and understanding of the tools and resources available for social engagement significantly affected how these students viewed society as well as themselves.

To further illustrate how learning about tools and resources affected one's self-concept, a few students drew attention to a previously underrated resource—themselves. For example, Twenty discovered that her voice was a resource of significant proportions that could serve as a ticket to greater engagement:

I now believe my voice is my most powerful resource. I have a better understanding of exactly what my voice can do now. I will use my voice to spread awareness to the value of women of color. I want to go beyond the email, mail, or person-to-person, and expand to panel discussions, seminars, workshops, etc. (I want things that insert me in the communities through physically involvement). My voice is more complex than what I thought before; my voice is an outlet, which doesn't allow unjust to go unheard of. I see the different avenues I can take, as well as the different connections & people it will reach. If anything, I know I can [affect] the world by affecting one person via talking about the uncomfortable topics.

Thirty-One also discovered her voice, as well as how to hear the voices of others, and explained that she was leaving the CAI course "equipped enough" to "make a change":

After being in this class and learning about how to be involved in my community, I have realized that I can have a voice. I have learned that it is possible to share my opinion without making it an argument or competition of who is right or wrong. I have also learned that conversations with individuals who have different views than myself is not always about winning the argument, but about obtaining an understanding of a different point of view. In conclusion, I have changed a great amount since the beginning of the semester and I can owe that all to my participation in this community action and involvement course. It has shown me how to approach controversial issues and helped me learn how I can be useful throughout my communities. I still have a lot to learn and I am sure that I have a

difficult road ahead of me, but I feel equipped enough to assert myself in my community and make a change.

It is interesting to note that all the four students who commented on "finding" their voices as a result of the class were black females. While it is difficult to draw causal links, this could potentially speak to the feelings of alienation and exclusion experienced by women of color within U.S. society.

As a final example, perhaps Student One best captured how some students in the CAI class changed over the semester in respect to their understanding of resources and tools available to them. She described her journey toward recognition of the best resource she had on hand for social change:

> The second way that I realized I've changed over the course of this semester was my opinion on what limits me in terms of being able to create social change. In my first self-assessment, I stated that "while I was reflecting on the question of what resources I have and don't have to exert my personal agency, I came to the conclusion that I have the education and drive to want to influence my social world; **however, I lack the means (and by that I mean time, money, and mainly political connections) to physically change the world.**" I now see the error in my ways…one does not need money, political connections, or even that much time and effort at all to make a change. *The most important social action tool that I (and everyone) has is MYSELF; it is my actions on a day to day basis that will ultimately create the change I want to see in the world around me.* A person can only avoid making mistakes if they never try to do anything new…and I for one, plan on making plenty of mistakes as I try to live an open, honest, positive, and progressive life. (Bold font in original; italics added)

In her comments, One thus reflects an increased awareness of the importance of daily actions, as discussed in the previous section, and in doing so, identifies herself as the "most important social action tool." Thus, in a manner similar to those above who discussed their realization of the potential of an individual to change society, these students, over the course of the semester, documented an increased appreciation of their own importance as agents of change.

These comments were markedly different than those collected in the first weeks of the semester. A significant number of students revealed that they had gained tools and resources for social change through the CAI course. It is worth remembering that the students had a great deal of freedom in discussing how they changed over the course of the semester, so the fact that such a large number of them referenced gaining tools and resources suggests that this was very important and meaningful across the board. From specific tools, such as petitions and workshops, to the discovery of personal attributes, many students found themselves feeling better equipped at the end of the semester. For some, this altered their view of the social world itself, while for others, it affected how they saw themselves.

These findings allow increased elaboration on both the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus and the role of education in supporting and facilitating transition from one to the other. Students can have a desire to change society, a feeling of hopefulness in general, and a belief in their abilities to cause positive social change, yet, without tools, they may be unable to translate these into transformative actions. Similarly, a perceived lack of resources may reinforce cynicism and doubt about one's own ability to make things better. Action reinforces or challenges patterns of thought and general feelings and expectations about society (Bourdieu 1990a), and agency has elements of iteration and projectivity (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Therefore, without transformative action to reinforce transformative expectations and aspirations, it is possible that the desire, hopefulness, and belief in one's potential as a social agent will fade or turn to cynicism. On the other hand, similar to how a reproductive habitus tends to naturally reinforce itself (Bourdieu 1990b), transformative belief about one's potential as a social agent can be reinforced by intentional, transformative action.

Tools and resources, then, are vitally important, because they provide the means by which students can engage in action that supports and lends credibility to their transformative outlook. Mills (2008a) argues that teachers can help provide students with the tools and opportunities that encourage them to recognize the possibilities for change in the situations and circumstances in which they find themselves. This then provides greater specificity regarding the role sociological education might play in helping students generate a transformative habitus. It can uncover what tools students feel they lack, and then attempt to provide them; it can also open students up to other resources (i.e. self-belief) or alternative perspectives on social change (i.e. the social construction of society) that the students themselves were perhaps unaware they needed.

Turning Potential into Kinetic Energy

With a shift in their beliefs about social change and an increased awareness of tools and resources available to them, it remains to be seen if the students in the CAI course began the process of connecting their desires for a better society to action intended to fulfill those desires. At the beginning of the semester, the vast majority of the students in the CAI course, despite their interest in social change, identified themselves as socially inactive. In other words, there was a gap between transformative desire and action. With this finding, it becomes important to explore if there was any significant change in this area at the end of the semester.

Therefore, students were specifically asked at the end of the semester to note any increase in their social engagement from the beginning of the semester. An open-ended question was added to the post-course survey, framed in this manner: "Please briefly list any social

involvement you undertook this semester or that you plan on doing next semester that you feel is a result of your participation in the CAI course. For example, did you decide to join a club or participate in a march?" The goal was to collect qualitative data to capture whether students had become more socially involved as a direct result of the CAI course. In other words, did they move toward action and the recognition of opportunities through which they could get involved? The responses were widely varied, but they generally comprised four categories. Three of these categories included current engagement or anticipated involvement in social action, breaking down in this manner: (1) those students who anticipated engagement in the near future as a result of the CAI course, either specifically or generally, (2) those who were able to point to specific examples of current engagement as a result of the CAI course, and (3) those who provided specific examples of current engagement along with a plan for further engagement in the future, as a result of the CAI course. The fourth category is comprised of the two students who did not answer the question, leaving one to presume they may likely have had nothing to report.

Comprising the first category, some of the students in the CAI anticipated becoming engaged in the near future, but had not yet taken any steps to do so. A few identified a specific plan they already had in place. For example, Student One shared:

> I will begin working as a mentor for a local high school's experiential learning course. In which students are required to perform a specific amount of community service hours and are encouraged to work on solving school wide and local issues. I was so inspired by this Community Action and Involvement course, and this opportunity felt like the perfect continuation of it.

Student Two also noted a specific plan for the near future, stating, "[N]ext semester [I] will be interning at a mental health institution. [I] will also be working with underprivileged kids in a predominantly black community." Two students, Nineteen and Nine, planned to attend a Black

Lives Matter March already slated to occur in the next few months. These types of responses indicate that the students had engaged in projectivity (Emirbayer and Mische 1998) regarding their role as social agents to the point that they could articulate a concrete approach for themselves.

Other students shared a more general plan for their future engagement. For example, several students planned to join some campus club or organization. For example, Eighteen said, "Next semester [I] will be looking into clubs recommended by my classmates involving social change." Thirty-Nine shared, "I want to intern or volunteer in [an] organization that helps a population that I am passionate about." Similarly, Forty-Four offered a plan, although it too was vague:

> I have decided to join a club (not sure which yet, looking into it). I want to be more involved on campus and with my community. I hope that through joining a club or more I can make a difference and network with others.

A couple of students, like Forty-Eight, offered a general plan, anticipating that more free time would enable greater participation in the following months: "I want to start volunteering next semester since I'll have more time because it's my last semester and I'll be taking 3 classes. I want to put myself in situations that can [b]etter the people and also myself." Also, despite her inability to point to specific examples of engagement, Twenty-Nine found she was, at a minimum, now thinking about the future and her career as a result of the CAI course:

> I haven't participated in anything this semester, but I have been paying more attention to what is going around me and in the world. I also am thinking about switching my minor to non-profit management. This course has got me thinking about what I would like to do as a career and I have been heavily considering working for a non-profit.

These students, while unable to point to a specific outlet for their social engagement, found themselves at least considering the possibility of their involvement as a result of the CAI course.

In the second category, several students were able to point to specific examples of their increased engagement. For example, Thirty-Five noted, "I joined a fraternity that allowed me to learn more about my major…And I joined [campus volunteer organization] to create little impacts of change in my community." Twenty stated, "Yes I have decided to join a club: Feeding the Children." Student Seven tried something new, sharing, "I attended a few rallies this semester which I haven't done before." Forty-Seven revealed, "I found a way to volunteer at an occupational therapy gym for kids with [cerebral] palsy," and Thirty-Five disclosed, "I volunteer in the mornings to tutor students with disabilities." Forty-One too had taken steps: "I joined the International Medical Outreach, signed up for Alternative Break Program, and plan on attending PRIDE parades with a group of individuals." Ten reflected on her move away from excuses and toward increased participation:

> I went to my first Pride this year because I wanted to show support for my community. In addition, I joined a magazine staff focused on representation and activism, and wrote an article on it that was published. I increased my participation in the National Organization for Women and helped them with a period product drive. Normally, I would have found excuses, but this semester I felt that I had support and understanding of my social goals.

Forty-Six also drew inspiration from the CAI course: "I protested Donald Trump and am taking steps to start a non-profit. I would not have done either of these had I not taken Community Action and Involvement." Both Twenty-One and Thirty-Six connected with organizations during the semester. Twenty-One shared, "I joined NCNW (National Council of Negro Women) this semester and with them I was able to take part in activities that allowed me to give back to the community. I intend to continue my works with this organization," and Thirty-Six noted, "I

254

joined PETA's [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals] action team, joined Come out for

Pride [City name], & obtained contact information for volunteer work on local farms." Eleven

developed her own plan and enlisted the help of a partner:

> Because of this class, my boyfriend and I have started asking local restaurants if
> they would donate their leftover food to the homeless. We are still planning
> everything, but hope by next semester we have it figured out. I joined an Animal
> Rights group on Meetup as a result of this class. Overall, I now find myself
> looking for opportunities to engage in social change.

These students were able to point to specific activities they had become involved in as a result of

the CAI course. These were widely varied, attesting to the range of passions and interests of the

students in the class.

The third category includes those students who noted examples of current engagement as

well as their plan to continue their engagement in the near future. For example, Twenty-Two

shared:

> I will be playing with my small jazz band for donations for non-profit
> organizations. In addition, I have joined multiple political organizations in hopes
> that my voice is heard and my knowledge is utilized for the better. ([for
> example]:…International Relations Club, United Nations Association)

Similarly, Twenty-Four divulged, "I joined the National Organization for woman, I registered to

vote, I went to [City name] Pride, and I plan on volunteering and working towards a creative

goal focused on art and social change." Student Three had become particularly busy, but still

planned to do more:

> [I] joined 'She's The First' to support girls education in third world countries,
> attended a peaceful protest against Donald Trump, signed up for events through
> Hands On [City name] (after the suggestion was posted on the discussion board),
> and I plan on volunteering much more over the break with domestic violence
> shelters and efforts to feed the homeless. (Rethink Homelessness and Harbor
> House), although volunteering with the shelter is a complicated process…

Similarly, Thirteen was active, but looked to become more so, sharing, "[I participated in the] Pride parade. I make blessing bags for the homeless. I plan to become involved in groups advocating for social change." Comparably, Forty-Five stated:

> I got involved with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office and volunteered as a guardian advocate to help people suffering with mental illness. I also plan to get involved with organizations that focus on ending long-term solitary confinement in prisons across the U.S.

These examples indicate that a number of the students in the CAI course were able to, at the end of the semester, point to an increased engagement as well as an expectation of additional social action in the future. These students noted with great specificity the opportunities they had seized upon, suggesting that they had indeed been able to see possibilities and take steps to, as Mills (2008b:83; italics original) terms it, "*make things happen.*"

As a final example, it might be helpful to demonstrate how one student's comments at the end of the semester differed markedly from her earlier writings. At the end of the semester, Fifty was very excited to report how she had become involved:

> I did join a few clubs! I joined Campus Peace Action and through that I've been connected to many other clubs that I often frequent or help out because [my] friends are in them like NOW, Holistic Healing, Ideas, Norml, and more. Through these I've been given the opportunities to participate in Pride Fest, volunteer at Veg Fest, stand with my friends and make posters and protest the DAPL [Dakota Access Pipeline], be a part of call parties where my club and I call political offices and voice our opinions on issues, I've volunteered on [campus] at the arboretum and participated in fundraisers for animal rights charities. It has changed my life so much and reading all of that back, it seems like a lot but really, I feel like I can't get enough.

To give this change context, it is helpful to recall one of Fifty's comments from the beginning of the semester, as cited in an earlier chapter. She said:

> …I am over here sitting in my air-conditioned room, eating snacks in my bed with the TV on and my phone next to me and I feel just SO put off by society. Even

just typing that makes me feel a little guilty. Regardless, I see the world in a very jaded light, and that's just from my own experiences I've gone through or seen right in front of me…I realize more and more every day just how TIRED I am… of everything. This mindset very much fuels the cynicism I feel when taking on the world. Because of this thinking, I find myself also falling into several Thought Traps, like how one person can't change anything and the world is just how it is and I can't do anything to change it.

Though this is only a single example, it is representative of the changes evident in the final writings of the semester when compared to the early writings. A significant percentage of the class noted a shift in their outlook over the semester, developing an increased belief in the potential of their own actions to make a difference; for several, this prompted them to not only see opportunities to get involved but to take advantage of them, and as Fifty pointed out, it had a meaningful impact upon their lives.

The findings indicate that generally the students fit into four categories regarding the degree to which they were socially engaged at the end of the semester as a result of the CAI course. A couple students did not indicate any social engagement. Several students articulated either a general or a specific plan for engagement in the near future, such as joining some club or a march. Others found themselves already involved in something new as a result of the CAI course, and some students were both currently engaged and had a plan for the near future. Thus, the analysis suggests that, all told, a significant number of students increased their actual engagement in the work of social change. In other words, many of them began the work of connecting their desire to make a difference to action to fulfill that desire. In addition to feeling more equipped with tools and resources, these students defined for themselves what was, at the very least, a general path toward social engagement, and some even started down the path. One might suggest, therefore, that a number of the students in the CAI course crossed over the "hump"

Rondini (2015) suggested in her study of a change-oriented course; they left the class able to articulate for themselves a path into the work of social action and social justice. In other words, these students, to some extent, escaped the traps of "I don't know where to begin," and the "I can't make a difference" (Jones et al. 2007) to see and seize opportunities to get involved. This movement from resignation to the recognition and utilization of what De Certeau (1984) terms as "tactics" allowed the students to begin to "act in ways that can transform situations" (Mills 2008:106a).

"Not the Best Progress Story"

Analysis of the students' writings from the end of the semester uncovered a few examples in which the students still felt frustrated or remained cynical at the end of the semester; these are negative cases (Charmaz 2006:101-102) that complicate the attempt to understand the impact of the CAI course as well as the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. For example, in this lengthy explanation, Three reflected on how she found it impossible to say she had "changed for the better" over the course of the semester:

> I wish I could look back on this semester, or my last year, and say that I have drastically changed for the better, but I can't. It is a running joke about how much I hate change actually, and it is completely found in truth. I couldn't find much to alter in my original self-assessment and mission statement, because I haven't exactly changed myself. The world has not become abundantly clear, I did not discover my one life passion, and I didn't think of a perfect plan to change the world. It's important to understand that it isn't anyone's fault but my own, and then again, can my personality be my own fault? I haven't found the single passion or cause that I am ready to devote myself to since I became interested in this field years ago.

> In this course I had many tools, lots of information, and really great discussions, all made available to me in order to guide me in the right direction. After all of the new knowledge, I can definitely say that I am coming out of this class knowing

more than I did before, but not really knowing what to do with it (due to indecisiveness). Aside from living in a constant state of indecision on important life factors, I did grow to learn that failure in social change attempts is not necessarily a failure. Reflecting on an earlier assignment in the beginning of the course when students had to determine if they were a cynic or an optimist, if the world was fragile or fixed. When I ponder the question again, I decide that I am alas, still a cynic, which doesn't make for the best progress story.

It is interesting to see that Three felt better equipped, having gained tools and information. It is also clear that she had perhaps expected the CAI course to help her uncover one specific passion and plan ideal for her and her life course, but felt this expectation remained unfulfilled. She also seems tempted to blame herself and a personal tendency toward indecisiveness.

A few others had discoveries that were markedly different than those cited by the majority of the students in the CAI course. For example, Four felt similarly to Three, finding herself unable, at the end of the semester, to identify a singular issue that would inflame her passion and set her into motion. Her evaluation was not, however, entirely negative:

> I also do feel that *I still lack initiative* in the way that *I have yet to find an issue that strikes my passion so much that it will break my cycle of cynicism*. However, after taking this class I now not only have hope for social change because of my optimistic personality but I now know that there are several different options and resources out there for when I am ready to embark on my journey to creating social change….(italics added)

Four still struggled with a lack of initiative, which tied to feelings of isolation and cynicism:

> A resource I feel that I still lack initiative. It is not that I do not want to contribute to making a change because that is what I desire more than anything however, I feel that unfortunately I have fallen in between the cycle of cynicism and the cycle of hope over time…I see these social problems, it makes me upset and I wish to do something to change them however, I then fall deeper into my personal life, shutting out my awareness on these major issues...I know that I can do so much more than what I am currently doing and I need to find that initiative to actually make the change that I know I am capable of accomplishing.

Additionally, at the end of the semester, Eight felt she was not ready to cause social change, and decided others were more passionate than she was:

> I have come to understand the social institutions that I am a part of and the tools that are needed/necessary to cause social change in them. I've also realized that others are way more passionate about causing social change than I ever will be. I enjoyed learning about community action and involvement but I do not believe I am in a place in my life to cause social change. I still may not be ready

In another instance, Twenty-Six discussed how she lacked direction in general, but found that the class "indirectly" helped her discover this:

> My original personal mission statement was a very positive one where I described wanting to live my life to the fullest and to be happy. And now, I'm just talking about how I really have no direction in life. I wouldn't say that this change happened because of the class; I think it has more to do with myself, and where I am at. However, like I mentioned earlier, this class *has*, indirectly, helped me learn more about myself. And what I learned is that I really have no idea who I am. But that's a step in the right direction, in my opinion.

As a final example, Forty realized at the end of the semester she had become more cynical.

Fortunately, however, in the CAI course she had learned of an example that she believed could help her deal with such feelings in the future by reminding her that hope was a choice:

> My initial response leaned more towards being hopeful, but I found the more that I studied, the more cynical I became. Which is not really an exciting moment. Being cynical has a way of drawing you away from people, and instead of feeling like you want to change the world, you just want the world to go away. There is a great side to this though, when I look back at the people that we studied in the class I realize I can choose hope. We studied people like Nelson Mandela who sat in a prison cell for twenty-seven years, and left the prison cell saying[,] "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew If I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison." If Mandela can choose hope, then [surely] I can. So when cynicism creeps its ugly head I will remember to take a breath and refocus, I will remember Mandela.

It is challenging to determine exactly what to take away from these comments. On one hand, it appears that, if nothing else, the CAI course prompted these students, such as Twenty-Six to

engage in self-reflection, which is an important exertion of agency, and arguably, the starting point of a transformative outlook. Each student was able to at least point to one positive they had gained from the class, such as tools, information, or a lesson about hope. On the other hand, it is tempting to deduce that the CAI course failed to reach these particular students. One can also conclude, however, that even if a course like CAI helped some students develop a transformative outlook, it is unlikely it would do so for every student in the course, because in the social world, nothing correlates 100%.

Overall, perhaps there are two main thoughts to consider. First, it is beneficial to look upon these examples as a reminder that each student is an individual and must be respected as such. It is nearly impossible to determine exactly why these students found themselves feeling as they did at the end of the semester. They each bring to bear their own social history and lived experiences, and these affect their desires, feelings, beliefs, and actions. There are numerous factors that could have come to bear on their time in the CAI course, from a personality conflict with the professor or other students in the class to frustrations in their home life to an overwhelming schedule. Or, it could have been the CAI course did not meet their particular needs, as there are always outliers in every population or sample. These examples thus bring to mind the discussion in Chapter Two regarding the difficult of avoiding "cookie cutter" approaches to education. As Freire (1970) argues, students are not mechanical receptacles for information, and it is vital that they not be treated as such. Instead, they must be allowed the space to grapple with what they are learning and fit it to their own experiences as much as possible.

This leads to the second thought. These cases remind us how the theorization of the dialectic of the reproductive and transformative habitus defies simplification. For example, Forty has found herself feeling more cynical at the end of the semester, yet draws on examples from class to affirm her belief that it is possible for her to choose to be hopeful. Is this a reproductive, fatalistic outlook? Or, by recognizing reasons to be hopeful, it is transformative? As an additional example, is Three's inability to identify a single passion to pursue evidence of a reproductive outlook, or does it suggest a heightened awareness of the complexity and interconnectedness of social problems that accompanies the development of the sociological perspective, which is expected to lead students toward more meaningful and engaged lives (McKinney et al. 2004)? These examples therefore, if anything, further complicate both the theorization of the habitus and the role of sociological education in generating transformative outlooks in its students. Although Three describes herself as "not the best progress story," it is impossible to conclude that her experiences over the semester, as well as those of the other students mentioned here, were less significant and less transformative than those of her classmates; in fact, they may have been equally or more so.

Conclusion

The writings produced at the end of the semester, while not entirely definitive, help answer the exploratory question as to whether the students in the CAI course changed significantly over the course of the semester in terms of their attitudes and behaviors regarding social engagement and social change and the extent to which any change may be attributed to the CAI course itself. The decision was made to allow the students to speak for themselves on this,

and the instruments used to collect this information were open-ended and/or optional, leaving space for the students to discuss (or not) anyway in which the class affected them. The results show that, in their later writings, the students chose to address the same topics that had been raised at the beginning of the semester, which allowed comparison between the two. In their reflections, the students discussed changes in their view of the society, their belief in their own potential as social agents, and their definition of what constitutes social action. They also referred to the tools and resources they gained along with any increase in their engagement. Very often, the students themselves pointed directly to "*the course*" as helping facilitate that change. A few students, on the other hand, explained that they still struggled with cynicism, felt unengaged, or were not ready to engage in social action. While these responses seem to suggest a reproductive outlook, one could alternatively conclude that a transformative view is developing, because the realization that one is not ready to engage in social action indicates both a belief that social action can cause change and an understanding of the actions one is not yet ready to take. Regardless, it was evident, from the perspective of the students that the CAI course had impacted their view of themselves and the social world to some extent.

Once again, the writings of the students uncover the complexities ingrained in the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. These intricacies complicate the attempt to determine if the students developed a transformative outlook as a result of the CAI course. One might recall from the previous chapter that even determining their starting place was difficult, given the complex interplay between desire, feeling, belief, and action. In several ways, it appears that the students moved toward the transformative end of the spectrum. For many students, their writings suggest that they were able to begin to close the distance between their

desire to create a better world and action intended to bring it about. For some, this movement was affected by an increased belief in their own potential as social agents. Abandoning their view of social change as the domain of extraordinary people and "huge" undertakings helped some students develop a more hopeful outlook on society. Finding tools and resources helped some students feel equipped to take action and embark on their own journey of social change. Several students became socially involved, pointing to specific actions as evidence of their participation, while others had a general plan for the near future. These results appear to exemplify what Mills (2008a) defines as a transformative habitus, as students move away from fatalism and become able to see opportunities for change and employ the necessary tools and tactics to challenge the current social arrangements.

It seems straightforward to argue, therefore, that a number of students developed a transformative outlook over the semester as a result of the CAI course, while a few negative cases did not; however, it is not necessarily so. What if, for example, a student entered the class with a desire to cause social change, but realized, over the semester, that perhaps, in comparison to her classmates, she was not that interested or ready after all? Perhaps over the semester, she had come to define the work of social change as the domain of radicals and liberals, and she did not see herself as fitting in either category. She also may have been "put off" by the passion of those around her. Yet, this student remained involved in charity work, thereby engaging in what others might define as social action aimed at altering society. How does one then define her outlook? Which indicators should be emphasized? If it is desire, maybe this is a reproductive outlook. Or maybe she just holds a different definition of what it means to better society. If action is the most important indicator, then maybe she has a transformative outlook; but then

again, if she does not see her action (charity work) as an opportunity to challenge current social arrangements, is that indeed transformative? And, if she believes she has abandoned her desire to cause social change, how does that complicate our ability to define her outlook as reproductive or transformative? It raises the possibility that such a desire is not necessarily the starting place one might think it is. It would also be important to take into account her feelings about the social world and her belief in her own potential to cause change, which would likely complicate the discussion. These hypothetical considerations leave one to wonder if the CAI course reinforced a reproductive outlook in this student, or did it, by its approach, allow her space to define for herself what is means to be a social agent and then act accordingly?

Just this single example demonstrates how complicated it is to make definitive determinations about the degree to which the students' habitus shifted toward, or for that matter, away from, transformation. Self-perception and definitions matter, along with desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions. The degree to which one is more important than the other is unclear. It is also difficult to untangle these indicators, which makes it challenging to uncover how each indicator affects the others in terms of order and magnitude. For example, how do students' beliefs about their potential affect their actions? Or vice versa? How might those beliefs affect their desires and abilities to "make a difference" in the social world? And in what manner are those beliefs dependent upon the other indicators and affected by how one defines social engagement? These questions could go on, presenting different combinations of indicators in the attempt to unravel the intricacies of the theorization of the reproductive/transformative habitus, which make it extremely difficult to understand if, and how the students in the CAI course shifted toward one end of the spectrum or other.

It is into these complex waters that action-oriented education wades. Is it most important to support or grow a desire to change society? Or, is it better to start with action, and hope that a desire to better the social world, optimism about society in general, and a belief that one can positively impact social arrangements follows? One could also argue that it is best to start with helping students develop a hopefulness about society, thinking that this provides the foundation for desire, belief, and action. Starting with tools and resources might also be the best option, as feeling equipped might help shift all the indicators toward the transformative end of the spectrum. In the sociological classroom, these considerations are even more complicated, as the development of the sociological perspective can serve to reinforce or shift students toward a reproductive view of society. While the sociological perspective may indeed be transformative for students, it does not guarantee that students who develop theirs will necessarily develop a transformative outlook. In other words, the transformation associated with the development of the sociological perspective may give rise to the fatalism Mills (2008a) associates with the reproductive habitus, as students learn to see the vastness and interconnectivity of social problems. One might argue, however, that the sociological perspective, with its consideration of the interplay between structure and agency helps students develop perhaps the most realistic view of society, thus avoiding foolhardy idealism. Thus, even what is meant by transformation is called into question. If, as Mills (2008a; 2008b) argues, the role of education is to help students develop a transformative habitus, the perplexing and involved intricacies uncovered here must be further examined.

The results of the previous chapters, based on the early writings of the students, demonstrate that the majority of the students felt cynical about the social world in general,

266

believed it beyond their abilities to change society, and identified themselves as non-agentic and unequipped for social action. For most students, enrollment in the CAI course was more than signing up for an elective credit, it was their attempt to gain greater sociological knowledge and find how to become more engaged in society. The results of this chapter, based on the later writings of the students, indicate that, to some degree, the CAI course helped meet that need, yet it is difficult to determine the degree to which students changed in regards to the reproductive and transformative dialectic. The next chapter presents the mean scores from the post-course survey on a series of questions about the CAI course, as well as the results of the paired samples t-tests used to determine if there was any significant change from the pre-course survey to the post-course survey in students' attitudes and behaviors toward social engagement and social change. In particular, the quantitative results will provide points for comparison with the results of the qualitative research portion of the study as discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER NINE: CHANGES IN THE TIDE
EXPLORING QUANTITATIVE PRE- AND POST-SURVEY RESULTS

Analysis of the writings collected throughout the Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course helped define the starting place of the students as well as uncover the manner in which the students themselves described the degree to which they changed over the semester in regards to their desires, feelings, beliefs, and actions toward social change and their role in it. Many students found themselves either more optimistic, more confident in their own abilities to cause social change, or get more involved, or some combination of the three. A small number of students felt they changed little over the semester, become more cynical, or decided they were not ready for social action. With these findings in mind, it is now time to examine the quantitative results collected from the pre- and post-course surveys. First, the means for a series of questions specifically about the CAI course will be presented from the post-course survey. Second, the results of the paired samples t-test will be examined to determine if the answers to questions about the students' general attitudes and behaviors about social change from the post-survey varied significantly from those they provided on the pre-course survey. These results helped to determine any points of convergence or variation from the results of the qualitative portion of the research.

As a Direct Result of the CAI Course…

On the post-course survey, students were asked a series of questions in an attempt to gain feedback about how the CAI course directly affected their perceptions of their own abilities as social agents as well as their desires, feelings, and beliefs about personal agency and the social

world. Only the means and standard deviations will be provided for these statements. Because these questions were not included on the pre-course survey or asked of another CAI course, there is no point of comparison to help determine if the means are particularly meaningful or if they represent significant change. They are therefore presented here simply because they are interesting, and when considered alongside the results of the qualitative research portion, they tend to affirm what the students were writing at the end of the semester. Again, these cannot be viewed as earthshattering results, as the mean scores lack the necessary context to establish the degree to which they are significant.

Table 8 provides the means and standard deviations for a series of twelve statements from the post-course survey. These questions were designed to uncover the degree to which the goals and outcomes of the CAI course had been accomplished, and therefore they asked students to consider if the CAI course had affected their desires, beliefs, and feelings about social action and the social world in general. Each statement began with the phrase, "As a direct result of the CAI course," and then offered a consideration for the students to evaluate. The students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement, choosing from the following options: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree. Table 8 presents the statements in the order they were asked on the survey, but to discuss the results, they are divided into three groups. The first includes seven statements that revolve around students' feelings about their own agency. The second group contains three statements that reference what the students might have gained from the CAI course in terms of resources. The third group includes two statements that relate to the sociological perspective. The results,

unfortunately, do not capture change over time or a context for evaluating their significance. In light of the qualitative research portion, however, they are interesting and therefore worth noting.

Table 8: Means and Standard Deviations for Questions about the CAI Course

As a direct result of the CAI Course:	Mean (SD) n=47
I recognize that I can use my personal agency to change things in the social world	3.85 (.36)
I better understand the tools and methods I can use to be socially active	3.96 (.20)
I feel overwhelmed by my inability to change things I do not like	2.00 (.69)
The knowledge I gained can help me if I want to work for social change	3.91 (.29)*
I feel that social institutions are impossible to change	1.64 (.74)
I better see how I can use my talents/skills to challenge things in society that I do not like	3.68 (.52)
My views of my personal agency remain the same	2.13 (.95)
I feel empowered to take action to alter society in a positive way	3.62 (.53)
My outlook on life is more negative in general	1.49 (.75)
My desire to work for positive change in the world has increased	3.74 (.44)
I am more aware of power imbalances in society	3.63 (.49)
I am more likely to question/challenge commonly-held ideas and beliefs	3.55 (.58)

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Strongly Agree
*n=46

The first grouping begins with the statement that asks students to reflect on their general outlook. The statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, my outlook on life is more negative in general," has a mean score of 1.49 (SD=.75). In other words, the students largely disagreed that their outlook on life had become more negative as a result of the CAI course. One

might recall that many of the students entered the CAI course with an outlook that was at least partially cynical, and it is therefore tempting to interpret this mean score as an indication of support for the results of the qualitative analysis that indicated the students had become more positive over the semester. All the mean score indicates, however, is that the students' outlooks did not become "more negative" as a result of the course.

The next two statements in the first grouping reference the impact of the CAI course regarding the students' feelings about their role as potential agents of change. First, for the statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, my desire to work for positive change in the world has increased," the mean is 3.74 (SD=.44). Second, for the survey item, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I feel empowered to take action to alter society in a positive way," the mean is 3.62 (SD=.53). For these two statements, the means indicates that, on aggregate, the students largely agreed that the course had increased their desire to work for change and helped them feel empowered to do so. This is in keeping with the findings of the qualitative research portion.

The fourth and fifth statements in the first grouping directly reference personal agency. For the statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, my views of my personal agency remain the same," the mean is 2.13 (SD=.95), falling near "Somewhat Disagree." It is difficult, however, to decipher exactly what is happening with this statement. For some students, they may have entered the class feeling they lacked agency (as the qualitative analysis indicates). This might have changed over the semester, causing them to disagree with the statement, which is the desired result. It also may have been the case that a few students could have entered the CAI course with a firm belief in their personal agency (as the qualitative analysis also indicates), and that may not have changed over the semester, causing them to agree with the statement, which

would also be a desired result. Given that the qualitative portion of the research revealed that the vast majority of students appeared to doubt their own agency at the beginning of the semester, it was hoped that this mean score would be low (indicating a positive change), but given the wording of the statement and the lack of context, one cannot draw any definitive conclusions. Next, the survey item, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I recognize that I can use my personal agency to change things in the social world," has a mean of 3.85 (SD=.36). This indicates that, as a result of the CAI course, the students largely agreed that they recognized they could employ their personal agency to cause change in society. This mean score supports the findings revealed by the qualitative analysis of the students' writings at the end of the semester, which demonstrated the increased belief of many students in their own potential to change society. Again, while it is impossible to draw any causal links, this parallel is interesting.

The sixth and seventh statements in this first grouping refer to the difficulty of change. For the statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I feel overwhelmed by my inability to change things I do not like," the mean is 2.00 (SD=.69). The mean score indicates that the students somewhat disagreed with this statement. As their writings revealed that many of the students felt overwhelmed and unable to make a difference in society early in the semester, this low mean score might imply that their feelings changed over the semester to the extent that they felt less overwhelmed and more capable as a result of the CAI course. This would also support the qualitative results from the end of the semester. Similarly, for the statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I feel that social institutions are impossible to change," the mean score is 1.64 (SD=.74). This implies that the students, on aggregate, disagreed with the concept of structural intransigence. While this might be due to the emphasis on the social construction of

society in the framing of the CAI course, it is impossible to tell for certain. It is also unclear if they felt they could change the institutions themselves. Nonetheless, this finding also aligns to some degree with that of the qualitative research portion, which found that the students, without fail, defined the social world as fragile, or changeable, to some degree. Again, however, one cannot make definitive claims.

The second grouping is comprised of three survey items that relate to the resources students felt they had gained or recognized they had during the CAI course, and for each of them, the mean draws near the highest possible score, 4=Strongly Agree. First, the statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I better understand the tools and methods I can use to be socially active," has a mean of 3.96 (SD=.20). Second, for the statement, "As a result of the CAI course, the knowledge I gained can help me if I want to work for social change," the mean is 3.91 (SD=.29). Third, the statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I better see how I can use my talents and skills to challenge things in the social world that I do not like," the mean is 3.68 (SD=.52). When one recalls that the qualitative research portion of the present study showed that many of the students directly referred to the tools and resources they gained as well as their recognition of what was already available to them, like their "voice," as a result of the CAI course, these means are supportive of those findings.

The third grouping includes two statements that can be considered as indicators of the sociological perspective. One statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I am more aware of power imbalances in society," has a mean of 3.63 (SD=.49). The other statement, "As a direct result of the CAI course, I am more likely to question or challenge commonly-held ideas and beliefs," has a mean score of 3.55 (SD=.58). Therefore the mean scores indicate that the students

generally found themselves in agreement with both of these survey items. This indicates that, as a result of the CAI course, the students found themselves more aware of power differentials and more likely to challenge commonly held assumptions. These two items are necessary components of the sociological perspective and a critical consciousness (Shor 1992). Therefore, it appears that the students themselves felt they had grown in this area.

The results for this series of twelve questions on the post-course survey are interesting and supportive of the qualitative analysis. In general and in the aggregate, the students agreed that they (1) felt more agentic, (2) gained resources, and (3) developed their sociological perspective "as a direct result of the CAI course." This is encouraging, as these outcomes were among the stated goals and objectives for the course itself (see syllabus in Appendix B). Also, there appears to be nothing in these mean scores that deviates markedly from the results of the qualitative research portion. In fact, it is tempting to argue that these findings align quite strongly with what the students' writings revealed. One must keep in mind, however, that without context or further research, any conclusions drawn using these results remain tentative.

Comparing the Pre- and Post-Course Survey Results

In order to determine the statistical significance of any changes from the student responses on the pre-course survey to their responses on the post-course survey, the paired samples t-test was used. This was done in order to better understand how the students changed over the semester as well as offer points of similarity to or variation from the results of the qualitative analysis of students' writings. The paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the student attitudes toward social change or social action from the beginning to the end of the

274

semester. The paired samples t-test is a test for the difference of means between members of the pairs, from condition one to condition two. Therefore, this type of analysis is appropriate for measuring the difference between two separate conditions, or in this case, the pre- and post-course surveys; it is often used to test for significant change in a sample after the application of some type of treatment. The null hypothesis for the paired samples t-test assumes that the mean difference between the paired samples is zero; in other words, the "treatment" had no significant effect on the variables being measured. On the other hand, the rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that mean difference of the paired samples is significantly greater than or less than zero, or for that particular variable, treatment had a significant effect. For the present study in particular, a positive t value indicates that the mean score on the pre-course survey was higher than the mean score on the post-course survey. Conversely, a negative t value indicates that the mean score on the pre-course survey was lower than the mean score on the post-course survey.

General Attitudes Toward Society and Social Change

Table 9 provides the results of the paired samples t-test for eleven statements on the pre- and post-course surveys that intended to capture the general attitudes of the students regarding society and social change. The students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement, selecting from: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree. All participants answered these questions on both the pre- and the post-course survey (n=47).

Table 9: Paired Samples T-Test Results for Attitudes Toward Society and Social Change

	Pre-Course Mean (SD)	Post-Course Mean (SD)	*t* value	*p* value
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about society:				
Individuals can change their communities for the better	3.68 (.56)	3.72 (.54)	-.04	.688
Social inequalities and social problems are inevitable; they will never go away	2.62 (.85)	2.57 (.77)	.04	.756
People are poor because they lack motivation	1.57 (.77)	1.26 (.44)	.32	.006**
The world is a positive place for most people	2.19 (.90)	2.40 (.77)	-.23	.105
Social and collective movements do not really create lasting change in society	1.57 (.62)	1.28 (.54)	.30	.007**
It is a worthwhile effort to challenge social inequalities and social problems	3.70 (.55)	3.85 (.42)	-.15	.146
One individual has the power to challenge social inequalities or social problems	3.09 (.91)	3.55 (.50)	-.47	.001***
The individuals who succeed in the world are those who work hard enough to do so	2.70 (.91)	2.77 (1.00)	-.06	.652
People who work to help others overcome social issues are admirable	3.81 (.40)	3.83 (.38)	-.02	.785
The efforts of an individual to improve his or her situation can be limited by things such as race/ethnicity, social class, and gender	3.68 (.60)	3.72 (.45)	-.04	.660
It is a waste of effort to try and improve society	1.15 (.42)	1.13 (.34)	.02	.767

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Strongly Agree
n=47; *df* = 46; two-tailed test
*p≤.05. **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

For this series of survey items, the paired samples t-test indicate that the mean scores for three of the eleven statements changed from the pre- to the post-course survey at a significant level. For these three statements, therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that the mean

difference is equal to zero, can be rejected. First, there was a significant difference in the scores for "People are poor because they lack motivation" on the pre-course survey (M=1.57, SD=.77) and the post-course survey (M=1.26, SD=.44) conditions; t(46)=.32, p=.006. The results indicate that, compared to the beginning of semester, the students agreed less with this statement at end of the semester. This may reflect the strong emphasis placed on understanding the influence of social institutions on the life of the individuals throughout the CAI course (i.e. Mills 1959).

There were two other statements that changed significantly from the pre- to the post-course survey. There was a significant difference in the mean scores for "Social and collective movements do not really create lasting change in society" on the pre-course survey (M=1.57, SD=.62) and the post-course survey (M=1.28, SD=.54) conditions; t(46)=.30, p=.007. These results infer that from the pre- to the post-course survey, student agreement with this statement decreased. In other words, they tended to disagree more strongly with the idea that social movements were ineffectual. This is expected given the emphasis placed on discussing social movements as tools of social change in the mid-part of the semester as well as repeated references to such movements throughout the class.

Finally, there was a significant difference in the mean scores for "One individual has the power to challenge social inequalities or social problems" on the pre-course survey (M=3.09, SD=.91) and the post-course survey (M=3.55, SD=.50) conditions; t(46)=-.47, p=.001. These results imply that, compared to the pre-course survey, the students showed greater agreement with this statement on the post-course survey. This finding is of particular interest because it provides verification for the accuracy of the results of the qualitative research portion of the analysis. As noted in previous chapters, some students entered the CAI course feeling

overwhelmed by the vastness of social problems and struggling with the "thought traps" that "one person cannot make a difference," and "I can't make enough of a difference to matter." (Jones et al. 2007:4-11). By the end of the semester, in their writings, several students noted a shift in their belief, accepting that one individual could challenge social inequalities or other social problems, and they applied this to themselves as well.

The paired samples t-test indicated that there was not a significant mean difference on several items from the pre- to the post-course survey, and therefore the null hypothesis, which states that the mean difference is equal to zero, cannot be rejected. It can be helpful to examine which student attitudes or beliefs about society and social change did not change significantly over the course of the semester, as this may better clarify the mindset of the students who elected to enroll in the CAI course as well as help further untangle the indicators of the reproductive and transformative habitus uncovered during the qualitative analysis portion. For example, the results indicate that, as an aggregate, the students who entered the CAI course agreed, "Individuals can change their communities for the better." While this item might seem markedly similar to the aforementioned statement, "One individual has the power to challenge social inequalities or social problems," which changed significantly, "Individuals can change their communities for the better" did not change significantly from the pre- to the post-course survey. This may indicate some nuances worth considering. For example, the first statement references "individuals" in the plural, compared to the singular "one individual" in the second statement. Also, it may be easier to believe in the power of individuals (i.e. a collective effort) to in some general way better their communities, than it is to expect one individual to take down an expansive social problem or challenge a stratification system. These differences imply that, at the

278

outset of the semester, perhaps the students in the CAI course saw the possibility of a group of people planting trees or picking up trash in the local park as more feasible than one individual single-handedly ending poverty in the United States.

In addition, it is not surprising that a few of the mean scores were not significantly different from the pre- to the post-course survey. For example, on the pre-course survey, the students in the CAI course disagreed with the statement, "It is a waste of effort to try and fix society," and this did not change over the semester. If they had believed this at the outset, they would probably not have enrolled in the course. One should recall that the desire to engage with the work of social change was one of the stated motivations for enrolling in the course. Further, on the pre-course survey, the students had largely agreed with the two statements: "It is a worthwhile effort to challenge social inequalities and social problems," and "People who work to help others overcome social issues are admirable." These again tie to a motivation for taking the CAI course. These beliefs or attitudes did not change significantly from the pre- to the post-course survey, and this indicates that the students who enrolled in the CAI course did so because they believed the work of social change was worthwhile and important, and that belief did not waver over the semester.

<center>Optimism About One's Ability to Cause Change</center>

Table 10 provides the results of the paired samples t-test for a series of ten questions on the pre- and post-course surveys. These ten survey items asked students how optimistic they were that they could change something if it bothered them in regards to various groups, social levels, and institutions. The students were asked to indicate their level of optimism for each

<center>279</center>

question, with answer choices ranging from 1 to 5, with 1=Very Helpless and 5=Very Optimistic.

All participants answered these questions on both the pre- and the post-course survey (n=47).

Table 10: Paired Samples T-Test Results for Optimism in One's Ability to Cause Change

	Pre-Course Mean (SD)	Post-Course Mean (SD)	*t* value	*p* value
How optimistic are you that you could change something if it bothered you in regards to:				
Your personal situation	4.21 (.95)	4.34 (.82)	-1.03	.309
Your family	3.62 (1.15)	3.72 (1.10)	-.67	.490
The neighborhood in which you grew up	3.17 (1.05)	3.32 (.78)	-.82	.418
Your university	3.17 (1.03)	3.45 (1.08)	-1.43	.161
Your racial/ethnic community	2.96 (.98)	3.04 (1.04)	-.41	.688
Your state of residence	3.06 (1.21)	3.15 (1.06)	-.34	.737
The media	2.00 (1.12)	2.78 (1.11)	-3.49	.001***
Your national government	1.87 (1.04)	2.64 (1.15)	-4.13	.001***
Your national economy	1.83 (1.03)	2.19 (.95)	-2.12	.039*
The world outside your nation	2.15 (1.12)	2.81 (1.14)	-3.51	.001***

1=Very Helpless, 5=Very Optimistic
n=47; *df*=46; Two-tailed test
*p≤.05. **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

In this series, an interesting pattern emerged. The paired samples t-test results did not

indicate any significant difference in the scores for the first six situations presented. In other

words, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the means from the pre- to the post-

course survey could not be rejected for these items. These situations included those that are more immediate to the individual, such as "your personal situation," "your family," "the neighborhood in which you grew up," "your university," "your racial/ethnic community," and "your state of residence." The level of optimism of the students toward being able to change something in any of these particular situations did not change significantly from the pre- to the post-course survey. In fact, the mean scores of the pre-course survey demonstrate that the students tended to feel more optimistic about their ability to change these six, more immediate situations, than they did the final four, which may rightly be defined as more distant from an individual's sphere of influence.

The mean scores for the final four items changed significantly from the pre- to the post-course survey, indicating that the null hypothesis could be rejected for these statements. The four items that showed a significant difference in means were the broadest in scope. First, there was a significant difference in the scores for "The media" on the pre-course survey (M=2.00, SD=1.12) and the post-course survey (M=2.78, SD=1.11) conditions; t(46)=-3.50, p=.001. This infers that from the pre- to the post-course survey, the students became more optimistic about their ability to change something that bothered them in relation to the media. Second, there was a significant difference in the scores for "Your national government," on the pre-course survey (M=1.87, SD=1.04) and the post-course survey (M=2.64, SD=1.15) conditions; t(46)=-4.13, p=.001. This implies that from the pre- to the post-course survey, the students became more optimistic about their ability to change something that bothered them in relation their national government. Third, there was a significant difference in the scores for "Your national economy" on the pre-course survey (M=1.83, SD=1.03) and the post-course survey (M=2.19, SD=.95) conditions; t(46)=-

2.12, p=.039. These results indicate that from the pre- to the post-course survey, the students became more optimistic about their ability to change something that bothered them in relation their national economy. Finally, there was a significant difference in the scores for "The world outside your nation," on the pre-course survey (M=2.15, SD=1.12) and the post-course survey (M=2.81, SD=1.14) conditions; t(46)=-3.51, p=.001. This implies that from the pre- to the post-course survey, the students became more optimistic about their ability to change something that bothered them in relation to the world beyond their nation.

These results indicate that the students in the CAI course notably grew more optimistic regarding their ability to change things that bothered them on the macro-level. On the post-course survey, the means for these four items remained lower than then the six more immediate situations, yet they were the only ones that changed significantly from the pre-course survey. Thus, it appears that overall, while the students remained less optimistic about their ability to change society at the national or global level than they were about the micro- or meso-level, they did grow significantly more optimistic about these four spheres of social life during the semester.

These results are particularly interesting for a few reasons. First, during the semester, a decision was made to focus on the role of the individual in the national government; these discussions coincided with the U.S. presidential election, which attracted the attention of many of the students, particularly as the presidential candidates from the Democratic Party (Hillary Clinton) and the Republican Party (Donald Trump) visited the campus. Some of the members of the CAI course attended and/or protested at the rallies, so during the semester, there was an opportunity for the students to see how "your national government" could be part of their daily lives. As such, the timing of this external event could quite likely have influenced the students'

optimism regarding their ability to affect the outcome of elections, recalling the importance of action in affirming or challenging one's beliefs, as discussed in Chapter 8. Second, the role of the individual in the economy was the center of discussion, as students read in *The Better World Handbook* (Jones et al. 2007:57-83) about how economic decisions, from shopping to investment, have remarkable impact in terms of labor, wages, working conditions, human rights, and the global economy in general. Third, media, including social media, received a great deal of attention during the semester, often in connection to the election or social movements such as #blacklivesmatter. One might therefore argue that these results at least to some degree may reflect the impact of such discussions.

<div align="center">Willingness to Try and Make A Change</div>

Table 11 provides the results of the paired samples t-test for one question on the pre- and post-course surveys that asked students about the likelihood that they would seize an opportunity to try and change society. Specifically, the students were asked, "How likely would you be to try and make a positive change in society if you saw an opportunity to do so?" This explanation was provided for the question as well: "By positive change, we mean work which attempts to reduce social problems." The students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statements, selecting from: 1=Extremely Likely, 2=Likely, 3=Somewhat Likely, and 4=Not Likely. For the purposes of this analysis, the answers were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated greater likelihood, 1=Not Likely, 2=Somewhat Likely, 3=Likely, and 4=Extremely Likely. All the students in the CAI course answered this question on both the pre- and the post-course survey (n=47).

Table 11: Paired Samples T-Test Results for Willingness to Try to Make A Change

	Pre-Course Mean (SD)	Post-Course Mean (SD)	*t* value	*p* value
How likely would you be to try and make a positive change in society if you saw an opportunity to do so?	2.34 (.76)	2.66 (.60)	-2.79	.008**

1=Not Likely, 2= Somewhat Likely, 3=Likely, 4=Extremely Likely
n=47; *df*=46; Two-tailed test
*p≤.05. **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

For this question, mean scores on the post-course survey were significantly different than those on the pre-course survey; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant difference in the score for the pre-course survey (M=2.34, SD=.76) and the post-course survey (M=2.66, SD=.60) conditions; t(46)=-2.79, p=.008. This indicates that from the pre- to the post-course survey, the students defined themselves as more likely to try and make positive change in society if they saw an opportunity to do so. This result appears to support the conclusions reached in the qualitative analysis of the students' writings. Several students, at the end of the semester, articulated an increased willingness to engage in the work of social change, citing a newfound belief in their own abilities and their recognition of tools and resources available to them as reasons to do so. A number of students also noted specific ways in which they had become more socially active. Such results appear to coincide with the significance of this t-test.

One should note, however, that the mean score on the post-course survey for this question about the students' willingness to try and make change if an opportunity arises is 2.66 (SD=.60), falling between "Somewhat Likely," and "Likely." Therefore, on aggregate, the students in the CAI course still did not define themselves as "Likely" to seize opportunities to try to make a

positive change; they only indicated that they were more likely than they were at the onset of the semester. The ability of students to see and seize opportunities to challenge current social arrangements and "make a difference" are evidence of a transformative habitus (Mills 2008a). Therefore, it was expected that the mean score for this question on the post-course survey might be higher, but perhaps this result helps to capture just how difficult it is for students to dramatically shift their outlook about social change over the course of a semester.

Personal Engagement

Table 12 provides the results of the paired samples t-test for seven survey items on the pre- and post-course surveys. This series of statements asked about the personal engagement of the students in social action and social issues. The students were asked to indicate their level of agreement for each statement, with answer choices ranging from 1 to 4, with 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree and 4=Strongly Agree. With the exception of one statement, "I would be more socially active, except I lack the time," where n=45, all participants answered these questions on both the pre- and the post-course survey (n=47). In this particular grouping, the mean scores for two of the seven items changed from the pre- to the post-course survey at a significant level, allowing the rejection of the null hypothesis. First, there was a significant difference in the scores for "I am not as socially active as I would like to be because I do not have enough money," on the pre-course survey (M=2.81, SD=.90) and the post-course survey (M=2.43, SD=.88) conditions; t(46)=2.24, p=.030. This indicates that, from the pre- to the post-course survey, the students agreed less with this statement. This is an interesting change, especially as the qualitative research portion revealed that some students

285

identified money as a resource they needed in order to get involved in the work of social change. This result might imply that, on aggregate, the students decided that money was not a determiner of their social engagement. This would coincide with the later writings of those students who indicated that they had previously thought they needed particular resources like money to engage in social action, but by the end of the semester, had realized that they had other tools and skills at their disposal, thereby lowering the importance of money. This could also reflect the decision by some of the students to get involved in clubs, marches, or rallies during the semester, as these activities would have cost them little or no money.

Table 12: Paired Samples T-Test Results for Personal Engagement

	n	Pre-Course Mean (SD)	Post-Course Mean (SD)	*t* value	*df*	*p* value
I am interested in learning how to become more socially active	47	3.81 (.40)	3.89 (.31)	-1.27	46	.209
I am not as socially active as I would like to be because I do not have enough money	47	2.81 (.90)	2.43 (.88)	2.24	46	.030*
I have friends who are active in challenging social inequalities	47	2.66 (.96)	2.89 (.91)	-1.60	46	.117
I would be more socially active, except I lack the time	45	2.98 (.78)	2.96 (.88)	.16	44	.872
I do not see the point of getting involved in social issues because I cannot change them	47	1.72 (.83)	1.49 (.66)	1.76	46	.086
I regularly use social media to share my opinion on social issues	47	2.34 (1.13)	2.38 (1.10)	-.29	46	.776
I have conducted research (on my own) to learn more about social issues	47	2.47 (1.16)	3.30 (.83)	-5.53	46	.001***

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Strongly Agree
Two-tailed test; *p≤.05. **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

Second, there was a significant difference in the scores for "I have conducted research (on my own) to learn more about social issues," on the pre-course survey (M=2.47, SD=1.16) and the post-course survey (M=3.30, SD=.83) conditions; t(46)=-5.532, p=.001. From the pre- to the post-course survey, therefore, the students more strongly agreed that they had researched social issues on their own. This is not particularly surprising, as students were asked to conduct research into social issues that related to their own interests and passions on at least four separate occasions. Also, given the ongoing class discussion, both formal (in the classroom) and informal (voluntary student use of the online discussion board to share current issues), about social issues one would expect the students to be able to agree with this question. Since, in their early writings, several students cited a need for increased understanding of social issues to help them feel more equipped for social action, the result of the paired samples t-test indicate that the CAI course might have helped them take the steps to gain such knowledge.

The results of the paired samples t-test demonstrate that the means for the other five statements in this group were not significantly different from the pre- to the post-course survey. The null hypothesis could therefore not be rejected. The lack of significant results for a few of these statements reveals more about the students who enrolled in the CAI course and confirm what has been uncovered in the previous chapters. There was no significant difference from the pre- to the post-course surveys for the statement, "I am interested in learning how to be more socially active," but the students, on average, agreed quite strongly with this statement. On the other hand, they clearly disagreed with the statement, "I do not see the point of getting involved in social issues because I cannot change them," for which there was also no significant difference from the pre- to the post-course survey. Together, these results, along with the mean scores

themselves, imply that the students entered the CAI course keen to learn more about how to be socially active, rejecting the idea that there was no point for them to make an effort to get involved, and these feelings wavered little from the beginning to the end of the semester. This further confirms the findings of the qualitative research portion regarding the motivations of the students for taking the course.

Given the centrality of time in the students' early writings, it is important to note that there was no significant change in the level at which students agreed with the statement, "I would be more socially active, except I lack the time." On both the pre- and the post-course surveys, the mean scores fell very close to "Somewhat Agree." In their writings, several students felt their involvement in the work of social change was hampered by a lack of time. No student revisited this in the writings at the end of the semester, and there was no significant change from the beginning to the end of the semester on the survey question. Thus, one might conclude that at the end of the semester, the availability of extra time in the schedule of these students remained problematic and inhibited their decisions to become more socially active. This is something notable that pedagogical models aimed at social change will have to consider.

What Resources Are Important for Social Change?

Table 13 provides the results of the paired samples t-test for eleven questions on the pre- and post-course surveys. These statements asked students to indicate how important they felt a given resource was for people who wanted to work toward positive social change. The students were asked to rank the importance of each resource individuals, with answer choices ranging from 1 to 4, with 1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important and 4=Very Important.

Table 13: Paired Samples T-Test Results: What Resources Are Important?

	n	Pre-Course Mean (SD)	Post-Course Mean (SD)	*t* value	*df*	*p* value
How important is each of the following for people who want to work for positive social change?						
Academic knowledge	38	1.63 (.79)	3.29 (.84)	-7.20	37	.001***
Specific learned skills	38	1.92 (.91)	2.84 (.79)	-3.67	37	.001**
Money or funding	37	1.76 (.83)	3.16 (.80)	-6.01	36	.001***
Available time (extra time)	37	1.76 (.61)	3.68 (.58)	-13.43	36	.001***
Mentors who provide guidance	38	1.89 (.76)	3.16 (.75)	-6.15	37	.001***
Social networks	37	1.81 (.78)	3.19 (.78)	-.96	36	.001***
Minimal sacrifice	38	2.84 (.95)	2.21 (.88)	1.07	37	.006**
Courage	37	1.49 (.65)	3.76 (.50)	-13.95	36	.001***
Lots of energy	38	2.18 (.93)	3.26 (.80)	-4.34	37	.001***
Long-term commitment	38	1.79 (.84)	3.63 (.71)	-8.31	37	.001***
In-born abilities, such as artistic skills or intellectual ability	38	3.32 (.74)	2.03 (.79)	6.99	37	.001***

1=Not Important, 2=Somewhat Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important
Two-tailed test; *p≤.05. **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

For this series of questions, there was an issue with the pre-course survey, and a portion of the data was lost (n=37 or 38 instead of 47). Therefore, the number of students whose answers from the pre- to the post-course survey could be paired was reduced. With this in mind, the analysis for this set of questions was run three different ways. First, the paired samples t-test was run using case-by-case analysis, meaning the procedure used as many cases as possible. Second,

mean substitution was used to replace the missing scores in the pre-course survey; this was done with reservation, however, because almost 20% of the scores were missing for these questions. Third, listwise deletion was used, reducing the number of cases to 34. The output of the three analyses was reviewed, and it was found that the significance of the results held through each of the three methods. Therefore, the results provided will be those from the paired samples t-test run using case-by-case analysis, so the maximum number of cases is used, and the use of mean substitution is avoided.

For this group of survey items about the resources necessary for those who desire to work for social change, the means for each of the 11 statements changed from the pre- to the post-course survey at a significant level. In other words, the null hypothesis can be rejected for each item in this series. First, there was a significant difference in the scores for "Academic knowledge" on the pre-course survey (M=1.65, SD=.81) and the post-course survey (M=3.26, SD=.86) conditions; t(37)=-7.20, p=.001. These results indicate that from the pre- to the post-course survey, the students ranked academic knowledge higher in importance for those who want to work for positive social change.

Second, there was a significant difference in the scores for "Specific learned skills" on the pre-course survey (M=1.92, SD=.91) and the post-course survey (M=2.84, SD=.79) conditions; t(37)=-3.67, p=.001. This infers that, compared to the pre-course survey, on the post-course survey, the students ranked specific learned skills higher in importance for those who want to work for positive social change. This result may align with the students' reflection regarding the tools and resources they gained in the CAI course, in their writings at the end of the semester.

The results indicate that, compared to the pre-course survey, on the post-course survey, the students ranked money and available time higher in importance for those who want to work for positive social change. There was a significant difference for "Money or funding" on the pre-course survey (M=1.76, SD=.83) and the post-course survey (M=3.16, SD=.80) conditions; t(36)=-6.01, p=.001. This, at first glance, appears to diverge from the result for the survey item in Table 12, "I am not as socially active as I would like to be because I do not have enough money," a statement with which students in the CAI course agreed less at the end of the semester than they had at the beginning of the semester. It is possible to reconcile these results, however. Over the semester, the students had come to see money and funding as important for people who wanted to work for positive social change, but they did not necessarily see it as blocking their own engagement. Money could help better facilitate positive social change, but perhaps it was not something the students personally saw as necessarily hampering their own social action. There was also a significant difference for "Available time (extra time)" on the pre-course survey (M=1.76, SD=.61) and the post-course survey (M=3.68, SD=.58) conditions; t(36)=-13.43, p=.001. This result coincides with the finding noted in Table 12 for the survey item: "I would be more socially active, except I lack the time." As students shared in their early writings that they lacked the time to get socially involved, together, these results would indicate that time persisted as significant factor for the students in the CAI course in their consideration of the resources needed for the work of social change.

The results in Table 13 show that personal connections were also ranked higher in importance on the post-course survey when compared to the pre-course survey. There was a significant difference for "Mentors who provide guidance" on the pre-course survey (M=1.89,

SD=.76) and the post-course survey (M=3.16, SD=.75) conditions; t(37)=-6.15, p=.001; there was also a significant difference for "Social networks" on the pre-course survey (M=1.81, SD=.78) and the post-course survey (M=3.19, SD=.78) conditions; t(36)=-.96, p=.001. These results indicate that, compared to the pre-course survey, on the post-course survey, the students ranked mentors and social networks higher in importance for those who want to work for positive social change. This confirms the finding from the qualitative portion of the research that social activist mentors might be helpful for students interested in such action.

Continuing to examine the finding of this series of questions show that other resources were also ranked higher in importance by students on the post-course survey, when compared to the pre-course survey. There was a significant difference for "Courage" on the pre-course survey (M=1.49, SD=.65) and the post-course survey (M=3.76, SD=.50) conditions; t(36)=-13.95, p=.001; there was also a significant difference for "Lots of energy" on the pre-course survey (M=2.18, SD=.93) and the post-course survey (M=3.26, SD=.80) conditions; t(37)=-4.34, p=.001. Additionally, there was a significant difference for "Long-term commitment" on the pre-course survey (M=1.79, SD=.84) and the post-course survey (M=3.63, SD=.71) conditions; t(37)=-8.31, p=.001. These results indicate that, compared to the pre-course survey, on the post-course survey, the students ranked courage, energy, and commitment higher in importance for those who want to work for positive social change. This may be due in some part to the class discussions about individuals such as Dorothy Day or the young people who sat at lunch counters during the Civil Rights Movement, where courage, energy, and commitment featured largely.

Conversely, students in the CAI course ranked two items in this series lower in importance on the post-course survey than they did on the pre-course survey. There was a

significant difference for "Minimal sacrifice (not much to lose)" on the pre-course survey (M=2.84, SD=.95) and the post-course survey (M=2.21, SD=.88) conditions; t(37)=1.07, p=.006. This result implies that, on the post-course survey, the students ranked minimal sacrifice as less important for people who want to work for positive social change than they did on the pre-course survey. There was also a significant difference for "Inborn abilities, such as artistic skills or intellectual ability" on the pre-course survey (M=3.32, SD=.74) and the post-course survey (M=2.03, SD=.79) conditions; t(37)=6.99, p=.001. Therefore, on the post-course survey, the students in the CAI course rated inborn abilities significantly lower in importance for the work of social change than they did on the pre-course survey. These two results were in marked contrast to the other survey items in this series, lessening in importance for students from the pre-course survey to the post-course survey.

As a whole, the results of the paired samples t-test for this series of survey items were particularly interesting. It is important to question why the students ranked resources such as academic knowledge, learned skills, social networks, money and funding, and available time so low on the pre-course survey; each had mean scores below "Somewhat Important." Alternatively, they ranked in-born abilities between "Important" and "Very Important" at the beginning of the semester. One might conclude that these results imply that the students, by the end of the semester, had begun to shift away from their belief that social activism was only performed by extraordinary people with special in-born abilities. This would confirm the similar finding of the qualitative portion of the study. Over the semester, it appears that the work of social change had become less romanticized, as the students decided that they themselves, as "ordinary" people, could engage in social activism. By the post-course survey, they seemed to decide, however, that

although ordinary people could change society, they needed the other resources listed to work for positive social change.

Volunteering

Table 14: Paired Samples T-Test Results: Do You Work as a Volunteer?

	Pre-Course Mean (SD)	Post-Course Mean (SD)	*t* value	*p* value
Do you work as a volunteer?	.30 (.46)	.47 (.50)	-3.07	.004**

0=No, 1=Yes
n=47; *df*=46; Two-tailed test
*p≤.05. **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

Table 14 provides the results of the paired samples t-test for one question on the pre- and post-course surveys. The question asked students, "Do you work as a volunteer?" The answer choices included 1=Yes and 2=No. A dummy variable was created for this question on both the pre- and post-course surveys. After recoding, 0=No and 1=Yes. The results indicate that approximately 30% of the students in the CAI course indicated on the pre-course survey that they worked as a volunteer. On the post-course survey, the percentage of students who indicated they worked as a volunteer rose to approximately 47%. The paired samples t-test show that was a significant difference for "Do you work as a volunteer" on the pre-course survey (M=.30, SD=.46) and the post-course survey (M=.47, SD=.50) conditions; t(46)=-3.07, p=.004. These results indicate that on the post-course survey, students indicated that they worked as a volunteer at a significantly higher rate than they did on the pre-course survey.

Discussion

Quantitative analysis of the data collected from the pre- and post-course survey served to uncover the students' responses to the CAI course as well as show significant change over the semester in the students' attitudes, beliefs, and actions regarding social change and personal agency. The mean scores of a series of questions about the CAI course, while lacking context, present an insightful overview of how the students felt the CAI course affected their perceptions of their own abilities as well as their desires, feelings, and belief regarding social change and their role in it. Further, the paired samples t-test, while not establishing causation, did capture change from the beginning to the end of the semester in the students' views on and involvement in social change as well as the resources they deemed necessary for such work. In addition to providing interesting information, the results generally aligned with the findings of the qualitative analysis of the students' writings, which increased the reliability of that portion of the study.

The significant results of the paired samples t-test can be organized to demonstrate that the students in the CAI course experienced four general types of changes from the pre- to the post-course survey. First, the value students placed on resources such as academic knowledge, courage, and learned skills changed significantly. On the pre-course survey, the students had highly valued in-born abilities, while ranking those resources that can be acquired as not particularly important. This changed by the end of the semester, as the importance that students placed on in-born ability dropped significantly, and the importance that they placed on those resources that can be acquired increased significantly. Thus, in light of the findings of the qualitative portion of the research, it might be concluded that the students moved away from a

belief that only extraordinary people could cause social change and realized that resources are vital if one wants to engage in such work. Second, in a similar vein, the students found themselves agreeing more strongly that collective movements and the individual could create change in society by the end of the semester. This too was in keeping with the results of the qualitative analysis of student writings. Third, at the beginning of the semester, students were less optimistic about their ability to change something at the meso- and macro-levels, such as the national government than more immediate situations such as their neighborhoods. By the end of the semester, however, the mean scores changed significantly, indicating that the students had grown in their optimism about their ability to change such things. Fourth, the students' willingness to take action increased significantly from the pre- to the post-course survey. They became more willing to try to make change, and they volunteered at a higher rate than they had at the beginning of the semester. These four types of significant changes align quite closely to the results of the qualitative portion of the research, indeed indicating that as an entity, the students had changed in the value they placed on resources, their optimism in the potential of the individual to alter society, their own belief about what was within their realm of influence, and their willingness to get involved.

Similarly, many of the statements or questions that did not significantly change from the pre- to the post-course survey can also be grouped together, resulting in three main categories. First, the value students placed on the work of social change and the people who did such work did not change significantly from the pre- to the post-course survey. At the beginning of the semester, the students strongly indicated that efforts to change society and challenge inequalities were worthwhile, and they admired those who did it. Those sentiments remained consistent at the

end of the semester. Second, those questions or statements that dealt with the students' desire to be involved in the work of change did not change to any significant degree from the pre- to the post-course survey. This served to show that, as the qualitative analysis of the students' writings demonstrated, the students likely entered the CAI course with an interest in social change, and even a personal desire to be engaged in such work. This interest and desire remained consistent over the semester. In other words, students did not waver or increase in their desire to get involved in the work of social change. Third, when considering what they believed to be within the scope of their influence at the beginning of the semester, the students saw the situations in closest proximity to them as more changeable than those at the macro level. These scores did not change significantly over the semester. Therefore, the students remained optimistic that they could in fact change something that bothered them in the situations more immediate to them. Together, the lack of significant change over the semester in these three areas presents a picture of a group of students who, at the beginning of the CAI course, valued efforts at social change, desired to be engaged in it, and believed themselves capable of changing those things closest to them, such as their personal or familial situation. These feelings did not change over the semester.

Tying together the results of the qualitative analysis of the students' writings and those of the pre- and post-course surveys, it appears that many students did experience significant change in certain areas over the semester, yet remained consistent in others. They came to see the potential of the individual, and more particularly, themselves, to cause social change. They came to value those resources that could be acquired over innate ability. They also remained firm in their belief that making the effort to change society was worthwhile and important and became more willing to try to get involved in that effort. While this appears to be the experiences of the

students on aggregate, it is also important to remember that there were a few students who did not feel they changed significantly. These results could indicate that overall, the students developed a more transformative outlook on society as a result of the CAI course. It is important to remember, however, that there are limitations to such a claim, both in relation to causality as well as the complexities of the indicators of the reproductive/transformative habitus such as desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions uncovered during the qualitative analysis of the students' writings. For example, pre- and post-course surveys have proven useful for measuring short-term attitudinal change, yet short-term change does not necessarily lead to long-term modification (Mobley 2007; Snowden 2004). The results may also reflect some decree of social desirability bias (Bowman and Hill 2011).

However, even though such a conclusion might remain a bit tenuous, through the mixed method approach of this study, it definitely appears that a significant number of the students did increase in their optimism about their ability to cause social change, came to recognize the tools and resources available to them for such work, and were willing to become more engaged. In other words, they experienced some degree of transformation in their outlook. It remains now to consider if there are any pedagogical aspects of the CAI course that, according to the students, may have helped facilitate the changes indicated by both the qualitative portion of the research and the paired samples t-test. This will be the focus of Chapter 10.

CHAPTER TEN: PREPARING FOR THE NEXT JOURNEY
EVALUATING THE CAI COURSE

Chapters Eight and Nine uncovered the extent to which the students in the Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course changed from the beginning to the end of the semester. It was noted that a significant number of students increased in their optimism, came to believe in their own potential to cause social change, felt better equipped to be socially active, and voluntarily articulated at least a general plan for immediate social engagement. While there were exceptions, a few of which were noted, these were the common findings, taking into account the results of the qualitative analysis of student writings as well as the paired-sample t-tests comparing the pre- and post-course surveys. With the aforementioned findings about the students regarding the indicators associated with the reproductive and transformative habitus, including desire, feeling, belief, and action, it becomes instructive to determine what aspects of the CAI course were useful to students and helpful in attaining the course goals, as well as uncover shortcomings that can be addressed in the design of similar classes in the future.

If education is going to help students develop a more transformative outlook on society and their role in social change, understanding and developing methods to help facilitate this aim is important work. Mills (2008a; 2008b) theorizes that it is possible for teachers to help engender a transformative habitus in their students and help them see opportunities and see tactics to challenge limitations imposed by the current structural arrangements. A key question then becomes: how do teachers make this happen? As delineated in Chapter Two, the literature offers a plethora of research related to transformative education, documenting what "worked" and what did not in various classroom settings. This has been true of sociological education as well, as

evidenced in journals such as *Teaching Sociology*. As noted, the present study is guided by such research. Therefore, it is prudent to explore the strategies used in the CAI course to determine if this study has anything of value to add to this ongoing conversation in the literature, especially in light of the theorization of the reproductive/transformative dialectic.

This chapter therefore turns to the final exploratory research question: "What pedagogical aspects were effective in helping students achieve the goals and objectives of the CAI course? Are any of them transferable to other contexts? Where is there room for improvement?" In alignment with the rest of this study, the words of the students themselves will be used to address this question. The determination of what the students found to be compelling and beneficial in the CAI course was done in large part by drawing on data from the post-course survey, where the students were asked these four open-ended questions: (1) What, if anything, did you enjoy about the Community Action and Involvement course, (2) What, if anything, did you think would make the Community Action and Involvement course more useful, (3) What, if anything, did you dislike about the Community Action and Involvement course, and (4) Would you recommend the Community Action and Involvement course to your friends and fellow students? Why or why not? Also, data were drawn from the writings of the students, particularly the second self-assessment, as they periodically referred to a specific reading, discussion, or activity that they found particularly impactful. These comments were collected and reviewed several times. Recurrent themes were then identified, leading to the identification of key terms such as, for example, "discussion," "learning community," "like/dislike," "professor" and "field experience," that were useful for developing categories that revolved around what the students did and did not appreciate about the course, as well as what they suggested might make it better.

This Helped Me on My Journey

Although it can be challenging to uncover and pinpoint the pedagogical aspects that might have helped facilitate the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the CAI course, it is important to attempt to do so, nonetheless, to find if there is anything of value that is transferable to future courses. For example, is there anything that proved helpful or successful in the CAI course that could be employed in other CAI or action-oriented sociology courses? This section will draw on the students' comments to uncover what they found to be most helpful in the CAI course. The analysis revealed that, though a few students wove together their evaluation of the CAI course in a manner that made it difficult to break it apart into categories, most students generally expressed appreciation for one or two things. These included: (1) the learning community that developed in the CAI course and the class discussion it engendered, (2) knowledge gained, (3) the applicability of the course across the curriculum, and (4) the instructor.

Don't Make Me Choose Just One

While most students focused on one or two aspects of the CAI course in their discussion of what they appreciated about the class, a number of students identified multiple aspects of the class that they found beneficial. Instead of attempting to dissect such comments apart into their component parts, it seems more appropriate to leave them intact. Presenting them in their entirety best allows these quotations to convey how these students felt about the overall organization and pedagogical approach of the CAI course. Their appreciation of the CAI course as a unit serves as a reminder of the value of including this type of course in the undergraduate curriculum.

A few students found themselves positively affected by a combination of the pedagogical

methods utilized in the CAI course. For example, Forty-One valued every single aspect of the

CAI course, finding within them a new vision of herself as an agent of social change:

> The class in itself, every journal entry, every discussion in class, every story,
> every example of social change in the lectures, every song, sit-in, spoken word,
> changed me. In a way, I actually stopped doubting the abilities that I have to make
> a change, and started to see myself challenging the social institutions that blind us.

Three also found motivation and enjoyment in several aspects of the CAI course, stating:

> Throughout the course I enjoyed the free-flowing discussions, opportunity to
> share thoughts aloud and through journal entries, assessments, and other
> assignments [as well as] access to enlightening reading material and the
> motivation to begin finding my own outside of class.

Referencing applicability and relevance, Thirteen too presented a positive overview of the course,

reflecting on the learning environment, the class discussions, and the lessons:

> I enjoyed this class because it was a safe place for discussion about social issues,
> and I was able to see other people's perspectives because of it. I like that it did not
> feel like a typical class, in that we were not given a lecture and then left simply
> regurgitating information. This class helped everyone to expand their minds and
> to understand the problems society faces. Through the examples, discussions, and
> lessons I know I learned things in this class, that unlike my other classes, that I
> can apply to my life and that will stick with me forever.

Ten, too, offered a general assessment of the impact of the CAI course, referencing the social

construction of society, personal agency, and increased participation in the process:

> The underlying message throughout the course was simple: Find what interests
> you and suits your abilities, and make a plan to act on those interests…Rather
> than brainwashing or pressuring me, this course solidified my aspirations and life
> goals, and helped me see more clearly how to best exert my talents and agency.

> Had it not been for this course, I would still be struggling with what I could
> possibly do to improve the social climate…during this course I increased my
> participation in clubs and organizations involved in activism…I truly believe that
> I have many doors open to me now, and many options for pursuing social equality.

I see the social world as it is. If humans made it, I believe we can change it as well.

Six, however, pulled together perhaps the most complete reflection on the impact of the CAI course:

I constantly doubted myself because of my race, my gender, and education. I always told myself that no one would want to listen to what I have to say...But throughout the course, I started to see more [that] I can do. I did realize that there are things, small things, that I can do.

[The course] has taught me to look at problems, evaluate, [and] then see how I can help. I've learned that I do not have to be this huge political activist such as those influential individuals we have learned so much about in history. Our textbooks focus on the leaders of movements such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Gandhi, Susan B. Anthony, etc. The "little people" who worked with them are often not mentioned. Growing up, when I read about these influential people, I thought to myself, I could never make changes like these people. It made me doubt my abilities. But now I know that I do have abilities and resources to help create change.

I also learned that change happens gradually over time; it cannot happen overnight. It only takes one person to notice a problem and spread awareness. I also learned that I do not have to march on the streets in protest in order to see change. I realized there are so many other ways that also [fit] a person's lifestyle or personality in order to be a part of social action. This realization has been a huge relief.

In her assessment, Six summarized the key lessons she appreciated in the class, ranging from an awareness of "little people," the range of options available for the work of social change, and a personal recognition of her own potential. Like Six, the other students here credited the CAI course as an entity for affecting their view of society as well as their potential as social agents. The lessons, activities, and general approach of the CAI course resulted in encouragement, motivation, confidence, and relief for these students.

These evaluations serve as a reminder of the importance of intentionally organizing a course to achieve its goals and objectives, as well as developing a unifying rationale based on the

literature. This course used what Bean (2011) terms "backward design" in an attempt to tie each and every assignment and lesson to the central aims of the course, which included developing or supporting the undergraduate's sense of personal agency alongside the development of the sociological perspective and providing the resources necessary for them to identify how they could practically engage in social change. Each learning activity in the CAI was developed using a rationale rooted in previous research, both practical and theoretical. In light of the theoretical framework of the present study, this approach was particularly vital. Bourdieu (1990b) is clear as to the difficulty of overcoming the reproductive tendencies of one's habitus; changing thought patterns and behaviors that have been developed since infancy takes time and ongoing effort. Thus, if teachers are to help students develop a more transformative outlook, the habitus will likely require persistent reinforcement "in a direction that transforms it" (Bourdieu 1990a:116). In designing a class that intentionally aimed at doing just that, therefore, it is important that every aspect of the course serves to provide such reinforcement. Also, in light the definition of agency by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), such a class should consistently make space for self-reflection, projection, and evaluation, so the students examine their own patterns of thinking and action and evaluate them in terms of reproduction and transformation. While the degree to which students grow or change over a semester will vary, for the students in this section, the benefit of this approach is apparent in their description of how all the activities and discussions combined to create a transformative experience that was ongoing at the end of the semester.

A Community of Learners

A number of students referenced the learning community, either directly or indirectly, in their evaluation of what they liked or found beneficial about the CAI course. For example, Thirty-Nine felt the students in the CAI were in charge of their own learning: "I enjoyed that fact that it was us the students that controlled our learning. Everyone was learning at [their] own pace because the class was about us and what we can do." Similarly, Eighteen appreciated, "[t]he open forum[;] I felt we could make this class our own." Eight found the CAI course to be extraordinary in regards to, "The 'community' that it created in our classroom. I have never experienced such a close [k]nit, passionate group of students in a course before." Twenty-Nine expressed, "I enjoyed the relaxing and safe environment. People were free to speak their mind and everyone respected each other." Four defined the class environment in the following manner: "It was interactive and allowed for everyone to express their feelings and opinions. It was a non-judgmental zone." Likewise, Twenty-One shared, "I think what I enjoyed most was the class participation. [The instructor] never forced us to share our thoughts/opinions but rather made us feel comfortable enough to want to express ourselves."

Several students also felt that the sense of community in the CAI course supported their interest in social change and social action. For example, Three felt the relationships built in this learning community were particularly valuable and increased her level of comfort and confidence:

> The relationships built during the course that were obviously meaningful to the students and affected their participation and performance (as I know it did for me). Most of all, I enjoyed being around people that cared about the same issues that I do, and eventually being comfortable enough to not only listen to the thoughtful insight of my peers and professor, but eventually sharing my own.

Forty-Six also found that the learning community provided a source of comfort and connection

to others who shared her worldview:

> Community Action and Involvement has made me realize that I am not alone in
> my cause. There are several other people in my class who have the same world
> vision that I do and want to help improve or remove the social inequalities and
> social problems in our society.

Similarly, Thirty-Two shared that the CAI course supported her enthusiasm for social change

and provided an active example of community:

> As someone who is easily distracted or dejected, coming to class and doing the
> readings kept my morale up for working towards social change. This class felt
> like a community and the discussions held really reflected the social community
> ideas we discussed.

Further, Forty captured the co-building of knowledge that can occur in a learning community,

noting the potential to better understand oneself by learning about others:

> I enjoyed the culture of our classroom. You could really feel the love and
> acceptance in the room. But also, I enjoyed being challenged in my personal
> thinking, and the more that I learned about everyone else's stories the more I
> learned about myself.

In a final example, Thirty-Three summarized the importance of the learning community to her

experience in the CAI course:

> The class dynamics in Community Action and Involvement were unlike any other
> class I have taken at [University]. The open discussions and encouragement to be
> engaged in class were incredibly welcoming. I felt as though I had a space where I
> could talk to like-minded individuals and I could get different perspectives on
> certain topics. I enjoyed coming to class (so much so that I only missed one class
> and that was only because I was incredibly sick) and engaging in conversation or
> even just listening to the professor.

These comments speak to the centrality of the learning community to the overall experience for

several students in the CAI course. In the learning community that developed, the students found

acceptance, motivation, encouragement, alternative perspectives, and social ties that supported their desire for a better society.

The development of the learning community in the CAI course both supported and gave rise to class discussion that many students highly valued. In fact, for Forty-Five, there was no pedagogical strategy she found more impactful; she shared, "The discussions were the most beneficial and meaningful to me." Six too appreciated the class discussions and noted the importance of the class atmosphere in facilitating them: "I enjoyed the discussions we had in class. The professor made the class atmosphere feel comfortable enough to speak my mind and ask any questions I needed. I also enjoyed learning from my peers." Five agreed: "[The instructor] is excellent at fostering a group discussion, and I learned a lot from the perspectives of the other students." Likewise, Two noted, "I enjoyed more than anything the discussions. [They gave] everyone the opportunity to tell their side or views," while Eleven shared, "I enjoyed the conversations/discussions we had in class. They were enlightening as well as inspiring." Interestingly, Twenty-Six saw class discussion as an opportunity to exert one's agency, and therefore particularly appropriate for the CAI course:

> I enjoyed the discussion-style of the course. I prefer discussions over lectures regardless, but I feel like it was especially important for there to be discussion with a course such as this one. It was a great forum for sharing and challenging opinions, and it was just another small-scale example of allowing us to exert our own personal agency.

Thirteen similarly felt the discussions might help her overcome her hesitancy about getting involved: "Through our discussions in this class, I have opened my mind to becoming closer to my community and working to improve it despite my introversion and hesitance." She went on to say, "I have grown in my sense of community, and it has made it easier for me to know to

307

engage within society." Thus, these students enjoyed the role of class discussion in the CAI

course and found it an effective source of information as well as inspiration. The learning

environment facilitated discussion as well as benefited from it.

Interestingly, a few students noted their appreciation for the alternative perspectives they

encountered via class discussion, while others were grateful for the discovery of shared interests.

For example, Nineteen valued hearing from the variety of people in the course:

> I enjoyed the open discussion of the class and feeling encouraged to share
> information and videos with my peers. It was great to be able to talk with people
> from different walks of life come together for many common goals. Even if we
> did not share the same goals or beliefs, we were able to listen and learn from each
> other.

Similarly, Forty-Three observed, "Open discussions in class [were] an effective way to broadcast

a variety of viewpoints and ideas." Thirty-Seven too was appreciative of the different voices in

the learning community: "I enjoyed getting to know my classmates and gaining

knowledge/opinions different from my own. I also enjoyed being able to share my own personal

thoughts and using those to shape my own definition of changing the community." Seven agreed,

stating, "I really enjoyed the class discussions. It's great to have stimulating conversation with

groups of people who have different backgrounds and viewpoints. I really enjoyed it." Twenty-

Five too was grateful that, in learning about others, she learned about herself:

> This course has affected me in a way that is meaningful for my life and others. I
> have an understanding of why I have always thought the way I have from a lot of
> my peer's perspective. I have learned from them and the discussions [have]
> helped me be more understanding of what people view and how and why [they]
> react to certain things. I appreciated just listening to others and taking everything
> in, so I know how others may feel and not just myself.

Thirty-Six, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of being in a learning community with others of similar outlooks and goals, seeing such an arrangement as a source of support in the work of social change:

> I get amped when I am in a room full of people who have similar goals and motivations as I do. It is nice to not feel like it always rests on my shoulders. If you're trying to save the world alone, well, the world can get a bit heavy.

Fifty similarly felt she had been part of a "collective journey" through class discussion: "I loved how it always felt like a discussion. I never felt like I was put on the spot or that I didn't get a chance to say what I felt. It seemed more like a collective journey…" Finally, Thirty-Two found the environment and discussions of the CAI course to be reason for hope in a social world full of misunderstanding:

> Like I said, there are many miscommunications that occur and we need to open up conversation and understanding in order to heal the world. In class, we have a very diverse and open discussion[,] which allows us to take in other perspectives and discuss our personal beliefs in a way that allows us to make change. It is class and discussions like these that make me have hope.

For these students as well as the others like them, discussion served as a mechanism through which they could hear different viewpoints as well as find common ground with their peers.

The learning environment and the use of classroom discussion were noted by a large number of students as aspects they particularly appreciated about the CAI course. The goal of developing a learning community was central to the design of the CAI course, as indicated on the first page of the syllabus, where in reference to course structure, it states: "In this course, our main purpose is to be a community of learners that engages in a problem-posing dialogue that enables us to develop a critical consciousness" (see Appendix B). The establishment of a learning community in a class can help students become co-owners of the class and co-creators

of knowledge. The CAI course was intentionally designed to create "a community of learners *together*" (hooks 1994:153; italics original). Building a learning community was believed to be particularly essential for this CAI course due to its potential to provide a living, breathing example of how people of varying social locations and lived experiences can work together. It can provide a forum for diverse voices and problem-posing dialogue (Freire 1974/2013; hooks 1994). Indeed, as Kaufman (2010) notes, the creation of a learning community in a classroom is a social process that helps create unity. It also can lead to greater social involvement, because as McAdam and Paulsen (1993) explain, participation in the work of social change is more likely when individuals combine a view of themselves as social agents with social ties to others who are like-minded. With these considerations in mind, from the beginning of the CAI course, an attempt was made to create an atmosphere that encouraged sharing and interaction. Therefore, a class-based discussion was central to each lesson, and students were encouraged to share opportunities and ideas with each other, both in class and via an online discussion board. The importance of the social ties constructed during the class and the appreciation of the interaction throughout the semester was further evidenced by the decision of the vast majority of the students to set up and join a private Facebook page through which they could continue to share ideas, news, and opportunities for involvement after the semester concluded. While it is unclear how long this momentum will last, such an action attests to the sense of community that developed in the CAI course.

Along with the learning community engendered in the CAI course, the students expressed an appreciation for the class discussions that occurred throughout the semester. Open and uninhibited discussion that includes a range of social histories is essential for the "*together*" of

which hooks (1994:153) speaks. It is likely that one affected the other. The openness of class discussions facilitated the creation of a learning community, and as the learning community developed, such discussions were further encouraged. Class discussion is important for the co-construction of knowledge, as students are able to hear viewpoints alternative to their own. It also offers students the opportunity to direct the flow of the class, giving them an element of control, helping to level the power dynamics in the classroom to some degree (Freire 1974/2013). In an action-oriented class, class discussion is arguably even more essential, because to accomplish social change, it may be necessary to be able to work with a diverse cross-section of people, hear and evaluate alternative perspectives, and articulate and evaluate one's own thoughts and ideas. Classroom discussion can provide a trial run and allow students to develop such skills.

Knowledge Gained

As noted in previous chapters, some of the students who entered the CAI course did so hoping to gain increased knowledge about social issues and social change. Not knowing enough about the issues was a thought trap (Jones et al. 2007) cited by many students as prohibitive for their engagement in the work of social change. For several, this was a motivation to enroll in the CAI course. Therefore, it was important that the knowledge presented throughout the semester would be perceived by students to be beneficial and supportive of their agency. At the end of the course, a number of students indeed indicated that the knowledge they gained was valuable and helpful. Several students also referenced various assignments, materials, lessons, and learning

activities employed in the CAI course to help the students grow in their knowledge, as students found them useful, enjoyable, and valuable.

<u>Gaining A Broader Awareness</u>

Several students referenced the knowledge they gained in the CAI course in general terms. Twelve, for example, was grateful for the knowledge she gained: "I enjoyed the way we were taught. I thought all the lectures were very interesting and made an impact. I felt like I have learned more in this class then I have in other sociology classes." Fifty too reflected on the knowledge she gained, crediting it with prompting her personal growth, "…I came into this course thinking I was as aware as I could be, and I have seen myself drastically grow and change throughout the course." Student One compared the CAI class to another sociology course she had completed, finding that, as a result of the CAI course, she had gained useful knowledge that helped her feel capable of causing change:

> Having my eyes opened to the social inequalities that plague society's structure is actually what I enjoyed most about this course. You can't begin to change the world unless you realize the problems it's facing first. This in and of itself is the vital first step to taking action towards making the world a better place. I have also taken a "social problems" course here at [University], however it's focus on the world's problems more broadly left me feeling helpless; as opposed to this course which was much more micro than macro, left me feeling fully capable to make the necessary changes to myself and society.

In this manner, Student One captures the potential for sociological knowledge to either discourage students' agency or, conversely, inspire them to engage in the work of social change. Five too felt that the knowledge and awareness he gained from the class was beneficial:

> It's helpful to get a historical perspective and context for today's social problems, and this class made me think about things I'd just accepted and hadn't examined. I considered myself an enlightened, aware person before this class began, and I

know I've gained a broader awareness of social issues and the ways they've
developed over time.

Nineteen agreed that the knowledge she gained in the CAI course was applicable, which helped

her better appreciate the value of sociology:

> I have heard other people say that they do not like sociology because there is no
> way to apply it. Before taking this class, I probably thought the same thing as well.
> This course helped me to understand how I can apply sociological concepts and
> change the way that I see others and myself.

Thirteen also appreciated what she learned in the class, referring to both skills and knowledge:

> I always thought of myself as open-minded, but I did not realize how much there
> was still to learn. Through the lessons and discussions in this class I have learned
> a lot about how society functions and the perspectives of different people from
> various backgrounds within our nation. I am coming out of this class with a better
> handle on how to open up discussions and how to become socially active.

A few students also found the general broadness of the topics covered in the CAI course to be

useful. Ten explained, "I enjoyed how broad the course was, and how many different issues were

used as examples." Similarly, Forty-Four noted, "Our discussions and lessons were eye opening

and I was able to gain a lot of knowledge of different topics and issues." Although they did not

identify specific lessons or concepts that they found most valuable, these students made clear

their appreciation in general for what they learned in the CAI class.

Drawing Inspiration From Others

Moving beyond generalities, several students were particularly grateful for the concrete

examples of social action they became familiar with over the semester. They found the stories of

people engaged in the work of social change to be particularly helpful and inspiring. For instance,

Forty-Four had previously believed that change required the organization of a large group of

people; however, she stated, "after hearing [the instructor's] story of her students creating a social change and making an impact with the small amount of people they knew, I…stood corrected." Student One also drew inspiration from an example shared by the instructor:

> But I was inspired by [the instructor's] "why I write letters" story and that got me thinking more on the lines of small everyday actions that I do have the ability to change about myself, that in turn would change my personal world and positively affect others around me.

Fourteen felt similarly, noting that she appreciated, "learning about inspiring people who have made a difference." For Two, there were a couple of examples she was grateful to learn about, especially in light of her interest in colorism:

> There were two specific discussion[s] during class that really opened my eyes and influenced me in a positive way to cause change. The first story that influenced and made me more personally motivated is that of Dorothy Day. Thinking about how she wrote a letter to enact social change, made me look at all the resources that I had that were more effective that I did not use. Her story actually made me feel very lazy because I had so many resources that were easy to use yet I never used them to enact my own social change. However, the most important story that made me become more personally motivated was that of Nelson Mandela. I admired the fact that after spending twenty-seven years in jail for trying to enact social change, he still continued when he was released. This was motivating because I thought about all the people including myself in the beginning, who would have given up and stop pushing for change. After hearing these two stories I became so much more invested in creating a society that did not see shade because Nelson Mandela created an "Africa" free of apartheid.

For some students, learning about the many methods used for social change introduced them to multiple pathways for engagement. For example, Six learned that not everyone interested in social change is required to march in the streets:

> I learned that I do not need to march out into the streets in order to help create social change. I have also learned that there are numerous tools that can fit my personality in order to help create change. I now feel a bit more comfortable in being involved in community action.

Five also commented on how learning about different methods of social change and others who are already engaged in such efforts helped him:

> By exploring the different methods for working toward social change, we removed some of the intimidation associated with starting something new. We stressed that it's valuable to align yourself with others already doing the work and to learn from others with experience. You can start a new movement, but it's easier to join a group and contribute toward collective effort -- and possibly help change the group if you feel it's necessary.

Further, Five shared, "Above all, I value the lessons on how to organize and participate effectively in social action." It was not just the successes of social change that were appreciated, however. One should not miss Twenty-Four's appreciation for learning not just about favorable outcomes of social action, but also the failures and "everything in between":

> In the end I feel I gained a very healthy amount of context for social change. The methods, the successes, the failures and everything in between that I was never aware of before I got to experience with this class. I came in not knowing what to expect and I very much enjoyed the outcome.

Similarly, Twenty enjoyed learning about both positives and negatives:

> I am beyond grateful to have had a course like this. Community Action... was such an eye-opening experience that taught me the beauty of getting involve[d]. I enjoyed that I learned both the positive & negative but I still remain empowered by this class.

From the outset, one of the goals of the CAI course was to present social change and social action in an academic manner, while avoiding an emotion-laden approach. The course was designed to critically consider various methods for social change, evaluating them in light of both their potential and their limitations. Stories of activism can be essential for those students who have never been part of any such work (Cornelius 1998). The reflections of these students imply that they appreciated and benefited from the learning process aimed at achieving this goal.

<u>Enjoying the Requirements</u>

Although two students indicated that they felt that there was too much writing in the course, others expressed appreciation for the assignments and activities in the CAI course. A few students, like Forty-One for example, referenced the written assignments in general: "I enjoyed the written assignments and overall construction of the course." Others, for example, mentioned specific activities. A small number of students, for example, shared how much they enjoyed the act of journal writing. Thirty-Six reflected, "I loved the journal reflections which I will keep to reflect on as my story progresses," and Ten noted, "I felt that the journals helped me better reflect on what I had learned in class." Forty-One also appreciated the process of journaling and reading the journals of the instructor: "I think that after watching and reading another person's personal journals and learning how much I have in common is something else that changed me." Forty-One is here referencing the journal entries which were completed by the instructor and posted for all the students to read as part of leveling the power dynamics often at play during journal writing (Grauerholz and Copenhaver 1994). The act of writing and receiving detailed response and encouragement from the instructor also mattered to Forty-Six, who rediscovered a skill for social action as a result:

> I also added my writing as a resource because you, [the instructor], have instilled confidence in me with your feedback on my journal entries and other assignments. A few of my English and History/Human Geography teachers in high school have told me my writing was acceptable (Great Job! At the top of every paper, no indication of reading it to completion), but I never knew my writing could move someone and make them really feel something until you told me I could. Your motivation has ignited a passion within me to write for a cause, even if I don't think anyone will read it.

Others also noted the benefits of specific assignments. For example, Fifty liked the social action toolkit and the self-assessments: "I can use the toolkits and see how far I've come from my self-

316

assessments…it's crazy." She also enjoyed the group share activities: "…I loved when we brought in pictures of social change, music, art, and so on because I felt like I had access to so much that I didn't know before." Like Fifty, Forty-Five also appreciated the social action toolkit:

> Creating my three social action tools for the final social action project put into perspective the resources I have on hand to create social change… Although I was willing to spark social change before, I am now equipped with the tools necessary to do so. Seeing a list of social tools that can have the potential of a universal change is awesome. I feel by choosing tools such as positive propaganda, social media, and mentoring, I have exactly what I need to change the world for the greater good, part of it at least.

Thirty-Nine, too, found the social action tools to be beneficial: "What really helped me was the social action tools, they helped me by showing me examples of different ways and different things I can do to help out and become that activist that I really want to be…" Thus, at the end of the semester, several students indicated that they enjoyed, valued, and gained knowledge from the structured activities and assignments in the CAI course.

The assigned readings of the CAI course also featured in the students' comments as something they enjoyed and from which they gained knowledge, and even inspiration. For example, Thirty-Six stated, "The reading assignments were perfect and pulled me in." Ten liked the assigned textbooks, as well as their low price point (<$30 for three books): "I enjoyed the textbooks greatly, and appreciated that they were low in price as well." A few students referred to a specific book they enjoyed. For example, Twenty-Eight was grateful for the examples of social action provided in one textbook: "I enjoyed some of the reading material in the *Sociologists in Action* handbook due to the reasonable suggestion [of] action that can be associated with social issues." Twenty-Eight was referring to *Sociologists in Action: Sociology,*

Social Change and Social Justice (Korgen, White, and White 2014). A few students found value

in another assigned book, *The Better World Handbook* (Jones et al. 2007). Forty-Six shared:

> *The Better World Handbook* already gives plenty of ways to build community
> from planting a tree to hosting a block party to getting involved with the local
> schools. (italics added)

Forty-Four was inspired to action by the same book, "After reading *The Better World Handbook*,

I signed up for a soup kitchen in Kissimmee, in which I will assist in stocking food, sorting

clothing, serving the homeless, and much more." In this manner, a number of students chose to

comment on the assigned readings, finding them a source of knowledge and ideas beneficial for

and supportive their desire to generate positive change in the social world. Particularly, the

readings served some students well in connecting their desire to specific methods for social

change, or, in other words, presenting possible outlets for translating their desire into action.

Identifying with a Lesson

Some students referenced specific lessons as a source of knowledge that affected their

outlook, feelings, or beliefs. For example, Twenty-Eight recalled a lesson drawn from Enloe's

(2014) *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*: "If I learned anything in this class it is that bananas matter,

therefore your actions matters." Similarly, One was impacted by the class discussion of bananas:

> My view of the world as being a fragile place was strengthened…when we were
> discussing the ramifications of eating bananas. It is astounding to me how little
> effort it would take for a group of people, albeit an enormous number of people,
> to create such a drastic change in the world…if only we could all come together
> for the greater good. Unfortunately, however, there will always be that person in
> the world who thinks, "well I don't care if the laborers in banana farms are being
> treated unethically, I'm going to eat the banana". And the cycle continues…

On another note, Thirty-Five found that the knowledge she gained from class discussions about

race both enlightened her and gave her hope:

> The Community Action and Involvement course was definitely an eye-opening experience for me. I've had the chance to learn things about my race that I was completely oblivious to. I have learned that although a majority of these thoughts about a specific race have been negative, the reasons stem from many different aspects. I feel as if I've grown to look at more than one side of a story. And the importance of having hope that things can always change for the better.

Thirteen, on the other hand, referenced a specific discussion, "Life on the Möbius Strip," that she

especially appreciated:

> …I think my purpose is not to simply exist, but to live. What we discussed in class about living on the Mobius strip left an impact on me, and I know I will share that idea with those who ask why I am interested in becoming socially active. I do not want to be stuck in a cycle where everyone has had the same experiences and thinks the same way, and I am proud that I have friends and family from different cultures, races, religions, and beliefs. This class has helped to further open my mind to engaging in social change.

Fifty also referenced the lesson about the Möbius Strip, as well as others (i.e. "Invictus" and

"strange bedfellows"), citing their impact on her outlook throughout the semester-long journey:

> What I am truly amazed at, and find myself even being proud of as the semester closes is, as I [m]entioned in my first assessment, I really didn't think one person could make any significant social change. I am utterly shocked at how wrong I was. Even on the last day of class I was still learning, and I know that not only can one person change the world, it doesn't have to be so intimidating, and it is not how people might imagine it. Causing social change as an individual or small group most likely isn't pulling up a society up by the bootstraps single handedly, it could be through a poem, like "Invictus," where it causes a domino effect of inspiration for a countless number of people. It could be simply changing yourself or having a desire to reach out to other groups and work together with a strange bedfellow, it could be to keep trying to always have an open mind and participate inside and outside like the Mobius Strip.

Like Fifty, several students felt changed by what they learned in the CAI course and anticipated it would have a long-term effect on their lives. For example, Thirty-Three anticipated that the knowledge she gained from the class would have a lasting impact:

> The information given to us throughout the semester was insightful, inspiring, and definitely gave [my classmates and myself] things to think about before, during, and after the class was over. Community Action and Involvement became a class that I carried with me throughout the rest of my life.

Twelve felt similarly, sharing, "[The course] taught me valuable lessons that I will take with me throughout my life." Therefore, it appears that several students appreciated lessons taught in the CAI course because they provided knowledge that positively affected their outlook on social change and their role as social agents.

Thought Trap? What Thought Trap?

Early in the semester, several students felt they did not know enough to be engaged in the work of social change, citing the thought trap, "I don't know enough about the issues" (Jones et al. 2007:10). Therefore, it is encouraging that so many students noted that they felt they gained a significant degree of knowledge from the CAI course. Because the students were not asked specifically to speak about this, the fact that several did so highlights the importance they placed on the knowledge they gained. Whether it led to a general increase in one's sociological understanding, a burst of inspiration from the social activism of others, the recognition of multiple methods for social engagement, or a reading or a lesson that was especially meaningful, the students felt they had grown from the information presented to them throughout the CAI course. They also connected their increased knowledge with hope, inspiration, and the potential to be more involved in working to change society. Similar to what Cornelius (1998) noted,

learning about social activism can provide a framework from which the students can draw to develop their own approach to social action or to tackle an issue in which they are interested. Agency can be limited due to the lack of schema that one can call upon in determining the actions and possibilities available to oneself (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Therefore, if the goal is to help students develop a transformative outlook, it becomes essential to strive to release students from the trappings of their iteration by engaging students in the development of new schema, which can in turn present additional tactics and opportunities for action and change in the social world. In other words, students can have more to draw upon when projecting and evaluating courses of action available to them and may gain a realistic confidence in their own ability to affect situations of which they find themselves a part. In this manner, knowledge is not just knowledge for knowledge's sake; instead, it becomes timely, relevant, and by altering one's desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions, embodies a potential for lasting impact.

Applicability

Some students in the CAI course, when reflecting on what they found most useful about the CAI course, referenced its relevance and applicability. Forty-Three described the course as, "an eye-opening class with the underlying goal of inspiring change without an overwhelming burden." Several students noted how the CAI course was complementary to their majors or other courses. For example, Twenty-Eight found that the class "worked perfectly with my sociology of mental health course." Forty-Two recommended, "I think it should be required in the Environmental Studies degree." Others thought the CAI course would be helpful for Sociology

majors and non-majors alike. Thirty-Three anticipated that that class would be helpful to others, stating:

> …I would certainly encourage absolutely everyone I know (especially Sociology majors but really everyone in general) to take this class because it will change their viewpoint of society and their role in it. You can't walk away at the end of the semester looking at the world the same way and I think that's a wonderful thing.

Twenty-Two similarly suggested:

> This class is not only useful for sociology majors, in fact, one could argue that it is more important for non-sociology majors to take the class. It is beneficial no matter who you are to understand the tools that one possesses for social change. Not only what they are, but also how to use them.

Student One thought the CAI course should be required for every student: "This course has the ability to change people's mindsets…which is the whole point of college. This class should be a requirement, just as an intro to humanities course is." Thirty-Nine also noted, "I think this is a course that benefits everyone, not just one particular major or person. This course is basically about you." Twenty-Nine agree with what she saw as the universality of the class, stating, "…this class is very eye opening and it is so relatable. Everyone can learn something from it."

The appeal of the CAI course for students interested in social justice was also noted by a few students in their comments at the end of the course. Twenty-Four indicated that he would recommend the class to those students "who may feel restless in the realm of social change and want a direction or flow to work towards." Similarly, Three felt the course would be useful "to my friends interested in social justice because it provides insight and guidance as to how to begin a journey to achieving it." Thirty-Four also observed, "I would recommend this class to every person who wants to be a positive force [for] what ails our society. If people know how to confront social issues, I think more people would stand up." Conversely, Eight felt that she could

only recommend the course to those students "that are passionate about what is going on in the world and learning how to get involved in the ongoing conversation or possibly cause social change." Ten similarly concluded that, "the course would be too difficult [for students] without any goals or social interests." Thus, while some students thought the CAI course was perfect for those who had a prior interest in social justice, a couple students felt that an interest in social justice should be a prerequisite for enrolling in and getting the most out of the class.

Based on these comments, it might be helpful to, instead of just examining the CAI course to find what strategies and methods are transferrable to other undergraduate sociology courses, to think about the course as an entity that should perhaps be consistently included in the curriculum as an elective because it has something to offer any student interested in social change, regardless of major and area of interest. As the outcomes are in keeping with the social justice values and goals of sociological education as stated by McKinney and colleagues (2004) as well as Ferguson and Carbonaro (2016:162), a course such as CAI could prove beneficial in helping students gain the sociological knowledge and skills that are necessary "to engage with and impact the world around them." Given that other sociological courses have prescribed goals and objectives that might make it difficult to "add" anything additional, let alone integrate the scope of can be covered in an entire semester (or two, as a few students suggested) in a class particularly dedicated to social action and social change, it makes sense to offer a CAI course as a standalone option. If completed before research methods and data analysis courses in the sociology track, the CAI course could, as Thirty-Three pointed out, help provide students with a head start on their capstone project. Also, whereas introducing some praxis-type ideals into, say, an Introduction to Sociology course, which is considered a general education requirement, could

be problematic, maintaining a CAI-type course as an elective allows students to self-select to take such a course. In light of the comments from Eight and Ten, this could help ensure that those interested in or passionate about social change have the opportunity to pursue such a path, while not requiring those who have no such interest or desire to do so.

The Instructor

Some students felt compelled to discuss the instructor of the CAI course in their assessment of what they found useful or enjoyed in relation to the class. They did so both in response to the open-ended questions on the post-course survey as well as in their second self-assessment. In general, the students who directly referenced the instructor noted how the instructor was actively engaged with the students, showing concern and care for them as well as broader society. They also noted that they appreciated how the instructor worked to shape the course to their advantage. In addition, in the instructor, they found an example of how one individual has the potential to affect other people.

<u>Show Me You Care</u>

For some students, the level of concern exhibited by the instructor mattered. For example, Twenty-Two appreciated, "the [care] and compassion that [the instructor] has for not only her students but the entirety of society that surrounds us." Often, students connected the caring of the instructor with the knowledge they gained. Twenty-Five felt that the instructor exhibited concern for the students, "I enjoyed the professor and how she cared enough to listen to our opinion and gave us many different angles on how to view a particular cause." Similarly, Thirty-Seven was grateful for, "how actively involved the professor was with her students & hope she truly wanted

324

to provide her assistance to her students & provide them with useful knowledge & resources."

Twenty-Nine agreed: "I also enjoyed how involved [the instructor] was. She really cared about every single student and made this class meaningful." These students thus valued the care and concern shown them by the instructor, and they found this helped their overall experience of the CAI course.

<u>Organize the Class Well</u>

A number of students indicated that how the instructor organized the class benefited their experience. Thirty-One stated, "[The instructor] knows how to keep you interested and she makes you eager to come to class." Seventeen noted that he appreciated, "the way the professor organize[d] this course. For each lecture[,] she had an example that convince[d] everybody we can do better as unit[;] we can begin the change in our own life to become a model for others." Similarly, Forty-Five shared, "The professor did an amazing job instructing the course, and I thank her for educating me on how to get more involved and that my involvement matters if I want to see a change in the world." Thirty-Seven also appreciated the knowledge she gained from the instructor: "All the knowledge from [the instructor] that she has passed down to us has made us more aware and exposed to more knowledge and constructive social agency." Seven similarly stated, "I think [the instructor] is a great instructor and has created a course that helps you learn your options within your community, learn about your overall impact, and stimulates critical thinking." In another instance, when asked if he would recommend the CAI course to others, Seventeen had a single stipulation, "Yes, with the same professor[.] I don't think anyone can teach this class much better than [the instructor]." He also said:

By taking this class I didn't think I would have learned that much in a few months, but [the instructor] has the ability to deliver her knowledge during [75] minutes twice a week. Right now[,] I understand the community much more than I ever did, and I feel like I'm already an agent of development for the next generation.

Likewise, Thirty-three believed that her positive experiences with the CAI course were due to the fact that the passion of the instructor reflected the passion of the students for social change: "I loved the structure of the class and everything about it. Yet, the things that made it so special could be lost if the professor were someone who was not as passionate about social topics as the students." With comments such as these, several students thus highlighted their appreciation for how the instructor organized and approached the CAI course.

Give Me an Example to Follow

When discussing their appreciation for the instructor of the CAI course, several students made their comments direct and personal. For Sixteen, the instructor's care made her feel special and empowered:

This course has made me feel more important than any course I have ever taken at [University]. Any time I was absent, or failed to turn in an assignment, you…reached out to me. I had never had a professor call me out like that, made me want to be present for someone who noticed my absence more. Every time I did come to class, I left more empowered than the last. In fact, each class almost always ended with a phone call to my mom to share how I was positively affected by your words.

Twenty-Nine also shared a personal thought:

…you and this course have impacted me much more than you will ever know and for that I wanted to thank you. I am so grateful to have been able to part take in your class and I am so grateful to have had you as a teacher. I hope this course turned out the way you wanted it to, I know I am going to miss coming to your class.

Twenty-Five added the instructor to the list of resources she gained over a semester in the CAI

course, stating, "I have added you [instructor] because you helped me in changing my view of

things and understanding things from every angle and that has really opened my eyes and heart."

Similarly, Forty-One graciously shared:

> "One of the best resources that I have received, not only this semester but
> throughout my life, is [the instructor]. I really mean this. I think that the best
> resource for social action is influencing others and she definitely did just that.
> Tying this together with my self-assessment, being in this class has and continues
> to change my outlook of society in every way. [The instructor] taught me to
> embrace my agency in this world while still learning about myself and that has
> always been a challenge for me. What I need in this world, and pretty much
> everyone, are more people like her. I'm not trying to gloat about how amazing my
> class was but watching her touch the minds of each individual in there and
> creating a safe place to converse and argue about different topics was beautiful.

By voluntarily sharing such sentiments, a number of students expressed that the usefulness of the

CAI course was increased, in part, due to the role of the instructor, and the connection they felt

they developed with her during the semester.

Also, in the instructor, several students found an example of the potential for one

individual to affect society. For example, Student One noted:

> This Community Action and Involvement course has affected my outlook on life
> greatly and I will miss [the instructor] so much. People like her are just one prime
> example of how an individual can positively affect the lives around us, and the
> rippling effect of that is awe-inspiring.

Similarly, Eleven viewed the instructor as an example to follow. She stated, "I saw someone

create social change through teaching which has paved the way for me to do it as well." Thirteen

also expressed appreciation for the example she found in the instructor; she wrote this personal

comment at the end of her second self-assessment:

> I am extremely grateful to have had you as a professor. Thank you for sharing
> your knowledge, allowing us to be open with our beliefs, and for creating a safe

and motivating place for us all to be ourselves and work together to better the community.

Finally, in his second self-assessment, when he was explaining how he had changed over the semester, Fifty-One wrote the following about the instructor of the CAI course:

> Another major incident that shaped me as a social agent was a professor I had in college. I found her so influential and profound it changed my thought on social agency forever. This professor taught me that no matter the difference the change may have now it can impact the world for years to come. She taught me that although we may seem to be fighting an uphill battle we must stay the course and if we influence just one person we have succeeded. She also showed me that many of us in the class had no interest in becom[ing] sociologist[s,] but we can use our sociological imagination to use the tools we have at our disposal to change ourselves and eventually our communities. She taught me that any institution no matter how concrete it seems it is only constructed by our socialization and thus it can be changed with the right tools. But one of the most important lessons she taught me was that change comes from within, and for me to have any impact the community around me I first need change myself. She talked about how every decision we make is an expression of our social agency and that we should use our everyday action to express social change.

The importance of the instructor to these students is made clear in their comments. They appeared to connect the lessons they were learning about social action and social engagement with the example set by the instructor; in the words of these students, this served to make what they were learning more meaningful in terms of knowledge and inspiration.

Can Someone Else Teach the Class?

The students' writings thus indicated that the instructor played a key role in the class. This result deserves attention because the theoretical framework of the present study magnifies the centrality of the instructor. While Mills (2008a; 2008b) hopes that the institution of education will reorganize itself to consistently support the development of a transformative habitus in all students, until then, it is up to individual teachers to find a way to do "battle to engender more

transformative dispositions" within their own classrooms. In light of Mills' commendation as well as the comments by the students, one might question whether the positive outcomes of the CAI course were tied directly to the instructor herself. If so, then the findings and potential of the CAI course would be very limited in scope and applicability. On the other hand, if it is possible for other people to successfully teach the CAI course, attaining similar or better results, than the impact of the course itself becomes separated from the individual instructor and can thereby exponentially increase its potential for impact.

Although the results indicate that many of the students in the CAI course believed that the instructor was consequential to their experience, it is necessary to point out that the instructor was not the sole cause of any success the class might have experienced. The strategies and methods used were largely drawn from the literature, and had therefore been tried, tested, and analyzed by others in their own classrooms. In designing and teaching the CAI course, the instructor drew on the literature of transformative education, particularly its aim to level the classroom in order to create a space in which students feel empowered and are engaged in learning that is active, relevant, and leads to *praxis* (Freire 1970/2000). Additionally, the emotional manipulation of students was avoided (Burke 2015; Magnet et al. 2016), a "pedagogy of kindness" was implemented (Magnet et al. 2016), and students were enlisted as co-builders of knowledge in a learning community (hooks 1994; 2003). Aspects of traditional education were used as well, as the organization, cadence, and topics of the class were largely instructor driven. The combination of these methods and strategies, drawn from the literature and the experiences of others, appear to have enabled several students to improve their sociological perspective, gain knowledge, and move toward more transformative feelings, beliefs, and actions in relation to

social change. Such methods and strategies are not embodied any one instructor; they are transferable to other settings and are able to be implemented by other individuals, just as they were in the present study.

Further, in order to avoid placing too much emphasis on the uniqueness or personality of instructor in the CAI course, it is prudent to make a final point. The students' comments indicate that there were three actions of the instructor they found to be important for their experience in the CAI course. These included: (1) showing concern for the students and society, (2) organizing the class so as to best help the students learn, and (3) providing an example of the potential of an individual to cause change. These actions might also be termed as "transferable" because they can be learned (passed from one person to another, or from experience to the individual) as well as carried from classroom to classroom or campus to campus. These are skills, not personality traits. These actions are quite common to, or at very least, in the realm of possibility for, many individuals who teach sociology. Therefore, while other instructors might approach the topics and activities of the CAI course in a different manner, drawing on the literature, their own knowledge and experience, and their personality, with the employment of these three "transferrable" actions, the potential to fulfill Mills' (2008a) wish to help students develop a more transformative outlook on society is within the grasp of many, if not all teachers. These important considerations thus highlight the potential for other individuals to come in and teach the CAI class and attain similar or better results.

<u>Room for Improvement</u>

Speaking of getting better results, in addition to what they liked and found beneficial in the CAI course, students were asked to comment on anything they thought could make the class better as well as anything they particularly disliked. Even though it is likely impossible to make all students happy all the time, it was expected that this type of student feedback would be illuminating and could point to what strategies could be added or altered in future renditions of courses similar to the CAI course. The data for this section came from the two of the aforementioned open-ended questions on the post-survey: (1) What, if anything, did you think would make the Community Action and Involvement course more useful, and (2) What, if anything, did you dislike about the Community Action and Involvement course? Multiple readings of the answers to these two questions allowed the identification of common themes in the suggestions and complaints offered by the students in regards to the CAI course. While over a quarter of the students (N=15/47) in the class stated that there was nothing they could think of that would make the course more useful, a number of students made suggestions for improvement. In noting what would make the CAI course more useful for them, the comments offered by the students at the end of the semester generally fell into three categories. First, almost one quarter of the students (N=11/47) proposed that some sort of mandatory field experience be integrated into the class. Second, several students indicated that guest speakers from local organizations would be helpful. Third, several other students offered recommendations regarding the course's role in the curriculum. These suggestions are instructive for the future organization of this type of course.

Get Me Out There

Several students indicated that they felt a structured, hands-on type of experience would have made the class more useful for them. For example, Twenty-Five suggested that the CAI course include:

> a specific time slot where we as a class decide on a particular thing we may want to do together and follow through the semester with it. Hands on and working together. It would be nice for those who may never have done any community action involvement before.

Twenty-One agreed: "…I think…the class should take part in at least one event either together or individually and then reflect as a group." Thirteen felt similarly, stating, "…it would be cool for us as a class to take part in or observe a social movement life. I think it would help to put everything we have learned into a shared experience with physically going somewhere." Forty-One proposed that the class, "possibly engage in an actual social action event as a class. Kind of like a field trip." Finally, Three recognized the reasoning behind not having a mandatory field experience, but felt that perhaps a mock project could have been helpful:

> Adding a mandatory involvement assignment would kind of take away from the principle of the course, but I think adding class service missions or something similar would be a good addition. Not soup kitchens, but perhaps choosing a common cause and practice making their own mock campaign for it based on everyone's talents.

These students felt that adding a requirement for some type of social action, organized to involve the entire class, would have made the CAI course more useful for them.

Get Them in Here

In addition to the suggestions for the integration of a field experience into the course, several students agreed with Eight who proposed that "having guest speakers" would have made

the CAI course more useful. Fifty-One stated, "I think the addition of speakers on how they got involved in social action would really enhance the course." Forty-Five agreed:

> Perhaps we could have had guest speakers to come in the class to talk to use about various organizations that some classmates are interested in to better understand how to incorporate what we've learned to starting our social action plan.

Forty-Seven also recommended that "possibly bringing in local organizations to speak about what that group is doing," could be useful. These students obviously felt they would gain from an increased exposure to individuals and groups engaged in the work of social change, and that the CAI course should consider facilitating this in the future.

Get Me Out There, and Get Them in Here

These two suggestions, one for field experience and the other for guest speakers are interesting in light of the overall rationale for and approach to the CAI course itself. These students have made recommendations that are highly pertinent for an action-oriented course; the instructor-researcher agrees with their assessment. Readers might indeed question the logic of not including such aspects in the CAI class, and therefore, the reasoning behind their absence will be briefly touched on here. During course design, an intentional decision was made to not require students to engage in service learning, community volunteer work, or activities, such as rallies or marches. Students were informed at the beginning of the semester about this decision and the reasoning for it. The reasons for this decision were four-fold. First, the literature demonstrated that such a requirement does not guarantee the students would feel equipped and ready for social action at the end of a semester (i.e. Rondini 2015). They may feel more empathetic, but remain unable to see their own way to engaging in the work of social change.

Second, there were numerous opportunities for engagement available for students through the university. These were already established, meaning that there was no need to additionally tax other community organizations by asking them to accommodate 48 students for one semester, only to have such help disappear after the semester ended. Third, a goal of the class was for students to begin to identify activities that aligned with their own interests and skills, believing that this would help facilitate more long-term engagement than, for example, a one-time visit to a soup kitchen. Therefore, the decision was made to have each student compose a social action plan that was in keeping with his or her own interests instead of imposing one upon the entire class. Fourth and finally, requiring students to document hours or participate in a particular event, and connecting that requirement to a grade, felt contradictory to the core of the class itself.

The course was intentionally designed to make space for students to use their own initiative (or their own agency) to begin to take steps toward a personalized form of social engagement. Reading through these student comments, however, it becomes evident that incorporating such an activity, even a mock project as Three proposed, into the course curriculum would be useful for students, especially for those who had no previous experience and may have benefited from an organized group experience in getting started. This also connects to earlier comments about the need for social activist mentors. Further, as Twenty-One noted, a group action of some sort could have helped further develop the sense of community in the class as they could come together and share their reactions to the experience. As Cornelius (1998) and Mobley (2007) indicate, in teaching students about social activism, it is important to get them personally involved. The CAI course might have been more effective had it intentionally organized such an event or activity.

It was also interesting that a number of students proposed that local speakers be brought into the CAI class. This infers the importance of guest speakers for this type of course. In fact, the instructor also believed that guest speakers would be useful, but in keeping with the course rationale, desired for the students to take initiative and help organize this aspect of the class. Similar to the field experience, the engagement of guest speakers was presented as an opportunity for students to begin to exert their agency and to combine their interest in community action with initiative. Students were encouraged to look into the local community or the university, and if they found an organization or an individual they would like to hear from, they were to let the instructor know. Then, an attempt would be made (through the combined efforts of the student and the instructor) to bring that particular guest speaker into the class. The students were also provided a list of local organizations as a starting point. In this manner, the students were offered the opportunity to help organize opportunities to hear from organizations or individuals doing the type of work in which they were interested; they were also offered some control over the direction of the course. While the instructor did make several (unsuccessful) attempts on her own to bring in people doing work in the community, no student came forward during the semester with suggestions or contacts.

Therefore, with their recommendation that guest speakers would have been useful for the CAI course, it appears that several students might have felt the making of such arrangements was the responsibility of the instructor, because they had been given the opportunity (and the support) to do this for themselves but had not taken the initiative. This might also tie into the students' feelings that they have a shortage of available time. This may also be a reminder that students do not necessarily want additional control or responsibility in the classroom (i.e. Arum and Roska

2011; Lindahl and Unger 2010). They may prefer that the instructor bear the weight of responsibility for them. It may also reaffirm the difficulty of transferring power from the instructor to the students (Mayes 2010). In the future, therefore, it may be helpful for the instructor to use pre-course survey information to gain an overview of students' interests and then organize a few speakers accordingly, while leaving the door open for students to make suggestions as well.

Strategically Place CAI in the Curriculum

Beyond field experience and guest speakers, there were several students who offered recommendations in relation to how the CAI course might better fit into the undergraduate curriculum. First, a few students agreed with Eighteen's recommendation that the CAI course "[b]e added every semester. I have recommended this course to many of my peers." Similarly, Thirty-Six suggested that the CAI course would be more useful "[i]f it became a permanent course for our campus to get involved in," while Twenty-Eight saw "[p]roviding the course at more campuses" to be a useful idea. Thirty-Four expanded on this idea, proposed a follow up course that involved field experience: "I [think] a second course would be helpful in the way of actually going out and having hands on training." Thirty-Three saw the potential for "…this course to be offered as a prerequisite to research methods and data analysis." In this way, the students could use their social action plan to organize their capstone project. They also complained that discussion was sometimes cut short and there was not enough time to go deeper into the course material, as Thirty-Three noted, "I dislike that it was only for one semester. There is so much more to say and so much that we could have gone into if it were longer." Similarly,

Twenty-Six stated, "I disliked how, with some of the lessons, it felt rush and like the discussion was cut short when a lot of people had more to say about the topic." These students thus considered the big picture, and decided that there should be a permanent place for this type of course in the curriculum, or at a minimum, it should be offered more often or for an increased period of time, such as over two semesters.

Thanks for Your Feedback

The students' suggestions as to what would make the CAI course more useful were informative. Several students felt that the integration of some type of field experience into the curriculum would be helpful, while others proposed that the addition of guest speakers would have been beneficial. Some students thought that either expanding the CAI course over two semesters or increasing its permanency in the curriculum would be advantageous. Although a few of these suggestions appear to contradict what Three termed, "the principle of the course," they are instructive for how action-oriented courses are organized and what students feel that they need. In light of the indicators of desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions, one might infer that introducing intentional action into the curriculum can help reinforce or affirm the desire for a social change and a belief in one's own ability to bring it about, thus helping support the development of a transformative outlook. Particularly if students have not previously taken any steps on their own to "get involved," having a structured opportunity to do so in the company of their peers and instructor might help students build courage and confidence. Similarly, hearing from guest speakers who are already involved in action aimed at social change might help students discover new interests and new ways to get involved; therefore, the instructor should

perhaps bear the weight of facilitating such meetings. Collecting this information on the post-survey proved worthwhile, because it illuminates how a course such as CAI could better serve its members, particularly if the aim is to help facilitate a transformative habitus (Mills 2008a) in students.

The Next Journey

It is well and good to suggest that teachers can help facilitate the development of a transformative outlook in their students (Mills 2008a); however, what remains inadequately explained is exactly how teachers should do this. This lack of direction is complicated by the revelation uncovered in the present study, which demonstrates that the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus defies simplification, as indicators such as desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions introduce a great deal of complexity into the theorization. For example, just because students enjoy a certain activity or method, it does not necessarily mean that this enjoyment will translate to increased engagement in the work of social change (Cornelius 1998; Moremen 1997) or increase their belief in their potential as a social agent. In other words, enjoyment does not necessarily equal transformation. This uncertainty of how to best proceed in the work of transformation is perhaps even more pronounced in the sociology classroom, as power dynamics, privilege, socio-historical setting, social location, and knowledge creation, which are all important considerations in the development of the sociological perspective, may play out on a daily basis. Further, as Burke (2015) notes, each student is unique, and therefore, even if a prescriptive approach to teaching toward a transformative habitus in the sociology classroom were to be identified, it would likely leave some students by the wayside.

These complications indicate the importance of identifying those pedagogical strategies, methods, and approaches that can best facilitate the work of transformation.

Given the results in Chapters 8 and 9, it appears that many of the students experienced some sort of change as a result of the CAI course. They commented on changes in their view of society, their beliefs regarding their own agency, and their definition of social action. Additionally, many students noted that they had gained knowledge, tools and resources useful for social engagement and found themselves more involved than they were at the beginning of the semester. Although it is difficult to establish the degree to which change occurred or establish causality (meaning, prove that the CAI course caused the change, ruling out other variables), it is evident, that a significant number of the students felt they had, in some manner, changed over the semester and attributed their evolution to the CAI course. Therefore, it made sense to also see if the students could shed light on those aspects of the CAI course that might have facilitated such change, as this information could be useful for the design of similar courses in the future.

In their comments at the end of the semester, students repeatedly referenced four aspects of the CAI course that they found particularly useful and/or enjoyable. These included (1) the development of a learning community in which meaningful class discussion took place, (2) the knowledge students gained, along with particular methods, lessons, or assignments that served to grow said knowledge, (3) the applicability of the course across the curriculum, and (4) the role of the instructor. They also provided suggestions for improvement, such as adding field experience and guest speakers to the CAI course and increasing the presence or prominence of the CAI course in the undergraduate curriculum. Although these results are limited by context, arising from one group of students at a particular place and time, they provide food for thought

regarding the design of similar action-oriented sociology courses in the future. Also, there are a few aspects, such as the learning community, class discussion, particular lessons, and the role of the instructor that are transferable to other sociology courses, particularly those in which social problems, social change, personal agency, and the social construction of society are discussed. Comments such as these provided by the students in the CAI can help one to better understand what pedagogical aspects might "work" to help students develop a transformative habitus, thereby helping to connect theory to practice.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE JOURNEY TOWARD TRANSFORMATION DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

> Whether or not I (or anyone) actually goes out and changes the world after this course, the most important thing it did (in my opinion) was give us hope that it was possible to do. Education is a tool of social change, and just by taking this course, I already feel more equipped to become involved in the community. At the very least, it changed my perspective on topics and issues, and was inspiring.
>
> --Student Twenty-Six

Discussion

Based on the expectation that sociological education can transform how students see the social world, ignite their desire to drive social change, and give them the resources to do so, this study sought to explore the potential of a single course to help undergraduates develop a transformative outlook on society and their role as social agents. This sociology course was designed and taught by the researcher at a large southeastern metropolitan university. The study examined the social location and lived experiences of the students who enrolled in the course, their initial attitudes and behaviors toward the work of social change and their roles in it, and the degree to which those attitudes and behaviors changed over the semester, using both student writings and pre-/post-course surveys to collect data. This research also analyzed the data to uncover indicators of the reproductive and transformative habitus that are theorized to exist simultaneously as potentials within students (Mills 2008a; 2008b).

Six exploratory research questions were examined in this study: (1) What were the lived experiences and biographical histories of the students who elected to enroll in the Community Action and Involvement (CAI) course? (2) How did the students in the CAI course generally view the social world and their personal agency? (3) Did the students in the CAI course change

significantly over the course of the semester in their general attitudes and behaviors toward the social world, particularly regarding social engagement and social change? (4) By the end of the semester, were the students in the CAI course able to formulate and evaluate a personal plan for social engagement, thereby traversing the "hump" found in the literature? (5) What pedagogical aspects were effective in helping students achieve the goals and objectives of the CAI course? Where is there room for improvement? (6) What are the indicators of a reproductive/transformative habitus? These questions guided the study, which used a mixed methods approach, including qualitative examination of student writings and paired samples t-tests, to explore the impact of the CAI course from the perspectives of the students themselves.

There were 48 students who enrolled in the CAI course, 47 of whom provided written consent for their data to be utilized in the present research study. The vast majority of the students were female. In terms of race/ethnicity, the majority were students of color. Almost half of the members were first generation students. Most of the students leaned toward the liberal end of the political spectrum, and half of them had to work a job in addition to attending classes. In terms of their lived experiences, many of the students noted having experienced some sort of limitation or discrimination in relation to their social location. Many also discussed challenges they have faced in their lives, ranging from mental health issues to abuse, and from sexual assaults to poverty. Together, the social location of the students and their lived experiences appear to have encouraged these students in their desire to create a better society. They entered the class as a willing and engaged audience, hoping to find the tools they needed to grow their sociological perspective and become more socially engaged.

At the outset of the semester, many of the students who enrolled in the CAI course indicated that they held a cynical view of society at least some of the time, and the majority found themselves cynical all of the time. While every student believed that society was fragile and open to change, many doubted their abilities to cause positive social change. Some of the students felt overwhelmed by the vastness of social problems, and found themselves unequipped and uncertain where to begin. For some, such feelings were complicated by their definition of being "socially active" as people of extraordinary character carrying out "huge" actions, thus dismissing the "small" actions of the ordinary individual, especially themselves. Even those students, much fewer in number, who began the CAI course with an optimistic view of society and a belief that they could change it, expressed a need for additional tools and resources to connect their desire to get involved with action. The students' writings indicate that having knowledge about social problems is important, but so too is having knowledge about (1) people and groups in general and (2) successful strategies to make social change.

By the end of the semester, a significant number of the students indicated that they had experienced some degree of change over the semester. Some students found themselves more optimistic. Some expressed appreciation for the tools and resources for social change that they gained in the CAI course. Students also came to see the potential for one individual, particularly themselves, to cause change in society. A vision of social change as starting by changing oneself also emerged. The students constructed personal plans for social action, which included social action tools, limitations, and implications their plans might have for the future. Some students immediately became more actively engaged in things such as clubs, organizations, rallies or, at a minimum, were able to project a personal plan to get involved in the near future. Also, a few

students remained cynical, lacked initiative, or struggled to find a starting place; however, those students also noted positives they gained from the class. In general, the majority of students expressed sentiments similar to those noted by Student Twenty-Six at the beginning of this chapter in their writings at the end of the semester. In other words, to some degree, many of the students changed, and credited their change to the CAI course. In light of these findings, it is hard not to conclude that, yes, indeed, a single sociological course, with a carefully constructed pedagogy and plan, can help students develop a more transformative outlook.

In light of the changes they did or did not experience, the students were asked to identify pedagogical aspects of the CAI course that they found helpful as well as provide suggestions for improvement. Given that many students felt they had changed to some degree over the semester, this information provided insight as to what might help to better shape such courses in the future. The students appreciated the learning community that developed in the CAI class, and found the class discussion that arose within such an atmosphere to be stimulating and challenging. Many students were also grateful for knowledge and resources they gained from the lessons, assignments, and materials of the CAI course. Some students valued the relevance and applicability of the course to their own interests. Additionally, many students shared their appreciation for how the instructor cared for the students, organized the class, and served as a model of how one individual can impact others. In terms of areas open to improvement, several students desired the additional of either field experience or guest speakers. Also, a few felt that the course should be situated more permanently in the curriculum or have a "part II". These observations provided a useful critique of the design and implementation of the CAI course.

<u>External Events</u>

While the combined results of the qualitative analysis of students' writings and the paired

samples t-test demonstrate that the students changed over the semester, and that they often

attributed that change directly to the CAI course, it is important to acknowledge that there may

have been external events or issues that affected their experience in the class. Over the course of

four months, the students would have had a myriad of experiences generally unrelated to the CAI

course, which may have influenced them as well as their perception of the discussions and

material in the class. For example, they were taking other classes, which could also have affected

their experience, as Thirteen suggested:

> At the beginning of the semester, I had the desire to help but I did not know where
> to begin. Throughout the discussions in this class and even in my journalism and
> philosophy classes, I have become more open-minded, and I have more
> knowledge as to how to be engaged in the community.

Also, many of them were working jobs. A few experienced issues with their mental health during

the semester. A number joined clubs and organizations on campus. A few of them were

experiencing family issues, such as the terminal illness of a family member. Additionally, it is

likely that all of them were maturing intellectually and personally. These variables are hard to

measure and difficult to account for in reference to the impact such aspects might have had on

the students' outlooks, how they experienced the CAI course, and the changes they documented.

Apart from these more common variables, there were three external events that may have

impacted the students in the CAI course. First, there was the threat of a hurricane during the mid-

point of the semester that caused classes to be cancelled. As several students went home during

this time and were then slow returning to campus, this threat of severe weather upset the rhythm

and momentum of the course. Second, just two months before the beginning of the CAI course,

345

there was a mass shooting at a popular gay nightclub in the downtown section of the city where the campus is located. A few of the students in the class were directly impacted by the tragedy. Their writings suggested that this tragedy weighed on their minds. On the other hand, it also appeared to affect their sense of community in a positive way, as they wrote about how they watched people come together to support each other in the wake of the incident. For example, in a discussion about the importance of community, Forty-Five shared:

> A perfect example is about two months ago when [City] experienced one of the worst tragedies in U.S. history, the [Nightclub] shooting. The community was so shocked that it happened right in their backyard, and everyone immediately wanted to help in some way or another. Hearing the radio and news reporters talk about the thousands and thousands of people who came out to donate blood for the…victims was amazing.

Further, this incident may have provided direction for their passions during the semester, as some students became directly involved in local PRIDE events to support the LGBTQ+ community.

The final external event appeared to be the most broadly influential of the three. The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election took place in the last month of the semester. The political race was highly contentious, pitting Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton against the Republican candidate Donald Trump. As noted earlier, the students in the CAI course leaned liberal, and they were often heard referencing their support for Clinton or Bernie Sanders. The presidential race gave students in the CAI course an opportunity to get involved in the political arena and join with others for a cause. Several students indicated that they were quite engaged in debates on social media as well. A number of the students also attended or protested at political rallies, as both Clinton and Trump visited the campus during the semester. Students were also able to vote in the election, although a small number did not do so.

In the class after the general election, many of the students in the CAI course were noticeably somber and upset with the outcome. This permeated the class, as the students were markedly quiet and nervous. In order to give the students a safe and private place to vent, a writing prompt was posted online to which they could respond. The prompt was: "Take a few minutes to write a response capturing how you feel about the election, and how you think it will impact you and your decisions about engaging in social action." Beyond the frustration and worry that emerged in the student responses, of particular importance here, a number of the students saw the outcome of the election as a "wake-up" call, meaning they saw the work of social change to be even more important than they had previously. It appeared that for some of the students, the election of Donald Trump to the presidency served to magnify the importance of getting involved in the work of social change. For example, one student said,

> It took a full day to get over my initial shock. I stayed up all night to watch the election results. I felt numb, until I started thinking about my friends. I have a few transgender friends and many more in the wider LGBTQ+ community. I have a lot of Black and Latino friends, all of whom feel threatened right now. When I started thinking about them, I grew determined. I sent messages of support and love to everyone I could think of, and I promised myself that I'd become more politically active locally, in person.

Also, when asked about a plan to become more socially active in the near future, one indicated on the post-course survey that he or she planned to vote next time the chance presented itself. It is therefore possible that this external event may have served as a catalyst for increased involvement, providing a spark that enlarged the students' desire to work for social change and brought into sharp focus the need to get involved.

Limitations

This study had a few limitations that must be addressed as they have implications both for the present research as well as future research. The first limitation is the lack of generalizability of the results. As noted throughout the research, this study examines one class that is temporally and geographically bound. It included a specific group of students and an instructor who combined to represent a unique collection of social histories and lived experiences. It was also a relatively small sample size, and there was no control group that might have given the results increased context. The course might have been significantly different had it be taught at a different university or in a class with a different demographic composition. Therefore, in the discussion of the changes experienced by the students in the CAI course, it is unclear if the changes to which they attest was more or less than has occurred in other classes in similar studies (i.e. Rondini 2015). Therefore, care was taken in the research design and analysis to acknowledge that the results are contextually limited. Despite this limitation, however, the results are interesting and have the potential to contribute to both the sociological and the SoTL literature. Also, the specificity of the course design leaves room for similar or duplicate studies to be conducted in other settings by either the same instructor or different instructors.

Another limitation of note is the lack of a longitudinal element in the research design. One of the issues raised in previous studies regarding student commitment to the work of social change (i.e. Mobley 2007; Snowden 2004) is the absence of long-term study to determine the lasting effect of any attitudinal change. This problem haunts much of the literature in this area, and unfortunately, at this point, it is a limitation here as well. Testing for momentum requires longitudinal study. To what degree was student change momentary? How soon did any feelings

of inspiration or commitment fade? Did students implement their plans for social action? Why or why not? Also, as theorized by Bourdieu (1990b), the habitus is the product of one's upbringing, and changing students' patterns of thinking and action likely takes longer than one semester, and therefore, it is important to first, avoid overestimating the extent to which students change over the course of a few months, and second, develop measures to test what happens after students leave the course. For example, do they revert back to more reproductive outlooks? Through a longitudinal research design, answers to such questions could be explored. This would also help construct a bridge between SoTL literature and research on social activism (i.e. McAdam and Paulsen 1993). For example, did the students develop support systems or strong ties that helped them maintain momentum in the work of social change after the end of the semester? How did this affect their view of their own efficacy that they developed in the course? The addition of a longitudinal element could also help determine the degree to which social desirability bias may have impacted the students' writings and answers on the pre- and post-course surveys while they were enrolled in the class (Bowman and Hill 2011). Overcoming this limitation would significantly impact the understanding of the extent to which students engage and remain engaged after an action-oriented sociology course ends, as well as contribute to the theorization of the reproductive/transformative habitus. In the future, any similar type of research should strive to include a longitudinal element during the design stage.

A third limitation emerged during the qualitative analysis of student writings. The journal prompts in the middle of the semester were not designed well enough to uncover shifts and changes that occurred during the course. The students' responses to a few of the mid-semester prompts, while interesting, did not contribute significantly to understanding what was happening

between the early weeks of the class and the end of the semester that might have helped clarify what was going on regarding their outlooks and attitudes about social action. In other words, no clear process of transformation emerged from the writings. Also, a few of the journal entries had to be eliminated because the workload was deemed by the instructor to be too heavy at certain points. Therefore, this was an error in the class and research design that made it difficult to examine exactly what was happening in the students between the beginning and end of the CAI course. The results indicate that many of the students felt they were engaged in a transformative process; however, despite clear evidence of change from the beginning to the end of the semester, there is no well-defined path that emerges from the students' writings in the middle of the semester to clearly communicate how and when the students "moved" toward transformation, and this is further complicated by the aforementioned complexities of the dialectic of the reproductive/transformative habitus. For example, it would have been helpful to structure the journal entries or design and include other evaluative measures so as to better pinpoint when and why students began to feel differently about themselves and social action or when they started to intentionally engage in some form of social action aimed at social change. This would help bridge the gap between the beginning position and the end result more clearly.

A fourth limitation that emerged in the research was rather unexpected. The CAI class did not vary enough, demographically speaking, to draw conclusions regarding the degree to which the students' experiences of the course and views on social change and personal agency differed according to social location. In other words, the composition of the CAI course made it difficult to draw causal conclusions about the impact of social location on an individual's perspectives and behaviors in relation to social action. At the outset, it was anticipated that

obvious differences would arise during the qualitative analysis of students' writings that would contribute to the understanding of how aspects of social location such as race, ethnicity, and gender affect, for example, whether one is cynical or hopeful, or if one feels equipped for social change. Despite intentional efforts to flush out such differences, they did not readily emerge because of the lack of variation in the class.

This limitation was largely due to three issues. First, the population itself was relatively small, with only 47 students. Second, female students were over-represented, while males were underrepresented; there were 39 females and 8 males. This made it difficult during coding to determine whether a particular response was due to the gender/sex of the individual, or if it was totally unrelated. Third, attempting to discern differences based on any intersection of gender, race or ethnicity, and/or sexuality was equally problematic, as there were periodically too few (or too many) students to determine if a perspective was unique to that particular social location. It was therefore difficult to determine if a perception arose in relation to the "femaleness" of the student, or if the odds for such an answer were simply magnified because over 80% of the class was female. Similarly, with only one Latino in the class, it was difficult to extrapolate that his responses were in large part due to his ethnicity and gender. Also, if, for example, one female student directly indicated that her view of her personal agency was affected by the fact that she was black, if other females in the class who identified as black did not make the same connections, it was difficult to determine if her experience was an anomaly or not. Therefore, while it had been expected that markers such as race, ethnicity, or gender would influence the coding, they did not. Had the class been differently composed, however, it is possible that the learning community that emerged in the CAI course, along with the class discussions that shaped

and were shaped by this learning community, would have been significantly altered, potentially leading to markedly dissimilar outcomes.

Potential Implications

Stepping back, the fourth limitation may not be as problematic as first believed. Instead, it is possible to argue that the demographic composition of the class highlights an important implication of this study. The composition of the CAI class raises important research questions. Why, for example, did females and students of color take this course in such disproportionate numbers when compared to university averages? Why were there so few males in the class, particularly white males, of whom there were only three? Why did females of color outnumber white females and males of color outnumber white males in the class? The answers, if uncovered, may contribute to the sociological literature on social privilege and disadvantage as well as the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus.

In light of the fact that Mills's (2008a) theorization developed from working with students of marginalized groups, the demographic composition and social biographies of the students who enrolled in the CAI course also implies a need for additional research into the link between social location, social biography, and the attraction of action-oriented sociology classes. For example, do students from those groups traditionally under-represented in higher education feel more compelled by the potential for social change? Maybe they seek individual empowerment and guidance to challenge the inequities they personally encounter. Or, perhaps some students whose social histories are comprised of experiences that were challenging (mental

illness, felony charges), traumatic (sexual assault, physical abuse), or discriminatory (race, gender) may seek to use such experiences as a springboard to create a better society for others.

Students from marginalized groups or with difficult social biographies might be best positioned to benefit from those efforts of instructors that help them develop a transformative outlook on society. For example, the result which demonstrated that the majority of the students felt cynical and unequipped for social change at the outset of the CAI course might have been due in part to the fact that a majority of the students were members of a group historically disadvantaged in U.S. society. Thus, there could be a connection between marginalized status and the limited schema and iteration that constrains the ability of such students to engage in projectivity and practically evaluate options for social action (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). They may benefit from a course such as CAI, which can offer them additional schema regarding the opportunities available to them and the tactics they can use to challenge current societal arrangements, especially as they may be operating from a position of weakness (De Certeau 1984). Further, as this study revealed, they may need and appreciate, for example, an initial, structured field experience because they had not had previous opportunity to engage in one. Thus, while it is tempting to dismiss the lack of demographic variation as a limitation for this study, the composition of the class in terms of the social locations and social biographies of the students who chose to enroll in the CAI course is not necessarily a shortcoming. Instead, it is better framed as an important implication of this study as well as an opportunity ripe for future research.

Additionally, this study has the potential to contribute to the sociological literature by impacting the theorization of the habitus as delineated by Bourdieu (1990b), as well as the conceptualization of the simultaneous existence of both a reproductive and a transformative

habitus in students, as described by Mills (2008a; 2008b). While an aim of this research was to uncover if the students in the CAI course developed a more transformative outlook on society and their role as social agents as a result of the class, the qualitative analysis of students' writings revealed the difficulty of making such a determination. Instead, it exposed a variety of indicators, including desire, feeling, belief, and action, which introduce a complexity to the theorization that makes it challenging to understand the degree to which a student is exhibiting a reproductive or a transformative habitus. The complexity increases when the intricacies within and among the indicators are considered, such as, for example, the difference between abstract and concrete beliefs, or the difference between iteration (habitual action) and projective action (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). The analysis in this study reveals that students can simultaneously hold a desire that might be termed "transformative," such as "I desire to make the world a better place," and a belief that might be termed "reproductive," such as "I do not believe I can change things in society." Such complexities make it difficult to identify what type of habitus the students have, let alone measure how much they shifted on the reproductive/ transformative spectrum, if indeed they did so. It also makes it challenging to determine how to best pedagogically target each particular indicator to help students develop a more transformative outlook. For example, should action-oriented courses aim at creating space for transformative feelings, beliefs, or actions first? Additionally, at this time, sociological literature is lacking measures that can (1) accurately evaluate the "type" of habitus students have, (2) determine how and if students shift on the reproductive/transformative spectrum (if indeed that is the correct term to use), or (3) measure and assess the interplay between the indicators. This study serves to shine a light on these complications.

Brief Reflections

It is important to acknowledge that the instructor-researcher in this study operated from a position of power, dictating the prompts and activities as well as interpreting the students' writings. In the classroom, this created a strange dynamic related to the students' sense of their own agency. For example, students were required to complete the assignments in the designated manner, yet they were simultaneously expected to exert themselves by taking initiative to get involved in the class and their communities. Similarly, in relation to the student writings, the researcher made all decisions regarding coding and presentation, which may have inadvertently misrepresented the students' meanings. The students did, however, have some control over the research by virtue of their positions as class participants; they could, for example, be selective or withhold information when they completed their writings. Additionally, as one student did, they could ask that a particular writing activity not be included in the research because they deemed it too personal. Also, spending a semester together allowed the instructor/researcher to engage in conversations, both formal and informal, with the students and get to know them as individuals. Therefore, although it is important to remember that the results may present an imperfect understanding because of the power and relationship dynamics at play, even so, they still contribute to the conversation about the transformative potential of sociological education.

The results also serve as a reminder that despite one's efforts to present an objective, rigorous course of study, it is impossible to prevent subjectivity and bias from entering one's teaching and/or research. One of the most interesting results of this research was the discovery of how the ideals and values of the instructor-researcher appeared to affect the students in the CAI course, at least in the short term. The instructor-researcher in this study values *praxis* and

lifestyle activism and, therefore, generally approaches teaching with the aim of encouraging students to connect their developing sociological perspective with their daily actions. Valuing small actions and the power of the individual, the instructor-researcher assumes that the work of self-improvement and self-efficacy is never done, and the degree to which one can accomplish it will not only impact other people but also affect the social construction of society. Teaching is seen as the conduit through which this instructor/researcher can participate in the creation of a more equitable and empathetic society. It became apparent during the qualitative analysis that these ideals and values held by the instructor-researcher were directly reflected in some of the students' writings at the end of the semester. These students explained how, over the semester, they had come to see the importance of small actions, recognized their own potential as social agents, and decided that changing themselves first was a great starting place for social change. This discovery serves as a reminder of how one's own assumptions and beliefs can impact both teaching and research.

Conclusion

In order to better understand the extent to which education can help students shift away from a reproductive habitus and generate a transformative habitus, the intricacies of the indicators of desire, feelings, beliefs, and actions, as well as how they are influenced by social location and social biography, need further examination. Mills (2008a; 2008b) is certain that the institution of education in general and teachers in particular can help students move away from fatalism and reproduction of social inequities and toward the recognition of opportunities to intentionally exert agency to cause change. Because one of its aims is to help undergraduates

develop their competency to "engage with and have an impact upon the world" (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016:160), sociology is particularly well suited to do this; action-oriented sociology courses can also provide an excellent testing ground for future research. The sociological perspective also factors in, as it can serve to open up or initiate the process of transformation, as students begin to see society as open to change and better understand how social arrangements affect themselves as well as various other groups. If indeed, "[t]he best thing sociology can do for undergraduate students…is to teach them to learn effectively so that they can keep up with rapid changes in society, particularly in knowledge, and live meaningful, engaged, and productive lives" (McKinney et al. 2004:1), then it is vital that research such as the present study continue to pursue how sociology can best do this in practice.

More research is therefore needed to uncover the extent to which this type of transformation is possible as well as the long-term impact of action-oriented sociology courses such as the CAI class. Future studies could, for example, research methods that might be used to create educational experiences across the sociological curriculum that last longer than a semester to create a better opportunity for students, particularly those from marginalized groups, to add to their schema and learn to engage in transformative projection. For example, it might be helpful, as the students suggested at the end of the CAI course, to integrate a follow-up course during which students implement and begin to "live out" their social action plan. Additional work can be done to attend to the role of sociological education in reinforcing or generating feelings of frustration and helplessness toward social change in undergraduates. For instance, in what circumstances might sociological education lead to inaction and feelings of powerlessness versus action and a belief in one's potential to cause change? Future research could also focus on

expanding and testing the theorization of the habitus alongside the elements of agency as defined by Emirbayer and Mische (1998). This work has the potential to affect both life chances and quality of life, particularly for students whose intersectionality is connected to disadvantage and discrimination.

Future research could be expanded to include other campuses and instructors in the work of further developing and testing the theorization of the reproductive and transformative habitus. While Bourdieu (1990b) generally sees habits as reproducing social structure and stratification, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) opens a space in which the habits arising from one's social location and social biography can be generative and positive. The habits in the iteration element of agency do not have to be negative. As both Mills (2008a; 2008b) and Bourdieu (1990a) argue, through education, it may be possible to transform the habitus of students, replacing reproductive habits with transformative habits. In other words, the students' desires, feelings, beliefs, and actions can align on the transformative end of the spectrum, resulting in a type of lifestyle activism, where the students see the importance of their daily actions and choices (bananas matter!) in the social construction of society and, engaging the projective and practical evaluative elements of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998), make conscious, well-considered decisions that intentionally challenge inequitable social arrangements. Thus, the transformation of students ultimately implies the transformation of society.

The habitus is "transformed by school...[which] in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences" (Bourdieu 1977:87). If therefore, sociological education can help students develop a transformative habitus, it can affect their interpretation of present circumstances, as well as future expectations and aspirations, which in turn can impact the social

358

arrangements in broader society. In other words, if a goal of sociology is to create students that "engage with and have an impact upon the world in which they live and work" (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016:160) and help them to live "meaningful, engaged, and productive lives" (McKinney 2004: 1), then the work remains to continue to develop measures and the best practices that can help translate this goal into reality for the broadest range of students possible.

At the beginning of Chapter Four, the words of Student Forty introduced the students and the instructor who embarked on a journey toward transformation through the CAI course as people who "wanted to change the world." To conclude, therefore, it seems fitting to share her reflection of the transformation she experienced on the journey, as she captures a meaningful outcome that sociological education provided for her (italics added):

> Four months ago, I jumped on a boat with a group of forty-nine people unaware of how the trip would go. But we knew that we wanted to change the world. Since then I have learned that I can change the world by helping one person, and that is enough. It doesn't have to be televised or shared on social media for it to count. *Nothing is too big, or too small when it comes to making a difference.*

For Forty and the rest of the members of the CAI class, it is the sincere hope of this instructor-researcher that sociology indeed did the "best thing" it could possibly do by to helping them on their journey.

APPENDIX A:
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board Office of Research & Commercialization 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501 Orlando, Florida 32826-3246 Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276 www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1 FWA00000351, IRB00001138
To: **Brenda K. Savage**
Date: **May 06, 2016**

Dear Researcher:

On 05/06/2016, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: "The Effects of a Community Action and Involvement Course on Student's Attitudes and Behaviors Toward the Social World and Personal Agency"
Investigator: Brenda K Savage
IRB Number: SBE-16-12175
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.
In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual. On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B:
SYLLABUS FOR CAI COURSE

SYA 4650C.0001: Community Action and Involvement
University of Central Florida, Fall 2016

Class time: T/TH 10:30-11:45 a.m.   Instructor: Brenda Savage
Room: CB1 0308   Office: Howard Phillips Hall 406H
Credit Hours: Three   Office Hours: T/TH 1-2:30 p.m./by appointment
Meeting Dates: 8/22/16-12/12/16   Email: brenda.savage@knights.ucf.edu

Contacting Me:
Email is the quickest and preferred method to get in touch with me. I will usually respond to
your emails within 24 hours. Please email me directly at brenda.savage@knights.ucf.edu for the
quickest response (response time may be slower if you use Webcourses to contact me).

Course Structure:
In this course, we will examine how people "do sociology" to affect social change. We will also
develop our sociological perspective and evaluate ourselves as social agents and members of
various communities in our society. Discussion, writing, and active-learning strategies will guide
us toward understanding, reflection, analysis, and action as we build knowledge together.

Goals of the course:
1. You will be enabled to move forward in the development of a critical consciousness.
2. You will recognize society as a human creation that can be transformed through agency.

Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:
1. Assess how the particular social structures/institutions in an area of your own interest
    are/have been socially constructed.
2. Critically analyze the social structures/institutions related to an area in which you are
    interested in terms of power, ideology, and inequality.
3. Compare and contrast methods available to drive social change, keeping in mind the need to
    find solutions with people, not for them.
4. Be able to predict potential outcomes of challenging social structures and institutions related
    to an area in which you are interested.
5. Design a social action project that demonstrates your ability to articulate how you can
    actively engage in a social justice conversation that connects to your personal interests.

Required Course Texts:

Korgen, Kathleen, Jonathan M. White, and Shelley K. White. 2014. *Sociologists in Action:
    Sociology, Social Change and Social Justice*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Jones, Ellis, Ross Haenfler, and Brett Johnson. 2007. *The Better World Handbook*. 2nd Edition.
    British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers.

Crawshaw, Steve, and John Jackson. 2010. *Small Acts of Resistance: How Courage, Tenacity, and Ingenuity Can Change the World.* New York: Sterling.

Supplemental Readings: There will be multiple assorted readings assigned throughout the semester. These readings will link directly to the class discussions and topics covered in the course, and they will be made available through hard copy, links or PDFs in a timely manner. Both the students and the instructor can contribute to the selection of these readings.

Required Materials:
You should bring notebook paper, a writing utensil, and any required readings to class every day. You must also have regular and reliable access to the Internet in order to utilize Webcourses.

Student Financial Aid Engagement:
All faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. Therefore, **you must complete Journal Entry #1 in Webcourses by the end of the first week of classes**, or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid. **Please complete the assignment even if you do not receive financial aid (it is worth 10 points).**

Participation:
Your participation will be essential for this course. We will conduct each class in a seminar format where you are expected to come to class with questions, critical reactions, and other observations from the assigned readings and life in general. You should be prepared to engage in discussion and participate in class activities. This participation will include active listening as well as giving input. Your preparedness and involvement will provide opportunities to create a vibrant and dynamic classroom environment that will help us build knowledge together. Each student in this course comes from a different social location and vantage point, and we can utilize that wealth and range of experience to create an all-encompassing class spirit. In light of this learning approach, students are expected to treat every person in the class with respect, regardless of opinion, social position, or belief.

Attendance:
Attendance and punctuality is required for each class, and you are expected to attend the entire time for each class. If there are circumstances in which you need to miss class, arrive late, or leave early, please communicate this to the instructor in person or via email (in advance, if possible). So as to not use up class time, attendance will be taken periodically using short writing activities completed during class time in response to the topics of the day. These activities will count as grades in the "Class and Group Work" category (see below). In this manner, attendance will be noted and it will affect your grade. If you present a valid, **<u>documented</u>** excuse (illness/hospitalization, mandated court appearance, funeral for an immediate family member, or official university business), you will be given an "excused" instead of a zero. Students who have work schedules that conflict with class meeting times will not be excused from missing class. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the information covered.

In accordance with UCF policy, students participating in authorized activities, intercollegiate athletics, band, choir, co-curricular activities, and academically related program events will be given the opportunity to be excused from an in-class activity or make up an exam they miss for these reasons. It is the student's responsibility to provide an authorized copy of the Program Verification Form PRIOR to the class in which the absence occurs.

Grading/Evaluation

Course grades will be based on the following requirements: *Grading Scale:*

Class and Group Work: In-Class Activities	10%	
Informal Writings: Journal Entries	20%	
Formal Writings: Personal Mission & Self-Assessment I Sociological Autobiography Social Action Toolkit (3 Entries) Personal Mission & Self-Assessment II	40%	
Final Project: Social Action Plan	30%	
	100%	

A	90-100
B	80-89.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	0-59.9

Class and Group Activities:

We will conduct each class in a seminar format. You should bring questions, critical reactions, and other observations to class so you can adequately participate and contribute. You will periodically be asked to present main ideas from a reading or video to the class so we can share the learning tasks. There will be class activities, including small groups, open class discussion, and short presentations. You will periodically be asked to submit written responses to the topics of the day. **In order to fulfill this requirement, students are expected to be present for the entire class period; therefore, these activities also serve to document attendance.** If missed, these **in-class activities cannot be made up** and will be credited as a zero unless appropriate written documentation is provided, in which case the absence will be "excused."

Informal Writings:

Journal Entries. An important element of understanding our ability to be an agent of social change is critical self-reflection. Therefore, we will use journal writing to analyze our own perspectives and experiences. I too will complete these journal entries along with you. There are 15 journal entry prompts. Each journal entry is worth 10 points. I will not "grade" these. I will read them and check to see if each entry meets the minimum requirements. **Please see the handout on Webcourses for journal prompts, due dates, and minimum requirements.**

Formal Writings:

Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement I. Part of becoming aware of our ability (and inability) to understand and change aspects of our social world involves a careful assessment of what we have and what we need in order to exert our personal agency. We also must consider our own role in the social world, from the individual level to our families and beyond. In this writing activity, each of us will evaluate what resources are already available to us as well as what we feel we need in order to become more effective social agents. With this assessment in mind, we will then write personal mission statements that reflect how we define our role in the world. **Please see the handout on Webcourses for specific guidelines for completion.**
- *Due Date:* September 5, 2016 @ 11:59 p.m. in Webcourses

Sociological Autobiography. In order to grow in our understanding of our role in the social world, we must recognize how we are located in it. This involves a consideration of not only our private issues and statuses, but also how those connect to public problems and issues and the moment in which we live. This helps us connect our autobiography with history, structure, agency, and power dynamics at work in our society. Writing a sociological autobiography is a great way to explore our social location and a good starting place for understanding the larger social picture that situates how we engage with our world. **Please see the handout on Webcourses for specific guidelines for completion.**
- *Due Date:* September 26, 2016 @ 11:59 p.m. in Webcourses

Social Action Toolkit. Sometimes we are hesitant to engage in social action because we feel like we do not know of any options available to us. Therefore, throughout the semester, we will uncover and examine methods used to drive positive social change. We will also examine situations in which these methods have been employed, either successfully or unsuccessfully. We will create a collection of these methods as they are applied to an area in which we are personally interested, reflecting on each method, analyzing its effectiveness, and evaluating the outcomes of using the method.

Methods might include songs, blogs, graffiti, journalism, providing a free health fair, literacy programs, photography, marching in the street, boycotts, tax resistance, and vegetarianism, to name just a few. While this can be a collective effort, each of us will contribute three methods related to our own area of interest, and these will be compiled into a social action toolkit available to the entire class. For example, if your area of interest is race/ethnicity, you might

366

contribute the social action tool of marching in the streets by providing a specific example related to Selma, Alabama, or you might evaluate the discussion of racial issues through podcasts.

You can work with classmates who have the same area of interest as long as each member of the group contributes **three tools** (3 members in group = 9 tools). **Please see the handout on Webcourses for specific guidelines for completion.**

- *Due Date I:* The first is due by October 10, 2016 @ 11:59 p.m. in Webcourses.
- *Due Date II:* The second is due by October 31, 2016 @ 11:59 p.m. in Webcourses.
- *Due Date III*: The third is due by November 22, 2016 @ 11:59 p.m. in Webcourses.

Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement II. At the end of the semester, each of us will reassess the *Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement I* we wrote at the beginning of the semester. Following the directions for *Assessment I*, we will write a follow-up self-assessment and personal mission statement to reflect any changes in our thinking about personal agency and our role in the social world that developed over the course of the semester. We will also add an addendum in which we explain any changes (or lack of changes) from *Assessment I*. **Please see the handout on Webcourses for specific guidelines for completion.**
- *Due Date:* December 2, 2016 @ 11:59 p.m.

Final Project:

Join the Conversation: The Social Action Project. In the culminating project of the semester, you will demonstrate your ability to recognize opportunities to actively engage in social justice conversations or movements that connect to your personal interests and passions. This project will build on the other course assignments, the course readings, and class discussions. *It can be either an individual project or a small group project.* In this project, you will research a social justice conversation for an area in which you are interested, and use this information to present a personalized approach to social action that demonstrates your agency while recognizing structural constraint, laying out a plan through which you can engage in social change. The finished product will include a written component and a visual/presentation component. Ultimately, the project will reflect your ability to assemble knowledge, resources, and skills to find a personal and empowering approach to social change. **Please see the handout on Webcourses for specific guidelines for completion.**
- *Due Date:* Presentations will be given during the final exam period (and possibly the last day of class). The final project will be due in Webcourses on December 8, 2016, by 11:59 p.m.

Technology policy:
The use of laptops, smartphones, and tablets is permitted during class for the purpose of taking notes and engaging in directed course research. Texting, engaging in social media, listening to music, shopping, or surfing the web during class, however, is distracting to your classmates and displays bad social manners. It also hurts the learning environment because you are not tuned in or contributing to the class dialogue, so your classmates do not benefit from your presence. Therefore, you are expected to refrain from doing so. The instructor reserves the right to address

violations of the technology policy on an individual or class level and make adjustments that are in the best interests of the learning environment. Please have your electronic devices on vibrate **remove headphones or earphones** for the duration of each class.

Accessibility:
Every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of each student in order to create a hospitable and accessible environment for all. Please speak directly with me to discuss necessary and documented accommodations. The Student Accommodations Services (SAS) at UCF exists to serve students who are in need of accommodations or alternative ways to access course content. Students should therefore register directly with SAS, and SAS will then recommend accommodations and assist the instructor in providing them. Through collaboration and dialogue between the student, the instructor, and SAS, the goal is to establish a support system and encourage solutions for any accessibility issues that might arise in our class.

Academic Integrity:
Students are expected to act with honesty and integrity in all academic pursuits. Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated and will be subject to negative sanctions. The Golden Rule section of the UCF Student Handbook (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu) provides guidelines about plagiarism, cheating, and assisting with such actions. It also suggests possible action that can be taken in the event of academic dishonesty. Any student who violates the guidelines in the Golden Rule will receive a grade of zero on the particular assignment or exam. The incident will also be reported to the Chair of the Sociology Department, the Dean of the College of Sciences, and/or the Office of Student Conduct, and may result in a final grade of "F" for this course as well as further consequences.

Please be aware that all major written assignments are automatically submitted to turnitin.com, a program that detects plagiarism. Because turnitin.com notes similar strands of words, it is likely to report some level of similarity between your paper and other papers/websites, and it does not distinguish between material in quotation marks and material without quotation marks. Therefore, the program may find a low level of similarity between your work and other published works even if you provide proper citations and quotations. Turnitin.com will provide me with the ability to compare your work with that of others and determine if plagiarism has been committed. We will further discuss plagiarism in class, and I am here to help provide guidance and clarity. You, however, bear the final responsibility for being sure you understand what constitutes plagiarism; therefore, you should ask questions *before* submitting your work.

As an instructor, I too must exhibit academic integrity. This includes calculating and assigning students the grades they earn in the course. It is unethical for me to give grades that are falsely inflated, so please do not email me at the end of the semester to solicit a grade you did not earn. Further, it is a violation of student privacy laws for me to discuss student grades via email. If you have questions concerning grades, please make an appointment to meet with me in person.

Syllabus:

The syllabus is tentative and subject to change!

- Please be flexible with the schedule, as it may change pending the flow of class discussion and special interest in certain topics.
- Readings and assignments may change as well due to class input and interest.
- I will keep you updated on changes, **but the best way to stay informed is to check the class website daily and to attend class**.
- The "Announcements" section of Webcourses will be used to communicate with the class as a whole; *students will be held responsible for any information posted there*.
- I may periodically post an announcement, lecture, video, or short activity to Webcourses that you will be expected to view/read before coming to class.
- Please keep up to date by checking the course website and the syllabus regularly.

At a minimum, students should check their official UCF email account and their Webcourses page at least once **daily**.

Fall 2016: Community Action and Involvement Course Schedule

TUESDAY, AUGUST 23: INTRODUCTION TO CLASS
- Topics: What is social change? Do we have a role? Why get involved? Why not?
- Readings:
    - Syllabus (Available in Webcourses)
- *Journal Entry 1; Due in Webcourses by 6:00 p.m. on Friday, August 26.*
    - **This must be completed for UCF financial aid engagement/dispersion.**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25: PRE-COURSE SURVEY AND CONSENT PROCESS
- Mandi Barringer will join us to facilitate the pre-course survey completion and the consent process for course work. Feel free to ask her about opportunities to get involved in some data collection.
- Readings: None

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30: THERE IS NO 'I' IN COMMUNITY…OH, WAIT…
- Topics: How do we define "Community Action and Involvement" (CAI)? How do you personally feel, think, speak, and/or act regarding CAI? Why are you in this class?
- Readings:
    - *Better World Handbook* (*BWH*), p. 129-141
    - *Sociologists in Action* (*SIA*), p. 2-19
- Discuss "Social Action Toolkit" and "Final Project"
- *Journal Entry 2; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. p.m. on Wednesday, August 31.*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1: WHAT LIGHTS MY FIRE?
- Topics: Assessing resources: what are our passions, talents, knowledge, skills, time, money, interests, networks, social location?
- Readings:
    - *BWH*, p. 97-110
    - *SIA*, p. 67-82
    - *Small Acts of Resistance (SAR),* p. 15-25
- *Self Assessment & Personal Statement I; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7.*

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6: CYNICISM OR HOPE? FRAGILE OR FIXED?
- Topics: Social construction of society. Are we agents or are we trapped by structure? How likely is social change? How do we feel about the social world? Are we optimistic about the possibility of improving any aspects of our social life? What thought traps might keep us from taking action? Can we be neutral?
- Readings:
    - *BWH*, p. 1-11
    - *SAR,* p. 27-40
    - Supplemental Readings will be provided
- *Journal Entry 3; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, September 9.*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: "…AS LONG AS WE HAVE OUR…IMAGINATION"
- Topics: What is the sociological imagination? How do we develop it? How is it relevant to conversations about social change? What role (if any) does social activism have in sociology?
- Readings:
    - C. Wright Mills, "The Promise," from *The Sociological Imagination* (Webcourses)
    - Randall Collins, "The Sociological Eye and Its Blinders" (Webcourses)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13: WHERE AM I? WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE CAN WE NEVER BE?
- Topics: How does our social location impact how we see the social world? How does it affect what we can know and what is unknowable for us? How does intersectionality affect our views of agency and structure? Why are coalitions necessary? How do we work *with* people instead of *for* them?
- Readings:
    o *SAR*, p. 61-68
    o *SIA*, p. 169-190
    o Supplemental Readings will be provided
- *Journal Entry 4; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. p.m. on Thursday, September 15.*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15: OH, WHAT A TANGLED WEB WE WEAVE!
- Topics: Do we see and understand the historical and sociological implications of the time and place in which we live? How do social structures and institutions connect to private issues and limit social change? How do they affect our personal agency? Who's who and what's what in our society? Where are the vulnerabilities?
- Readings:
    o *SIA*, p. 51-66; 240-245
    o *SAR*, p. 69-96

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20: "I'VE GOT THE POWER"…OR NOT?
- Topics: How do we see our personal agency? How do we determine life chances for others and ourselves? How does our habitus (internalized way of seeing the world) affect our views of society and our own power?
- Readings:
    o *SAR*, p. 183-194
    o *BWH,* p. 143-161
    o Social Reproduction video (Khan Academy)
- *Journal Entry 5; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, September 22.*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22: "THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING"
- Topics: How do various sociological theoretical lens affect how we see social change, structure, and agency? Are we objective sociologists, or do we *DO* sociology as activists?
- Readings:
    o *SIA*, p. 21-34; 121-125
    o Mills, "Opportunities and Resignation"
    o Feagin, "Social Justice and Sociology"
- *Sociological Autobiography; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 28.*

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27: "AND JUSTICE FOR ALL??"
- Topics: How do we define social justice? What is it? What does it include? How do we feel about it as a potential and a possibility? Is it a worthwhile effort or a waste of energy?
- Readings:
    o *BWH*, p. 13-55
    o Watch one social justice documentary
    o "Forced Social Justice Training" article
- *Journal Entry 6; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, September 30.**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29: TAKE A BREATH
- Topics: Mid-course evaluations, catch-up, questions, collaboration, etc.
- Attendance will be taken.
- No assignments or readings

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4: CHOICES WE MAKE: FEEBLE OR FAMOUS?
- Topics: How important are choices made by individuals? Do such choices have lasting impact? Do they have a cumulative effect? Is there a difference between the intentional and unintentional choice related to social action? What is the role of "I" in social action?
- Readings:
  o *BWH*, Pick one section (food, shopping, etc) that interests you and read it; come ready to share
  o *SAR*, p. 97-119
  o Eugene Debs, "Statement to the Court"
  o Bring an example of an individual whose intentional choices seem significant for causing social change/social action; determine to what extent the choices impacted society
- *Journal Entry 7; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, September 30.**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6: "BURN THE SYSTEM DOWN!"
- Topics: What means and methods are available to drive social change? How do we assess which means and methods are most appropriate? What about the ends? Are we responsible for unexpected outcomes that result from social action we take? How does our social position affect our answers to these questions?
- Readings:
  o *SAR,* p. 153-170
  o *SIA,* p. 36-49, 106-121
  o Supplemental Readings will be provided
- *Journal Entry 8; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, October 7.**
- *Entry #1 for Social Action Toolkit; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, October 10.*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11: "SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED, I'M [NOT] YOURS"
- Topics: How effective is letter writing in bringing social change? What can the letter change (individual or collective campaigns)? What are its limitations?
- Readings:
  o Dorothy Day, "This Money is Not Ours" (Webcourses)
  o Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (Webcourses)
- *Journal Entry 9; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 12.*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13: "THE EARTH WITHOUT *ART* IS JUST *EH*"
- Topics: From Goya to Banksy: How effective is artistic expression in bringing social change? What can art change? What are its limitations? Are any forms of art most powerful or useful than others?
- Readings:
  o *SIA*, p. 178-182, PhotoVoice Project
  o Goya, *Los Desastres de la Guerra (The Disasters of War)* (link on Webcourses)
  o Banksy (link on Webcourses)
  o **Bring one sample of artistic expression (a social commentary) you find impactful**
  o Supplemental Readings will be provided

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18: "SING, SING A SONG"
- Topics: What role does music play in social change? How effective is music in bringing social change? What are its limitations? Why is music an important form of expression for groups who are oppressed in society?
- Readings/Videos/Links:
  o *SAR*, "Marshalling Arts," p. 133-151
  o **Bring one sample of musical expression (a social commentary) you find impactful**
  o Abel Meeropol (poem), Lewis Allen (lyrics), "Strange Fruit"
  o Anne Feeney, "Have You Been To Jail for Justice?"
  o Brett Dennen, "Ain't No Reason"

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20: "STRANGE BEDFELLOWS"
- Topics: How important is building coalitions? How might "our group" need or depend on other groups to drive social change? How does the social action of one group impact the situation of other groups? Who are we scared to work with? Where do such feelings come from? What are the limitations of coalitions?
- Readings/Videos:
  o "Businesses Are Joining the Fight Against North Carolina's Anti-LGBT Law"
  o "Corporate Boycotts Become Key Weapon in Gay Rights Fight"
  o *SAR*, p. 3-13
  o *SIA,* p. 84-103
  o *BWH,* p. 261-280
- *Journal Entry 10; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, October 21.*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25: "LOUDER THAN A BOMB"
- Topics: What role does the spoken word play in social change? How effective are speeches, spoken word, comedy, or political commentary/satire in prompting social action? Does the personal agency utilized though words translate into structural change? What are the limitations? Do they impact the speaker and the listener?
- Readings/Videos:
  o Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks to the U.N. 4th World Conference on Women."
  o Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize Speech
  o Martin Luther King, Jr. "The Mountaintop" speech
  o Bring one sample of spoken expression (a social commentary) you find impactful

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27: "MONEY TALKS"
- Topics: What economics tactics are useful in creating social change? How effective are various tactics in challenging structural economic inequalities? What are the limitations of such methods?
- Readings/Videos:
  o *BWH*, p. 57-97 (skim)
  o *SIA*, p. 128-145, 249-253
  o Supplemental Readings will be provided
- *Journal Entry 11; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, October 28.*
- *Entry #2 for Social Action Toolkit; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, October 31.*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1: ARE WE JUST TAKING UP SPACE?
- Topics: How much importance do methods that involve the power of presence have for social action? How do these types of methods build community and coalitions? How much influence do they have for challenging structural forces, and what are their limitations? How does the law affect these types of methods?
- Readings/Videos:
  o *SIA*, p. 147-166; 217-236
  o University of Missouri
  o American Civil Rights Movement
    ▪ "The Sit-Ins"
    ▪ "The Greensboro Sit-in"
  o Tiananmen Square: "Tank Man" // Iyer, "Unknown Rebel"
- *Journal Entry 12; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 2.*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3: TAKE A BREATH
- Topics: Mid-course evaluations, catch-up, questions, collaboration, etc.
- Attendance will be taken.
- No assignments, readings, or journal entries

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8: ARE WE SLACKTIVISTS? (PART 1)
- Topics: Social media (and the video and instance transmission capabilities of cell phones) have generated increased opportunities for communication and solidarity, making it a method of choice for many looking to drive social change. Just how impactful are these methods in challenging social structures and institutions? What are the limitations of social media? Does "retweeting" or giving a "like" drive social change, or is just "slacktivism?"
- Readings/Videos:
    - *SAR*, "Digital Dissent," p. 195-207
    - *BWH*, "Media," p. 195-212
    - Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change"

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10: ARE WE SLACKTIVISTS? (PART 2)
- Topics: Social media (and the video and instance transmission capabilities of cell phones) have generated increased opportunities for communication and solidarity, making it a method of choice for many looking to drive social change. Just how impactful are these methods in challenging social structures and institutions? What are the limitations of social media? Does "retweeting" or giving a "like" drive social change, or is just "slacktivism?"
- Readings/Videos:
    - Mario Machado, "The Revolution will be Tweeted"
    - Arab Spring and Social Media
    - Supplemental Readings will be provided
- *Journal Entry 13; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, November 11.*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15: THE POWER OF THE PRESS
- Topics: Can the press be used to drive social change in the local community and in broader society? What methods can those who are not journalists use to draw attention to social issues? Does the press still have the "power" to cause structural change? What impact might editorials or calling the press to cover an event have? What role does censorship play?
- Readings/Videos:
    - Barbara Risman, SSS Press Release on HB 757 in Georgia
    - *SAR*, "Cheating the Censor," p.41-49
    - William Lloyd Garrison, "To the Public," *The Liberator*
    - Skim Ida B. Wells-Barrett, "Lynch Laws in Georgia" or "The Red Record"

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17: ARE WE POLITICAL ANIMALS?
- Topics: How might political tools be useful for creating change in our communities, states, and nation? What are the limitations we experience as individuals living in a representative democracy? How is political power gained, held, and utilized? What are its limitations?
- Readings:
    - *SIA*, 206-213, 256-283
    - W.E.B. Du Bois, "Why I Won't Vote," *The Nation* (Webcourses)
    - Supplemental Readings will be provided
- *Journal Entry 14; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, November 18.*
- *Entry #3 for Social Action Toolkit; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, November 22.*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22: TAKE A BREATH
- Topics: Catch-up, questions, collaboration, etc.
- Attendance will be taken.
- No assignments, readings, or journal entries

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25: NO CLASS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29: WHEN THINGS DON'T CHANGE
- Topics: How do we choose between patience and persistence? When might people resort to "reckless deeds" to force social change? Can we insulate ourselves from society? How long does social change take? Does the exertion of personal agency of various individuals have a cumulative effect on society change? Should we just focus on making life more bearable for ourselves?
- Readings:
    o   William Ernest Henley, "Invictus"
    o   Supplemental Readings will be provided
- *Journal Entry 15; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 30.**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1: LIFE ON THE MÖBIUS STRIP
- Topics: How should we then live? How do we use our personal agency in our communities (however we define them)? How and should we engage?
- *Self-Assessment & Personal Statement II; Due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, December 2.*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER (THE FINAL PROJECT)
- Extended time!!! **10:00-12:50 PM** (this is the final exam period; plan to stay the whole time)
- Presentations of Final Project
- *Final Project due in Webcourses by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, December 8.*

Other Important Dates:

Withdrawal Deadline: Monday, October 31, 2016; 11:59 p.m**.**
  Final Exam Period: Tuesday, December 6, 2016: 10:00 a.m.-12:50 p.m.
   Final Grades Due: Thursday, December 15, 2016; 12:00 p.m.

APPENDIX C:
ASSIGNMENTS FOR CAI COURSE

SYA 4650C: Journal Prompts

An important element of understanding our personal agency is critical self-reflection.

We will use journal writing to use what we talk about in class to analyze our own perspectives and experiences. There are 15 journal entry prompts (approximately one per week). Each journal entry is worth 10 points, given for appropriate completion. I will check to see if each entry meets the minimum requirements, but I will not grade the content.

If you have an entry you do not want me to read until after the semester ends, please type "PLEASE DO NOT READ UNTIL END OF SEMESTER" at the beginning of the journal entry before you turn it in. I will then simply check it for completion.

Like you, I will write these journal entries. I will make them available for you to read.

Entries should answer the given prompt and meet these minimum requirements:

- The entry must be at least 400 words. Maximum word count is 700 words.
- The entry must be **typed and submitted through Webcourses by the due date**.
- If you miss the deadline for submission, you may still submit the entry for feedback. If it is less than 24 hours late, you can receive up to 6 points. If it is less than 48 hours late, you can receive up to 3 points. Beyond 48 hours late, no credit will be given.
- **Please use this format when naming your journal files: bsavage_je1, basavage_je2**

Prompts:

Assigned	Due Date	Related Class Topic	Journal Entry Prompt
8/23	8/26 @ 6 p.m.	Introduction To Social Change	**JE 1:** If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be, and why? Do you see yourself as socially active? Why or why not? Do you feel equipped to cause social change? Why or why not?
8/25	--	--	*No Entry*
8/30	8/31 @ 6 p.m.	There Is No 'I' In Community…Oh, Wait…	**JE 2:** How do you define "Community Action and Involvement?" What do you expect to gain from this class? What are you willing to give to this class? What, if anything, scares you about this class? What excites you about this class?
9/1	--	--	*No Entry*
9/6	9/7 @ 6 p.m.	Cynicism Or Hope? Fragile Or Fixed?	**JE 3:** How do you see the world? Is it fragile or fixed? Do you see yourself as cynical or hopeful? Why? Do any of the thought traps from BWH resonate with you? Which ones? Why?
9/8	--	--	*No Entry*

Assigned	Due Date	Related Class Topic	Journal Entry Prompt
9/13	9/14 @ 6 p.m.	Where Am I? Where Are You? Where Can We Never Be?	**JE 4:** Think of a time when you found out something you believed was not true or accurate. How did that impact you and your outlook on your life? How does this relate to our discussion about partial knowledge and "the unknowable?"
9/15	--	--	*No Entry*
9/20	9/21 @ 6 p.m.	"I've Got The Power"…Or Not?	**JE 5:** Upon reflection, what social inequalities have you become used to, meaning you scarcely think about them? Why do you think this has happened? Does your disinterest matter?
9/22	--	--	*No Entry*
9/27	9/28 @ 6 p.m.	"And Justice For All??"	**JE 6:** How do you define "social justice?" Do you feel like you work toward social justice? Do you see social justice as a worthwhile effort or a waste of energy? Why or why not?*
9/29	--	--	*No Entry*
10/4	10/5 @ 6 p.m.	Choices We Make: Feeble Or Famous?	**JE 7:** Using our discussion of Korczak and others, consider the following: Were Korczak and the others agents of social change? (You can talk about one or more.) Why or why not? How do you see your role as an individual related to social change? What about choices you make? (Bring power, structure, and personal agency into your discussion.)*
10/6	10/7 @ 6 p.m.	"Burn The System Down!"	**JE 8:** Do the means of social change always justify the ends? How does your social position affect your answer to this question?*
10/11	10/12 @ 6 p.m.	"Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I'm [Not] Yours"	**JE 9:** It is said of Dorothy Day that she spent her life, "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable," yet, there are no measurable results available to document the impact of her life's work. With this in mind, express your thoughts regarding Day as an agent of social change. Be sure to specifically reference the letter in your response, and address our beginning inquiry, *"What use is a solitary protest?"*
10/13	--	--	*No Entry*
10/18	--	--	*No Entry*
10/20	10/21 @ 6 p.m.	"Strange Bedfellows"	**JE 10:** Who are you scared to work with? Are there any types of groups or individuals around whom you feel nervous? Why? Where do those feelings come from?

Assigned	Due Date	Related Class Topic	Journal Entry Prompt
10/25	--	--	*No Entry*
10/27	10/28 @ 6 p.m.	"Money Talks"	**JE 11:** Use your sociological imagination to describe the impact that your personal spending habits might have on broader society or other groups in society. How do you feel about this situation? Are there any changes you could or would like to make?
11/1	11/2 @ 6 p.m.	Are We Just Taking Up Space?	**JE 12:** Is there any cause you are willing to use your physical "presence" to get involved? What are the personal risks you might face in doing so? What are the potential gains? What impact would you expect to have?
11/3	--	--	*No Entry*
11/8	--	--	*No Entry*
11/10	11/11 @ 6 p.m.	Are We Slacktivists? (Parts 1 & 2)	**JE 13:** How has social media impacted how you see and interact with the world? Do you see it as an important tool for social change? Why or why not? Do you use it to try to change people's opinions?
11/15	--	--	*No Entry*
11/17	11/18 @ 6 p.m.	Are We Political Animals?	**JE 14:** How do you feel about politics? Do you feel that you have a political voice? Why or why not? How might you increase your political power? What types of broader changes would you like to see related to politics?
11/22	--	--	*No Entry*
11/25		*No Class*	
11/29	11/30 @ 6 p.m.	When Things Don't Change	**JE 15:** Do you ever feel discouraged about the way things are in your world? How do you cope with those feelings? What advice might you offer a peer experiencing similar discouragement?*
12/1		--	*No Entry*

*There were initially 15 journal prompts; however, in the end, students were asked to complete only 11. Originally a journal entry was scheduled for this day; however, it was cancelled during the ebb and flow of the semester. Cancellation occurred either due to class cancelation due to Hurricane Matthew or it was determined to be too much for the students given the other tasks they were completing.

SYA 4650C: Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement I

Becoming aware of your ability (or inability) to understand and change aspects of your social world involves a careful assessment of (1) what you have and what you need in order to exert your agency to its fullest, and (2) how you define your role in the social world.

Task: Using the questions and considerations below, compose a self-assessment and a personal mission statement. These components should be an honest reflection of <u>you and your personal interests</u>, not generalities. A rubric has been provided to frame the expectations for this assignment, but you are welcome to use whatever written expression you prefer. Assume you are writing this for yourself and your peers. At the end of the semester, you will critically reflect on how the thoughts and views you express here have changed, evolved, or remained the same.

You will create a **self-assessment** to evaluate what resources are already available to you as well as what you feel you need in order to become a more effective social agent. Then you will compose a **personal mission statement** that reflects how you see your role in the world.

Please label your file in this manner: **bsavage_sapm1**

Part I: Self-Assessment (suggested 500-700 words)

For this task, self-assessment is judging oneself realistically, reflecting on these questions:
- What resources for social change do you already have on hand?
- What resources do you feel like you still need? What holds you back?
- Consider:
    - Skills, talents, interests, passions, personality, finances, networks, time
    - Social location (intersection of race/ethnicity, sex, gender, social class, nationality, religion, etc.)

The purpose of writing a self-assessment is to evaluate what you have and what you need to feel equipped to exert your agency and alter your social world. Self-reflection is an important part of understanding our personal strengths, weaknesses, and the possibilities available to us.

Part II: Personal Mission Statement[1](suggested 200-400 words)

After completing your self-assessment, you will compose a personal mission statement. A personal mission statement addresses these questions:
- Who are you? // What do you stand for? // What are your core values and goals?
- What is your purpose in life? // Who would you like to be?

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[1] *This idea and format is drawn from _The Better World Handbook_ (Jones, Haenfler, and Johnson 2007:108).

Rubric for Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement I

Criteria	Ratings		Points	Comments
Readability: Well-edited, grammar, spelling, punctuation, word usage, easy to follow, suitable for target audience	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Adherence to general expectations: All component parts present, well-organized, clearly links to a specific area of interest, length adequately captures and expresses ideas	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Self-Assessment: Assessment is personal, highlights and describes resources possessed and resources needed, thoughtful, considers social location, reflects sociological concepts and course content	Full Marks 20 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Personal Mission Statement: Statement includes values and goals, links to personal interests, thoughtful reflection of who the writer is and who the writer wants to be as an individual and a member of society, shows vision	Full Marks 20 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Total Points			/50	
Timeliness: • Less than 24 hours late = minus 10 points (highest possible = 80%) • From 24-48 hours late = minus 20 points (highest possible = 60%) • More than 48 hours late = feedback only (no points possible)				
Total Points			/50	

SYA 4650C: The Sociological Autobiography[2]

By understanding ourselves sociologically, we can better understand relationships to others, the communities to which we belong, and the broader social world.

Task: In order to grow in our understanding of our role in the social world, we must recognize how we are located within it. This involves a consideration of not only our private situation and statuses, but also how those connect to public issues and the moment in which we live. It helps us connect our autobiography with history, structure, agency, and the dynamics of power and privilege at work in our society. Writing a sociological autobiography is a great and revealing way to explore your social location and a good starting place for understanding the larger social picture that situates how we engage with our world.

*****Ultimately, this is a story of how the life of one social being (you) is shaped*****

You will critically analyze your life from a sociological perspective. The sociological autobiography is intended to help you become conscious of how social and historical context has shaped your life thus far. You will practice using the sociological imagination in the writing of your autobiography, which will help you better recognize the social construction of society and how it impacts your life and the communities of which you are a part.

Here are some things you should consider as you tell your story:
- The impact of history or major historical events on your life
- How your private situation connects to larger public issues.
- Power and privilege you experience (or lack) related to your roles, statuses, & beliefs
- The intersectionality of your particular social location (race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, etc.), and the stratification of society
- How family, education, religion, media, etc. have socialized you.
- The communities with which you identify or feel a part of
- The structures and institutions that impact your life story (education, religion, politics, health care, etc.)
- Your personal agency in relation to social structures and institutions

Basic Requirements:
- Paper must be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman font. Use one-inch margins on all four sides of the paper. Include page numbers (but not a running header).
- Word count = 1500-2000; this is a 6-8 page paper (you can go a bit longer if necessary)
- Include a title page with your name, the date, the course number, and the word count.
- This assignment will be submitted in Webcourses as a Microsoft Word or Pages file.

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[2] For this assignment, I have drawn on the work of Alem Kebede (2009), "Practicing Sociological Imagination Through Writing Sociological Autobiography," in *Teaching Sociology* 37(4):353-368.

Rubric for Sociological Autobiography

Criteria	Ratings		Points	Comments
Readability: Well-edited, grammar, spelling, punctuation, word usage, easy to follow, suitable for target audience	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Adherence to general expectations: Word count (length), formatted correctly, title page, page numbers, well-organized, proper font	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Autobiography: Articulates a clear picture of one's life story, includes adequate overview of the important phases of one's personal life, reader is provided with a sufficient understanding of the who the writer is, including the communities with which the writer identifies, situates the writer as an individual within the broader social picture	Full Marks 15 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Use of Sociological Perspective: Reflects course content and an understanding of the social construction of reality, demonstrates how personal situation is connected to broader public issues, connects self with communities, integrates social and historical context into autobiography, considers the impact of intersectionality, privilege, stratification, socialization, etc. on personal life, views life through sociological imagination	Full Marks 25 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
		Total Points	/50	
Timeliness: - Less than 24 hours late = minus 10 points (highest possible = 80%) - From 24-48 hours late = minus 20 points (highest possible = 60%) - More than 48 hours late = feedback only (no points possible)				
		Total Points	/50	

SYA 4650C: The Social Action Toolkit

If you are going to engage in social action, you need the tools that are powerful enough to get the job done.

Audience:
You are asked to give a talk to high school seniors who feel discouraged because they feel unable to change things they dislike in their social world. They do not think that their personal agency can be used to help themselves, their families, or their communities because the social problems are too big to effectively tackle. Some days they are tempted to give up trying to make a positive difference. These students have a social location and career goals similar to yours, sharing similar interests and perspectives.

As you are preparing your talk, you decide that the students would benefit from specific examples of how people have engaged in social change. Anticipating their skepticism and in the interest of full disclosure, you realize that you must not only include the potential of the examples you select, but also the limitations of such methods.

Your purpose is to help these students see their personal agency by providing them with a social action toolkit that is applicable for their lives and their areas of interest (which, remember, are very similar to yours!). You limit yourself to three tools, so the students can easily remember them. You create one-page handouts that are similar to online reviews for power tools.

The Task:
For each tool, you will complete the product review template with the following information:
- The tool name
- A ranking based on easy of use and potential impact (give it 1-5 stars)
- A brief description of the tool
- Costs and resources required for the tool to be most effective
- An explanation of how the method was used (process and context)
  - This is the who, what, when, where, why, and how
  - Include setting (time and place)
  - This should relate to your own interests, passions, and social location
- Likes: Describe what makes this tool effective for causing positive social change
- Dislikes: Describe the limitations of the tool
  - What groups might have been negatively impacted by the use of this method?
  - Could the method challenge structural inequities in society?
- Add-ons: What would make this tool more effective?
- A visual related to the method

Final Notes:
- You are welcome to work with classmates, but **each student must produce and submit three original tools** for the social action toolkit that relate to an area of personal interest.

Rubric for Social Action Toolkit

Criteria	Ratings		Points	Comments
Readability: Well-edited, grammar, spelling, punctuation, word usage, suitable for target audience	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Adherence to general expectations: Formatted appropriately, all component parts present, well-organized, visually pleasing, clearly links to a specific and personal area of interest	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Description of the social action tool: Definition of the social action method, any associated costs/resources, explanation of context, ranking & user comment, appropriate visual	Full Marks 15 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Sociological analysis of tool: Evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the method, connection to social structures/institutions and personal agency, potential outcomes, the effectiveness of method, reflects course content	Full Marks 25 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
		Total Points	/50	
Timeliness: • Less than 24 hours late = minus 10 points (highest possible = 80%) • From 24-48 hours late = minus 20 points (highest possible = 60%) • More than 48 hours late = feedback only (no points possible)				
		Total Points	/50	

SYA 4650C: Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement II:

Periodically reassessing your ability to understand and change aspects of your social world by (1) examining what you have gained or lost over a semester and (2) reevaluating your role in the social world can lead to personal growth and increase your sense of agency.

Task: In light of the questions/considerations below and the course materials and discussions, you will compose *Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement II* <u>and</u> add an addendum. These components should reflect how the thoughts and views you expressed in *Assessment I* have changed, evolved, or remained the same over the course of the semester. A rubric has been provided to frame the expectations for this assignment.

You will critically reflect on and revise *Assessment I* to demonstrate any changes in your thinking that developed over the semester. The **self-assessment** evaluates what resources are available to you as well as what you feel you need in order to become a more effective social agent. The **personal mission statement** reflects how you see your role in the world. The **addendum** includes (1) explanations for any changes from *Assessment I* to *Assessment II* and/or (2) explanations indicating why no changes were necessary.

Part I: Self-Assessment (suggested 500-700 words)

For this task, self-assessment is judging oneself realistically, reflecting on these questions:
- What resources for social change do you already have on hand?
- What resources do you feel like you still need? What holds you back?

Evaluate what you have/what you need to feel equipped to alter your social world.

Part II: Personal Mission Statement[3]*(suggested 200-400 words)*

A personal mission statement addresses these questions:
- Who are you? // What do you stand for? // What are your core values and goals?
- What is your purpose in life? // Who would you like to be?

Reflect on who you are as a social being and who you would like to be.

Part III: Addendum (length will vary, suggested 300-500 words)

The addendum will provide explanations for change or lack of change from *Assessment I* to *Assessment II*, indicating critical self-reflection connected to what we have discussed in class.

Explain any changes you made as well and provide reasons if no changes were necessary.

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[3] *This idea and format is drawn from *The Better World Handbook* (Jones, Haenfler, and Johnson 2007:108).

Rubric for Self-Assessment and Personal Mission Statement II

Criteria	Ratings		Points	Comments
Readability: Well-edited, grammar, spelling, punctuation, word usage, easy to follow, suitable for target audience	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Adherence to general expectations: All component parts present, well-organized, clearly links to a specific area of interest, length adequately captures and expresses ideas	Full Marks 5 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Self-Assessment: Assessment is personal, highlights and describes resources possessed and resources needed, thoughtful, considers social location, reflects sociological concepts and course content, revised as necessary from *Assessment I*	Full Marks 10 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Personal Mission Statement: Statement includes values and goals, links to personal interests, thoughtful reflection of who the writer is and who the writer wants to be as an individual and a member of society, revised as necessary from *Assessment I*	Full Marks 10 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Addendum: Addendum provides thoughtful discussion of changes or lack of changes from *Assessment I* to *Assessment II*, reflects course content and class materials, indicates engagement in the process of self-reflection	Full Marks 20 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Total Points			/50	
Timeliness: - Less than 24 hours late = minus 10 points (highest possible = 80%) - From 24-48 hours late = minus 20 points (highest possible = 60%) - More than 48 hours late = feedback only (no points possible)				
Total Points			/50	

SYA 4650C: Join the Conversation--The Social Action Plan

You can exert your personal agency in a way that is effective and sociologically reflexive if you are able to describe a way to connect your passions to a social justice conversation.

*Task***:** In this project, you will work to uncover a social justice conversation in your area of interest, investigating what work has been done, what is currently being said, and who is saying it. Also, you will examine how knowledge and skills are being employed to cause change in that particular area and the effectiveness of the work.

You will then create a personalized approach to social action that demonstrates your potential for agency while recognizing structural constraint. You will lay out a plan for engaging in social change that reflects who you are as an individual, the resources available to you, and your personal mission statement. This plan should be doable for **you**!

This is the culminating project of the semester, reflecting your ability to assemble knowledge, resources, and skills to find a specific, personal and empowering path to social change. This project should be a blueprint you can use to sociologically justify and implement your idea.

o **This can be either an individual project or a small group project.** Group projects will need to provide documentation of each member's contributions and individual reflections.

o You will submit a copy of your project through Webcourses. There may also be a need to have a hard copy as well. Please name your file in this manner: **bsavage_finalproject**

Social Action Plan

You will determine a personalized plan of social action with which you feel comfortable and competent, and then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses and potential outcomes of that method, in relation to the structures and the resources available to you. See the suggested format below. **I would love to discuss any alternative approaches and ideas you might have! This does not have to be a Word document.**

You **might** organize your project in the following manner:

- *Section 1: The Conversation I Want To Join*
    - o Describe the conversation sociologically (topic, area of interest, etc.)
    - o Identify the need you see and with which you want to engage.
    - o Include an overview of your research exploring the conversation. You can draw on readings, journals, videos, news stories, websites, etc. to discuss what is being done, what the need is, what has worked, and what is not successful. Explore those who do or might oppose the work as well as those who are or would be supporters.
    - o Speak informally to individuals, groups, or organizations connected with your area of interest, and summarize their insights, suggestions, missteps, etc.

- Use this section to make a case for your own plan and why it is necessary and appropriate.

- *Section 2: This Is My Plan For Engaging In The Conversation*
  - Clearly explain your plan for social action
  - If your action plan includes an element such as art, photography, a blog, a musical piece, an editorial, or spoken word, include it, if possible.
  - Identify three social action tools that you can use. Discuss how you would use them and why they are good choices. What are their benefits and limitations for your plan?
    - You can use three tools that you have created.
    - You can borrow tools from your classmates. It is your responsibility to see that they are properly completed.
    - You can mix and match with yours and those of your classmates.
  - Explain how you can implement the plan. When? Where?
  - **Connect this section to the work we have done for the social action toolkit, course readings, journal entries, and class discussions.**

- *Section 3: This is Why This Plan Fits Who I Am*
  - Explain why this plan is appropriate for you and how you see the social world.
  - Describe how the plan matches your values, beliefs, and mission.
  - Discuss the resources you have. Also note the resources you lack and consider how you can obtain them or compensate for not having them.
  - **Connect this section to the sociological autobiography, journal entries, and the self-assessment and personal mission statement**

- *Section 4: This Is How My Plan May Affect The Conversation*
  - Provide a critical reflection on the impact you predict your social action plan can have.
  - Discuss your plan's potential to cause change.
  - Discuss the structural limitations of your plan (where does its potential end?)
  - Analyze who is to be directly impacted by the plan and how other individuals or groups may be affected by it (positively or negatively…who will "win" or "lose"…what will be gained or lost?)
  - If you were able to implement the plan before completing this project, include a discussion of the experience
  - **Connect this section to the work we have done for the social action toolkit, course readings, and class discussions.**

- *Section 5: References*
  - Be sure to **cite all sources you use, even if you are paraphrasing**!
  - When paraphrasing, use in-text citations (Smith 2015).
  - For direct quotes, use quotation marks and include a page number (Smith 2015:6).
  - Include a "References" page at the conclusion of your project.

Rubric for Join the Conversation--Social Action Project

Criteria	Ratings		Points	Comments
Readability: Well-edited, grammar, spelling, punctuation, word usage, easy to follow, suitable for target audience (peer group or higher)	Full Marks 15 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Adherence to general expectations: All component parts present, well-organized, clearly links to a specific area of interest, length adequately captures and expresses ideas, citations and references are provided and appropriately used	Full Marks 15 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Written Component: Social action is personalized and draws on previous coursework, provides research into the selected social justice conversation, explains plan clearly, demonstrates understanding of broader issues related to the selected area, includes tools for change and evaluation of their potentials and limitations	Full Marks 30 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
Sociological analysis: Evaluates the strengths and limitations of the social action plan, connects to social structures/institutions and personal agency, accurately predicts potential outcomes and impact on various societal groups, analyzes the effectiveness of the plan, reflects course content, demonstrates a sociological understanding throughout the project	Full Marks 40 pts	No Marks 0 pts		
		Total Points	/100	
Timeliness: • Less than 24 hours late = minus 20 points (highest possible = 80%) • From 24-48 hours late = minus 40 points (highest possible = 60%) • More than 48 hours late = feedback only (no points possible)				
		Total Points	/100	

APPENDIX D:
PRE-COURSE AND POST-COURSE SURVEYS

Pre-Course Survey: Community Action and Involvement

Q36 You are asked to complete a pre-survey that asks some questions about your attitudes and behaviors related to previous introductory courses you have taken and the social world in general, as well as some demographic information. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Not only will this survey provide feedback to the course instructor, it is part of a larger research study examining students' attitudes and behaviors towards social issues and social action. Your input will help us better understand student perceptions of the world and a Community Action and Involvement course. Every student enrolled in Community Action and Involvement is asked to complete the pre-course survey as part of the course; however, your answers will not be used as data in the research study without your consent. You can skip any questions you are not comfortable answering. Your confidentiality will be protected. There are no anticipated risks. This information will not be reviewed by the principal researcher until after the end of the semester. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in the research. Thank you for your participation. Study contact for questions or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact Brenda Savage, Graduate Student, UCF Department of Sociology, College of Sciences, at brenda.savage@knights.ucf.edu, Dr. Elizabeth E. Mustaine, Faculty Supervisor, UCF Department of Sociology, at (407) 823-2618, or Mandi Barringer, UCF Department of Sociology, at m.barringer@knights.ucf.edu.   IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

Q37 I understand and agree to the conditions of this study.
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q68 Please enter your personal assigned identifier. Mandi will provide this for you.

Q10 We would like to ask you some general questions about society and social action. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about society:

	Strongly Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Individuals can change their communities for the better. (1)	•	•	•	•
Social inequalities and social problems are inevitable; they will never go away. (2)	•	•	•	•
People are poor because they lack motivation. (3)	•	•	•	•
The world is a positive place for most people. (4)	•	•	•	•
It is a worthwhile effort to challenge social inequalities and social problems. (5)	•	•	•	•
Social and collective movements do not really create lasting change in society. (6)	•	•	•	•
One individual has the power to challenge social inequalities or social problems. (7)	•	•	•	•
The individuals who succeed in the world are those who work hard enough to do so. (8)	•	•	•	•

People who work to help others overcome social issues are admirable. (9)	•	•	•	•
The efforts of an individual to improve his or her situation can be limited by things such as race/ethnicity, social class, and gender. (10)	•	•	•	•
It is a waste of effort to try and improve society. (11)	•	•	•	•

Q10 How likely would you be to try and make a positive change in society if you saw an opportunity to do so? By positive change, we mean work which attempts to reduce social problems.
- Extremely likely (1)
- Likely (2)
- Somewhat likely (3)
- Not likely (4)

Q11 In this section, we would like to find out if you feel like you could change something that bothers you. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very helpless and 5 being very optimistic, how optimistic are you that you could change something if it bothered you in regards to:

	1 (very helpless) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (very optimistic) (5)
Your personal situation (1)	•	•	•	•	•
Your family (2)	•	•	•	•	•
The neighborhood in which you grew up (3)	•	•	•	•	•
Your university (4)	•	•	•	•	•
Your racial/ethnic community (5)	•	•	•	•	•
Your state of residence (6)	•	•	•	•	•
The media (7)	•	•	•	•	•
Your national government (8)	•	•	•	•	•
Your national economy (9)	•	•	•	•	•
The world outside your nation (10)	•	•	•	•	•

Q62 In general, how difficult do you think it would be for you to make a positive change in society?
- Extremely difficult (20)
- Somewhat difficult (21)
- Somewhat easy (23)
- Extremely easy (24)

Q63 If you did try to make an effort to positively change society, how big a difference do you think you could make?
- Very big difference (1)
- Big difference (4)
- Some difference (2)
- Little difference (5)
- No difference (3)

Q36 How interested are you in working to create positive change in the following areas?

	Very interested (4)	Interested (3)	Somewhat interested (2)	Not interested at all (1)
Race/ethnicity issues (1)	•	•	•	•
Environmental issues (2)	•	•	•	•
Gender issues (3)	•	•	•	•
Sexuality issues (4)	•	•	•	•
Poverty (5)	•	•	•	•
Criminal justice system (6)	•	•	•	•
Economic system (7)	•	•	•	•
Politics/government (8)	•	•	•	•
Health care (9)	•	•	•	•
Education (10)	•	•	•	•
Discrimination (11)	•	•	•	•
Other (Please type in.) (12)	•	•	•	•

Q12 Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
I am interested in learning how to become more socially active. (1)	•	•	•	•
I am not as socially active as I would like to be because I do not have enough money. (2)	•	•	•	•
I have friends who are active in challenging social inequalities. (3)	•	•	•	•
I would be more socially active, except I lack the time. (5)	•	•	•	•
I do not see the point of getting involved in social issues because I cannot change them. (6)	•	•	•	•
I regularly use social media to share my opinion on social issues. (7)	•	•	•	•
I have conducted research (on my own) to learn more about social issues. (8)	•	•	•	•

Q71 How important is each of the following for people who want to work for positive social change?

	Very important (1)	Important (2)	Somewhat Important (3)	Not Important (4)
Academic knowledge (1)	•	•	•	•
Specific learned skills (2)	•	•	•	•
Money or funding (3)	•	•	•	•
Available time (extra time) (4)	•	•	•	•
Mentors who provide guidance (5)	•	•	•	•
Social networks (6)	•	•	•	•
Minimal sacrifice (not much to lose) (7)	•	•	•	•
Courage (8)	•	•	•	•
Lots of energy (9)	•	•	•	•
Long-term commitment (10)	•	•	•	•
In-born abilities, such as artistic skills or intellectual ability (11)	•	•	•	•

Q13 Which of the following have you used in the past year to research social issues on your own? Please mark all that apply.
- Books (1)
- Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) (2)
- Internet websites (Google Scholar, BBC News, etc.) (3)
- Movies or documentaries (4)
- Magazines or newspapers (5)
- Television (6)
- Podcasts (7)
- Other (Please type in.) (8) _____

Q61 How many sociology courses have you taken as an undergraduate? Please type in a number.

Q50 Have you taken an Introduction to Sociology, Honors Introduction to Sociology, or a Social Problems course as an undergraduate?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q52 What was the mode of delivery in your Introduction to Sociology, Honors Introduction to Sociology, or Social Problems course?

	Did not take (1)	Face-to-face (lecture) (2)	Mixed mode or hybrid (reduced seat time) (3)	Online (4)
Introduction to Sociology (3)	•	•	•	•
Honors Introduction to Sociology (4)	•	•	•	•
Social Problems (5)	•	•	•	•

Q8 Now we are going to ask you some questions about the impact of introductory sociology classes on your personal outlook. How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your Introduction to Sociology and/or Problems course?

	Much of the time (1)	Some of the time (2)	Seldom (3)	Never (4)
I felt empowered to take action to challenge social problems we discussed in class. (1)	•	•	•	•
I felt angry or outraged due to the existence of the social injustices we discussed in class. (2)	•	•	•	•
I felt guilty. (3)	•	•	•	•
I felt helpless to change any of the social inequalities discussed in class. (5)	•	•	•	•
I agreed with the conclusions drawn in class about social inequalities. (6)	•	•	•	•

Q38 How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your Introduction to Sociology and/or Social Problems course?

	Much of the time (1)	Some of the time (2)	Seldom (3)	Never (4)
I felt indifferent (did not care) about the social problems being discussed. (1)	•	•	•	•
I found myself questioning my own opinions and perspectives about society. (2)	•	•	•	•
I felt discouraged or overwhelmed by the topics being discussed. (3)	•	•	•	•
I wanted to engage in social activism, or take action to cause positive social change. (4)	•	•	•	•
I felt annoyed because the conclusions in the class were too liberal, blaming the structure of society instead of the individual person. (5)	•	•	•	•

Q37 How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your Introduction to Sociology and/or Social Problems course?

	Much of the time (1)	Some of the time (2)	Seldom (3)	Never (4)
I felt encouraged that things in the world could be changed for the better. (1)	•	•	•	•
I felt the topics and concepts we were covering were relevant to my personal life and experience. (2)	•	•	•	•
I felt optimistic and positive about society. (3)	•	•	•	•
Class discussions confirmed my thoughts and beliefs about the social world. (4)	•	•	•	•
I saw myself as responsible for making society better. (5)	•	•	•	•

Q54 Have you taken a General Psychology or Honors General Psychology course as an undergraduate?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q53 What was the mode of delivery in your General Psychology or Honors General Psychology course?
- Face-to-face (lecture) (1)
- Mixed mode or hybrid (reduced seat time) (2)
- Online (3)

Q59 Now we are going to ask you some questions about the impact of introductory psychology courses on your personal outlook. How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your General Psychology or Honors General Psychology course?

	N/A: We did not discuss these topics in class (5)	Much of the time (1)	Some of the time (2)	Seldom (3)	Never (4)
I felt empowered to take action to challenge social problems we discussed in class. (1)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt angry or outraged due to the existence of the social injustices we discussed in class. (2)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt guilty. (3)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt helpless to change any of the social inequalities discussed in class. (5)	•	•	•	•	•
I agreed with the conclusions drawn in class about social inequalities. (6)	•	•	•	•	•

Q60 How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your General Psychology or Honors General Psychology course?

	N/A: We did not discuss these topics in class (5)	Much of the time (1)	Some of the time (2)	Seldom (3)	Never (4)
I felt indifferent (did not care) about the social problems being discussed. (1)	•	•	•	•	•
I found myself questioning my own opinions and perspectives about society. (2)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt discouraged or overwhelmed by the topics being discussed. (3)	•	•	•	•	•
I wanted to engage in social activism, or take action to cause positive social change. (4)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt annoyed because the conclusions in the class were too liberal, blaming the structure of society instead of the individual person. (5)	•	•	•	•	•

Q61 How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your General Psychology or Honors General Psychology course? If you did not discuss social problems or social inequalities in this class, please indicate that as well.

	N/A: We did not discuss these topics in class (5)	Much of the time (4)	Some of the time (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)
I felt encouraged that things in the world could be changed for the better. (1)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt the topics and concepts we were covering were relevant to my personal life and experience. (2)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt optimistic and positive about society. (3)	•	•	•	•	•
Class discussions confirmed my thoughts and beliefs about the social world. (4)	•	•	•	•	•
I saw myself as responsible for making society better. (5)	•	•	•	•	•

Q57 Have you taken a General Anthropology or Honors General Anthropology course as an undergraduate?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q56 What was the mode of delivery in your General Anthropology or Honors General Anthropology course?

- Face-to-face (lecture) (1)
- Mixed mode or hybrid (reduced seat time) (2)
- Online (3)

Q62 Now we are going to ask you some questions about the impact of introductory anthropology courses on your personal outlook. How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your General Anthropology or Honors General Anthropology course?

	N/A: We did not discuss these topics in class (5)	Much of the time (4)	Some of the time (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)
I felt empowered to take action to challenge social problems we discussed in class. (1)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt angry or outraged due to the existence of the social injustices we discussed in class. (2)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt guilty. (3)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt helpless to change any of the social inequalities discussed in class. (5)	•	•	•	•	•
I agreed with the conclusions drawn in class about social inequalities. (6)	•	•	•	•	•

Q63 How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your General Anthropology or Honors General Anthropology course?

	N/A: We did not discuss these topics in class (5)	Much of the time (4)	Some of the time (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)
I felt indifferent (did not care) about the social problems being discussed. (1)	•	•	•	•	•
I found myself questioning my own opinions and perspectives about society. (2)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt discouraged or overwhelmed by the topics being discussed. (3)	•	•	•	•	•
I wanted to engage in social activism, or take action to cause positive social change. (4)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt annoyed because the conclusions in the class were too liberal, blaming the structure of society instead of the individual person. (5)	•	•	•	•	•

Q64 How often do you recall feeling the following as a direct result of your General Anthropology or Honors General Anthropology course?

	N/A: We did not discuss these topics in class (5)	Much of the time (4)	Some of the time (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)
I felt encouraged that things in the world could be changed for the better. (7)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt the topics and concepts we were covering were relevant to my personal life and experience. (6)	•	•	•	•	•
I felt optimistic and positive about society. (3)	•	•	•	•	•
Class discussions confirmed my thoughts and beliefs about the social world. (4)	•	•	•	•	•
I saw myself as responsible for making society better. (5)	•	•	•	•	•

Q14 How often do you voluntarily engage in discussion about social issues with anyone outside of class in person or social media?
- Several times a day (1)
- 1-2 times a day (3)
- 2-4 times a week (4)
- Once a week (5)
- A few times a month (6)
- Less than once a month (7)
- Never (8)

Q15 With which of the following do you voluntarily engage in discussion about social issues with outside of class, either in person or through social media? Please mark all that apply.
- Peers (1)
- My significant other (i.e. partner, spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend) (2)
- Family members (3)
- Friends (4)
- Professors (5)
- Classmates (6)
- Strangers (7)
- Children (8)
- Other (Please type in.) (9) _____

Q39 Do you discuss social issues more often in person or on social media?
- In person (1)
- Social media (2)

Q16 Do you work as a volunteer?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To   Are you involved in ...

Q17 Please type in the number of organizations for which you work as a volunteer.

Q18 During the average week, how many hours do you spend in volunteer activities?

Q19 In which of the following types of volunteer opportunities have you been involved in the past year? Please mark all that apply.
- Alternative Break Programs (1)
- Acts and Recreation (i.e. theatre, dance, sports programs) (2)
- Animal Awareness (3)
- Civic Engagement (i.e. voter registration drives, political campaigns) (4)
- Different Abilities (i.e. working with people who have Down's Syndrome or autism) (5)
- Domestic or Sexual Violence (6)
- Education and Literacy (7)
- Elderly and/or Veterans (8)
- Environmental Awareness (9)
- Health Care (i.e. help at a free clinic) (10)
- Humanitarian work (i.e. disaster relief) (11)
- Hunger or Homelessness (12)
- Youth and Mentoring (13)
- Other. Please type in. (14) _____

Q20 Are you involved in organizations or groups on the university campus?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To   How often do you don...

Q21 Mark the reasons you have chosen to become a member of organizations or groups on campus. Please mark all that apply.
- I want things to list on my job resumé (1)
- I desire to gain new friendships (2)
- I want to get involved in social change (3)
- I share similar viewpoints with others in the organization or group (4)
- I want to network with others (5)
- I want to be part of a sorority or fraternity (6)
- I like the opportunities available in the organization or group I have joined (7)
- Other (Please type in.) (8) _____

Q22 How often do you donate money to a cause you view as worthy?
- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Frequently (4)

Q58 In a few sentences, please explain the reasons why you have decided to take this Community Action and Involvement course, and what you are hoping to learn or gain from the class.

Q23 We would now like to ask some final questions to learn more about you. Please type in your age.

Q24 What is your current class standing?
- First Year (1)
- Second Year (2)
- Third Year (3)
- Fourth Year (4)

Q25 Please indicate how you primarily identify your race or ethnicity.
- Asian (1)
- Black (2)
- Hispanic or Latino/Latina (3)
- White, non-Hispanic (4)
- Other (Please type in.) (5) _____
- Prefer not to answer (6)

Q26 Which of the following best describes the area where you spent the majority of your childhood?
- Rural (farmlands, smaller communities) (1)
- Suburban (outskirts of city, larger communities) (2)
- Urban (inner city, city) (3)

Q27 Which of the following best describes your family's economic situation while you were growing up?
- Plenty of money, could afford many extras (1)
- Good amount of money, but could not always afford extras (2)
- Fair amount of money, could pay for necessities but few if any extras (3)
- Could not always afford necessities, such as food and rent (4)

Q33 Do you work at a job for money more than 20 hours per week?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q28 Please indicate your religion.
- Prefer not to say (7)
- No religion (1)
- Christianity (including Catholic, Protestant, and all Christian denominations (2)
- Eastern Religions (i.e. Buddhism, Hinduism) (5)
- Islam (3)
- Judaism (4)
- Other (Please type in.) (6) _____

Q29 Where would you place yourself on a scale of political views?
- Prefer not to say (9)
- Extremely liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Somewhat Liberal (3)
- Moderate (4)
- Slightly conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Extremely conservative (7)
- Do not know (8)

Q30 What is your gender?
- Prefer not to say (4)
- Female (1)
- Male (2)
- Neither of the above (Please type in.) (3) _____

Q31 Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?
- Prefer not to say (5)
- Bisexual (1)
- Gay/lesbian (or homosexual) (2)
- Heterosexual (attracted to people of the opposite sex) (3)
- Other (Please type in.) (4) _____

Q34 Are you an international student?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q35 Please write in your academic major. You may also say undecided.

Post-Course Survey: Community Action and Involvement

Q36 You are invited to take part in a research study examining students' attitudes and behaviors towards social issues and social action. Your input will help us better understand student perceptions of the world. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If at any point you wish to discontinue your participation or skip a question, you may do so. Your selection for the study is based on your present enrollment in the Community Action and Involvement course. You will be asked to complete a survey about your attitudes and behaviors related to previous introductory courses and the social world in general, your response to the Community Action and Involvement Course, and demographic information. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. This is an anonymous survey; names of participants will not be collected. There are no anticipated risks. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. By clicking yes below, you consent to the provisions of the study. Thank you for your participation. Study contact for questions or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact Brenda Savage, Graduate Student, UCF Department of Sociology, College of Sciences, at brenda.savage@knights.ucf.edu, Dr. Elizabeth E. Mustaine, Faculty Supervisor, UCF Department of Sociology, at (407) 823-2618, or Mandi Barringer, UCF Department of Sociology, at m.barringer@knights.ucf.edu.   IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

Q37 I understand and agree to the conditions of this study.
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q48 Please enter your personal identifier. Mandi will provide this for you.

Q50 Have you taken an Introduction to Sociology, Honors Introduction to Sociology, or a Social Problems course as an undergraduate?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you taken a General Psychology o...

Q52 What was the mode of delivery in your Introduction to Sociology or Honors Introduction to Sociology course?

	Did not take (1)	Face-to-face (lecture) (2)	Mixed mode or hybrid (reduced seat time) (3)	Online (4)
Introduction to Sociology (3)	•	•	•	•
Honors Introduction to Sociology (4)	•	•	•	•
Social Problems (5)	•	•	•	•

Q54 Have you taken a General Psychology or Honors General Psychology course as an undergraduate?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Have you taken a General Anthropology...

Q53 What was the mode of delivery in your General Psychology or Honors General Psychology course?
- Face-to-face (lecture) (1)
- Mixed mode or hybrid (reduced seat time) (2)
- Online (3)

Q57 Have you taken a General Anthropology or Honors General Anthropology course as an undergraduate?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q56 What was the mode of delivery in your General Anthropology or Honors General Anthropology course?
- Face-to-face (lecture) (1)
- Mixed mode or hybrid (reduced seat time) (2)
- Online (3)

Q10 Now we would like to ask you some general questions about society and social action. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about society:

	Completely Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Disagree (1)
Individuals can change their communities for the better. (1)	•	•	•	•
Social inequalities and social problems are inevitable; they will never go away. (2)	•	•	•	•
People are poor because they lack motivation. (3)	•	•	•	•
The world is a positive place for most people. (4)	•	•	•	•
It is a worthwhile effort to challenge social inequalities and social problems. (5)	•	•	•	•
Social and collective movements do not really create lasting change in society. (6)	•	•	•	•
One individual has the power to challenge social inequalities or social problems. (7)	•	•	•	•
The individuals who succeed in the world are those who work hard enough to do so. (8)	•	•	•	•
People who work to help others overcome social issues are admirable. (9)	•	•	•	•
The efforts of an individual to improve his or her situation can be limited by things such as race/ethnicity, social class, and gender. (10)	•	•	•	•
It is a waste of effort to try and improve society. (11)	•	•	•	•

Q10 How likely would you be to try and make a positive change in society if you saw an opportunity to do so? By positive change, we mean work which attempts to reduce social problems.
- Extremely likely (1)
- Likely (2)
- Somewhat likely (3)
- Not likely (4)

Q36 How interested are you in working to create positive change in the following areas?

	Very interested (4)	Interested (3)	Somewhat interested (2)	Not interested at all (1)
Race/ethnicity issues (1)	•	•	•	•
Environmental issues (2)	•	•	•	•
Gender issues (3)	•	•	•	•
Sexuality issues (4)	•	•	•	•
Poverty (5)	•	•	•	•
Criminal justice system (6)	•	•	•	•
Economic system (7)	•	•	•	•
Politics/government (8)	•	•	•	•
Health care (9)	•	•	•	•
Education (10)	•	•	•	•
Discrimination (11)	•	•	•	•
Other (Please type in.) (12)	•	•	•	•

Q9 How important is each of the following for people who want to work for positive social change?

	Very important (4)	Important (3)	Somewhat Important (2)	Not Important (1)
Academic knowledge (1)	•	•	•	•
Specific learned skills (2)	•	•	•	•
Money or funding (3)	•	•	•	•
Available time (extra time) (4)	•	•	•	•
Mentors who provide guidance (5)	•	•	•	•
Social networks (6)	•	•	•	•
Minimal sacrifice (not much to lose) (7)	•	•	•	•
Courage (8)	•	•	•	•
Lots of energy (9)	•	•	•	•
Long-term commitment (10)	•	•	•	•
In-born abilities, such as artistic skills or intellectual ability (11)	•	•	•	•

Q11 In this section, we would like to find out if you feel like you could change something that bothers you. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very helpless and 5 being very optimistic, how optimistic are you that you could change something if it bothered you in regards to:

	1 (very helpless) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (very optimistic) (5)
Your personal situation (1)	•	•	•	•	•
Your family (2)	•	•	•	•	•
The neighborhood in which you grew up (3)	•	•	•	•	•
Your university (4)	•	•	•	•	•
Your racial/ethnic community (5)	•	•	•	•	•
Your state of residence (6)	•	•	•	•	•
The media (7)	•	•	•	•	•
Your national government (8)	•	•	•	•	•
Your national economy (9)	•	•	•	•	•
The world outside your nation (10)	•	•	•	•	•

Q12 Now we are going to ask you some questions about your attitudes and behaviors related to social action. Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
I am interested in learning how to become more socially active. (1)	•	•	•	•
I am not as socially active as I would like to be because I do not have enough money. (2)	•	•	•	•
I have friends who are active in challenging social inequalities. (3)	•	•	•	•
I would be more socially active, except I lack the time. (5)	•	•	•	•
I do not see the point of getting involved in social issues because I cannot change them. (6)	•	•	•	•
I regularly use social media to share my opinion on social issues. (7)	•	•	•	•
I have conducted research (on my own) to learn more about social issues. (8)	•	•	•	•

If I have conducted research (... Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

409

Q13 Which of the following have you used in the past year to research social issues on your own? Please mark all that apply.
- Books (1)
- Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) (2)
- Internet websites (Google Scholar, BBC News, etc.) (3)
- Movies or documentaries (4)
- Magazines or newspapers (5)
- Television (6)
- Podcasts (7)
- Other (Please type in.) (8) _____

Q14 Do you voluntarily engage in discussion about social issues with anyone outside of class in person or social media?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To	Do you work as a vol...

Q15 With which of the following do you voluntarily engage in discussion about social issues with outside of class, either in person or through social media? Please mark all that apply.
- Peers (1)
- My significant other (i.e. partner, spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend) (2)
- Family members (3)
- Friends (4)
- Professors (5)
- Classmates (6)
- Strangers (7)
- Children (8)
- Other (Please type in.) (9) _____

Q39 Do you discuss social issues more often in person or on social media?
- In person (1)
- Social media (2)

Q16 Do you work as a volunteer?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To	Are you involved in ...

Q17 Please type in the number of organizations for which you work as a volunteer.

Q18 During the average week, how many hours do you spend in volunteer activities?

Q19 In which of the following types of volunteer opportunities have you been involved in the past year? Please mark all that apply.
- Alternative Break Programs (1)
- Acts and Recreation (i.e. theatre, dance, sports programs) (2)
- Animal Awareness (3)
- Civic Engagement (i.e. voter registration drives, political campaigns) (4)
- Different Abilities (i.e. working with people who have Down's Syndrome or autism) (5)
- Domestic or Sexual Violence (6)
- Education and Literacy (7)
- Elderly and/or Veterans (8)
- Environmental Awareness (9)
- Health Care (i.e. help at a free clinic) (10)
- Humanitarian work (i.e. disaster relief) (11)
- Hunger or Homelessness (12)
- Youth and Mentoring (13)
- Other. Please type in. (14) _____

Q20 Are you involved in organizations or groups on the university campus?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To	How often do you don...

Q21 Mark the reasons you have chosen to become a member of organizations or groups on campus. Please mark all that apply.

- I want things to list on my job resumé (1)
- I desire to gain new friendships (2)
- I want to get involved in social change (3)
- I share similar viewpoints with others in the organization or group (4)
- I want to network with others (5)
- I want to be part of a sorority or fraternity (6)
- I like the opportunities available in the organization or group I have joined (7)
- Other (Please type in.) (8) _____

Q22 How often do you donate money to a cause you view as worthy?

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Frequently (4)

Q61   Now we would like to ask you specific questions about the Community Action and Involvement Course.   Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.   As a direct result of the Community Action and Involvement Course....

	Strongly Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
I recognize that I can use my personal agency to change things in the social world (2)	•	•	•	•
I better understand the tools and methods I can use to be socially active (3)	•	•	•	•
I feel overwhelmed by my inability to change things I do not like (4)	•	•	•	•
The knowledge I gained can help me if I want to work for social change (6)	•	•	•	•
I feel that social institutions are impossible to change (7)	•	•	•	•
I better see how I can use my talents and skills to challenge things in the social world that I do not like (8)	•	•	•	•
My views of my personal agency remain the same (5)	•	•	•	•
I feel empowered to take action to alter society in a positive way (9)	•	•	•	•
My outlook on life is more negative in general (11)	•	•	•	•
My desire to work for positive change in the world has increased (12)	•	•	•	•
I am more aware of power imbalances in society (13)	•	•	•	•
I am more likely to question or challenge commonly-held ideas and beliefs (14)	•	•	•	•

Q47 Overall, how pleased were you with the Community Action and Involvement course? Did the Community Action and Involvement course:
• Surpass your expectations for this type of course (1)
• Meet your expectations for this type of course (2)
• Fall short of your expectations for this type of course (3)

Q58 Please describe in a few sentences how what you learned in the Community Action and Involvement course has affected (or not affected) the way you see yourself and the social world.

Q46 Please briefly list any social involvement you undertook this semester or that you plan on doing next semester that you feel is result of your participation in the Community Action and Involvement course. For example, did you decide to join a club or participate in a march?

Q63 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. As a direct result of the Community Action and Involvement Course....

	N/A: Did not take this type of course (1)	Strongly Agree (5)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (2)
What I learned in my introductory level sociology course is now more meaningful (1)	•	•	•	•	•
What I learned in my introductory level psychology course is now more meaningful (2)	•	•	•	•	•
What I learned in my introductory level anthropology course is now more meaningful (3)	•	•	•	•	•

Q50 The Community Action and Involvement course met 28 times during the semester. Please estimate how many classes you attended.
- 90-100% (attended 26-28 classes; missed 1-2 classes) (1)
- 80-89% (attended 23-25 classes; missed 3-5 classes) (2)
- 70-79% (attended 20-22 classes; missed 6-8 classes) (3)
- 60-69% (attended 17-19 classes; missed 9-11 classes) (4)
- 50-59% (attended 14-16 classes; missed 12-14) (5)
- Less than 50% (attended fewer than 14 classes) (6)

Q51 Please estimate what percentage of the assignments, such as readings, videos, and articles you read or viewed for the course.
- 90-100% (1)
- 80-89% (2)
- 70-70% (3)
- 60-69% (4)
- 50-59% (5)
- Less than 50% (6)

Q59 What, if anything, did you enjoy about the Community Action and Involvement course?

Q45 What, if anything, do you think would make the Community Action and Involvement course more useful?

Q60 What, if anything, did you dislike about the Community Action and Involvement course?

Q64 Would you recommend the Community Action and Involvement Course to your friends and fellow students? Why or why not?

Q23 Almost done....We would now like to ask some final questions to learn more about you. Please type in your age.

Q24 What is your current class standing?
- Freshman (1)
- Sophomore (2)
- Junior (3)
- Senior (4)

Q25 Please indicate how you primarily identify your race or ethnicity.
- Asian (1)
- Black (2)
- Hispanic or Latino/Latina (3)
- White, non-Hispanic (4)
- Other (Please type in.) (5) _____

Q26 Which of the following best describes the area where you spent the majority of your childhood?
- Rural (farmlands, smaller communities) (1)
- Suburban (outskirts of city, larger communities) (2)
- Urban (inner city, city) (3)

Q27 Which of the following best describes your family's economic situation while you were growing up?
- Plenty of money, could afford many extras (1)
- Good amount of money, but could not always afford extras (2)
- Fair amount of money, could pay for necessities but few if any extras (3)
- Could not always afford necessities, such as food and rent (4)

Q33 Do you work at a job for money more than 20 hours per week?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q44 Are you a first generation student? (In other words, your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have not completed a bachelor's degree).
- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unsure (3)

Q28 Please indicate your religion.
- No religion (1)
- Christianity (including Catholic, Protestant, and all Christian denominations) (2)
- Eastern Religions (i.e. Buddhism, Hinduism) (5)
- Islam (3)
- Judaism (4)
- Other (Please type in.) (6) _____

Q29 Where would you place yourself on a scale of political views?
- Extremely liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Somewhat Liberal (3)
- Moderate (4)
- Slightly conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Extremely conservative (7)
- Do not know (8)

Q30 What is your gender?
- Female (1)
- Male (2)
- Neither of the above (Please type in.) (3) _____

Q31 Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?
- Bisexual (1)
- Gay/lesbian (or homosexual) (2)
- Heterosexual (attracted to people of the opposite sex) (3)
- Other (Please type in.) (4) _____
- Prefer not to say (5)

Q34 Are you an international student?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q35 Please write in your academic major. You may also say undecided.

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