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Perceptions of “Trouble”: An Examination of Student Sense-making and the Psychological Influence of Disciplinary Inequity

By

Cynthia Valencia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Kris Gutiérrez, Chair
Professor Emily Ozer
Professor Tolani Britton

Fall 2022

Abstract

Perceptions of “Trouble”: An Examination of Student Sense-making and the Psychological Influence of Disciplinary Inequity

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Cynthia Valencia

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Kris Gutiérrez, Chair

This dissertation was motivated by the individual and collective stories of young people who face injustice as they attempt to access their education. Vast amounts of studies have demonstrated that Black, Latinx, and Indigenous youth regularly face disproportionate discipline in schools across the United States. Further, punitive school level discipline has been linked to the legal system as youth who become suspended, expelled, and school police involved, are more likely to become incarcerated. The potential social emotional influence of punitive or carceral experiences on non-dominant youth has not been widely explored. Moreover, despite decades of research confirming that disproportionate discipline is ever-present in U.S. schools and increases the chances of carceral system impact, reform and policy efforts have been mostly unsuccessful in ameliorating racial and ethnic disproportionate discipline.

In this dissertation, I explore how non-dominant students at a majority Black and Latinx high school make sense of disciplinary practices and how they are psychologically influenced by these experiences. I utilized a mixed-methods approach to measure and explore student perceptions of discipline. In order to quantitatively explore perceptions of disciplinary injustice, I developed a four level construct and measure titled Perceptions of Disciplinary and Policing Justice. The majority of respondents also participated in one of three hour long focus groups where participants were able to share their experiences with discipline and policing. Focus group sessions also allowed me to explore the emotional influences of discipline and policing on youth and their development.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses demonstrated that the vast majority of participants had received punitive discipline that was impactful or memorable to them, with Black students being the most likely to receive punitive discipline. Focus group data analysis indicated that participants were emotionally influenced by their disciplinary experiences and said experiences negatively shifted their perceptions of school in general. The most impactful finding of the study however was the community building and collective resistance that youth demonstrated through their participation in the focus groups. By rejecting negative stereotypes and labels and affirming the experiences of others, participants challenged systemic carceral practices.

Through this work, I offer a measure to explore student perceptions of disciplinary justice and highlight the importance of student voice in education policy and practice. The stories shared in this dissertation speak to the experiences of non-dominant youth across the country. Despite the tragedy and injustice that was shared, participants brought light and laughter to the focus group space and reframed negative experiences into opportunities for learning and growth.

To my parents, my husband, my sisters, and my baby.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Carceral logics in schools

The criminalization of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous youth exists at the intersection of community dispossession, carceral, *and* education systems. Though it is perceived that places of living, learning, and punishing serve their own respective intended functions, I conjecture that the carceral logics of juvenile prisons extend to and reinforce racialized punitive practices in educational institutions. Carceral logics refer to a maintenance of security through unquestioned social control across institutions as they maintain order through surveillance, removal, and punishment (Annamma, 2016; Mendoza, 2014). The carceral logics of prison are embedded within our society (Foucault, 1977) through economic and policy decisions such as the war on drugs, prison expansion, immigration laws, community surveillance, lack of economic resources for impoverished communities, etc. (Clear, 2009; Fagan et al., 2000). Carceral logics extend to youth serving institutions such as juvenile prisons and schools (Sojoyner, 2013; Annamma, 2016). Carceral logics organize and inform the ways in which schools function and the practices they utilize in order to educate. In the era of mass incarceration, educational institutions, informed by carceral political and societal ideologies, have functioned as both surveilling and funneling into prison mechanisms (Gilmore, 2007).

Current school level practices and policies reproduce and reify carceral logics in schools through the exclusion, removal, policing, and surveillance of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students from low-income backgrounds (Annamma, 2016; Wun, 2014), a demographic of students I will refer to throughout this paper as nondominant youth (Gutierrez, 2006). Studies which utilize large scale national data confirm that racial and ethnic disproportionate discipline practices are ever present in schools (Sickmund, 2019; Losen & Martinez, 2015) and education researchers demonstrate through literature reviews of previous studies that disproportionate discipline negatively impacts the educational and life outcomes of students from non-dominant backgrounds in the form of school failure and carceral involvement (Elias, 2013; Meiners, 2007). During a time in which young people are expected to navigate a world-wide pandemic and process recent civil unrest, youth perceptions of their intersectional experiences with education, criminalization, and racial inequity are arguably more valuable than ever. Moreover, the examination of the skills, knowledge, and coping practices that are utilized in response to said experiences highlights the mental and emotional load young people must utilize to navigate inequitable environments. By exploring their experiences and perceptions, hegemonic systems can begin to transform into the youth serving institutions they strive to be. In this study, I conceptually explore the mechanisms by which schools function as an extension of the carceral system through inequitable disciplinary practices and I seek to empirically understand how students perceive and experience school-level carceral logics and practices during this pivotal time in history.

This study will demonstrate that under the guise of safety, schools rely on a carceral logic of surveillance and control in order to operate as spaces of learning for non-dominant youth. I seek to empirically understand how adolescents perceive, experience, and respond to the inequitable practices within their school system. A historicized description of racially charged carceral and educational policies and an exploration of youth responses and perspectives will be utilized to highlight ubiquitous forms of school level criminalization and their influence on students' perceptions and development. Few studies have explored how youth experience, perceive, and respond to both punitive sanctions and police presence in their schools. This work

addresses an important gap in the literature as the majority of the School to Prison Pipeline literature highlights disproportionate rates of discipline and carceral policies but rarely explores students' perspectives and personal experiences using mixed methodology (Elias, 2013; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Rocque & Snellings, 2017). Literature on youth Attitudes Towards Police (ATP) or perceptions of police demonstrated that youth hold less favorable views of police than adults and that Black and Latinx youth have more unfavorable views of police than their White and Asian peers (Zhang, Nakamoto, Cerna, 2020; Hagan, Shedd, Payne, 2005). Studies in the U.S. that have explored student perceptions of school police have investigated mostly homogenous, non-Black student populations (Brown & Benedict, 2005; Jackson, 2002). These studies have not considered how experiences of surveillance and control influence psychosocial development and social emotional responses (Ruck & Wortley, 2002; Shedd, 2015). I seek to address this gap in the literature by exploring how non-dominant youth perceive police presence and inequitable discipline in their schools and how carceral practices psychosocially influence youth. Further, I hope to illuminate the skills and repertoires young people utilize in order to successfully navigate inequitable spaces and discipline. Interpreting and highlighting psychosocial influences and student perceptions of carceral logics provides the opportunity to fill the clear gaps that exist in current neoliberal reform efforts which fail to recognize systemic anti-Blackness in school systems and thus continue to criminalize and push non-dominant youth out of education systems. This study illuminates an important empirical question to better understand how schools function as extensions of the carceral continuum and, in particular, how youth experience school level carceral practices.

In the present study, I conjecture that punitive sanctions and police presence are indicative of operational carceral logics in school systems and that students are heavily influenced by such practices. In order to examine the influence of school level carceral practices, I designed a mixed methods exploratory study to investigate how secondary public school students from majority non-dominant backgrounds perceive, experience, and respond to punitive practices and policies in their schools. I will examine student perceptions of the school carceral continuum with the goal of better understanding how carceral practices psychosocially influence students and their emotional responses to said practices. I will further explore how youth make sense of inequitable disciplinary practices and will highlight the skills they utilize to navigate and survive in their schools and communities. In order to measure student perceptions of carceral logics, I will administer a survey that measures policing and disciplinary justice perceptions among students. I will further explore student perceptions and experiences of discipline and policing through discourse from three youth focus groups. The qualitative focus groups were informed by items and responses from the measure and allowed me to gain in depth understanding from respondents regarding the *why* of their perceptions of injustice. For example, respondents were asked if they believe police should be present on school campuses. During the focus groups, they had the opportunity to provide rationale for their response and share unique stories. The focus groups will also allow me to investigate the psychosocial influences of carceral practices and the ways in which youth are able to maneuver complex institutions.

Theoretical Considerations

Educational – penal realism

Racial and ethnic disparities in both discipline and academic outcomes continue to plague the U.S. education system, outlasting costly neoliberal reform efforts which unsurprisingly fail to improve outcomes for minoritized students (Fasching-Varner & Mitchell, 2013, 2014; Gregory,

Skiba, Noguera, 2010; Goldstein & Noguera, 2006; Sojoyner, 2013). Fasching-Varner et al. (2014) draw upon Derrick Bell's (1992) concept from Critical Race Theory, racial realism, to advance a new concept they call *educational and penal realism.* Racial realism addresses the permanence of race and advocates that challenging racism must come from new approaches developed outside of the oppressor's playbook. Their new form of realism considers the economic rationale for prison expansion, educational inequity, and the school – prison nexus to push the field away from a false idealism which relies on neoliberal reform efforts to *fix* schools and underserved students. Instead, they challenge the field to accept the intentionality of inequitable education and work within contradictions of school and prison complexes.

A number of costly reform efforts have been implemented in the school district in which this study takes place. However, vast educational inequities continue to operate in both discipline, special education, and academic achievement (CDE, 2019). In order to combat educational inequities, it is imperative that the intentionality and functionality of inequitable education is understood by policy makers and administrators. Conceptualizing youth perspectives on said reform efforts can inform this understanding. This study explores how school systems function as mechanisms within the carceral continuum and analyzes how school practices psychosocially influence youth.

Educational – penal realism describes how mass incarceration and education systems work in tandem to create a for profit carceral continuum which fuels the educational reform complex (Fasching-Varner et al., 2014). Fasching-Varner et al. (2014) conceptualize the shortening school – prison nexus by examining the consistencies between both systems. They reference Foucault's (1979) panoptic model of surveillance to describe these consistencies; like a prison tower which can "pan" or see all, panopticism refers to the process by which systems and institutions, including schools, socially control communities through surveillance and discipline. Schools utilize pedagogical approaches with a panoptic gaze, relying on exclusion and discipline to control student behavior (Noguera, 2003; Gregory, Skiba, Noguera, 2010). Educational – penal realism accepts the carceral continuum as a phenomenon which extends to and functions in conjunction with the education system.

Educational – penal realism allows us to conceptualize and accept that schools, particularly schools which serve minoritized youth, are simply not serving students. Shedd (2015) argued that widespread zero-tolerance policies and practices, which include policing, suspension, and expulsion for both major and minor violations, created a *universal carceral apparatus* which "undermines the educational functions of these institutions" and extends into the streets and communities that youth navigate (p. 84). Shedd's work in Chicago Public Schools highlighted the prevalence of surveillance, punishment, and discipline in segregated schools and neighborhoods with high populations of low-income students of color. She utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods to call attention to racialized carceral logics that exist in segregated underfunded schools.

Beckett and Murakawa (2012) conceptualized the existence of a "shadow carceral state," to argue that civil sanctions and punitive policies such as gang injunctions, non-payment of debt, fines, and child-support, work to reinforce a caste system to engulf citizens in the shadow carceral state (Beckett & Murakawa, 2012; Alexander, 2012). Selman, Myers, and Goddard (2019) argue that the shadow carceral state extends to the youth community and educational institutions which implement shadow carceral measures to mark non-dominant young people as "dangerous" and "high-risk" through punitive sanctions such as curfew violations, school suspensions, academic exclusions, expulsions, etc. Thus, reinforcing the racialized notion that

Black and non-dominant youth require high levels of surveillance and control in education systems. This study will demonstrate that though all youth must negotiate a set of developmental demands, youth from non-dominant communities must negotiate an additional set of developmental demands to navigate their communities and spaces of learning.

Mechanisms of discipline utilized at majority Black and Latinx schools include surveillance cameras, metal detectors, searching of student bodies and property, and direct observations by police officers while shadow carceral measures include unseen mechanisms of discipline such as suspensions. The existence of these school and community level mechanisms are important to understanding educational – penal realism but alone do not capture the overarching influence of the carceral culture on adolescents. The exploration of developmental and psychosocial influences of overt and covert carceral mechanisms allows for an extended perspective on the issues related to harmful and ostracizing practices which stretch deeper than academic and judicial outcomes.

The Present Study

In order to investigate the psychosocial influence of school level carceral practices on youth development, I utilized a mixed methods approach to explore how secondary public school students at a majority Black and Latinx high school have perceived, experienced, and responded to punitive practices at their schools. In the second chapter of this volume, I present a literature review of the school – prison nexus and the analytical frames I will utilize to contextualize, understand, and analyze my data. My methods employed to examine adolescent perceptions and experiences of carceral practices are presented in chapter three of this volume. In chapter four, I describe the development of a measure which aims to categorize the varying levels of carceral logic presence and perceived injustice among students. I discuss the limitations of categorizing youth into weighted or distinct theoretically modeled levels as something that can provide information but does not provide an entire picture of youth perception. By also engaging students in focus groups, which I describe in chapter five, I sought to complexify and bring nuance to my analysis by exploring youth perceptions and untangling the psychosocial influence of carceral school level practices. I examine youth discourse, language, and nonverbal forms of communication through thorough examination of focus group dynamics to understand how experiences of discipline influence youth meaning making, emotional functioning, and perceptions of themselves. I aim to examine how the phenomenon of educational – penal realism, in conjunction with perceived injustice, have psychosocially influenced student perceptions of their school experiences and the skills they utilize to navigate carceral logics. The current study contributes to the current literature on the school – prison nexus by examining how punitive sanctions at school psychosocially influence youth and the tools they employ to manage adversity.

It is worth noting the space and time in which this study takes place. Today's youth are receiving an education that is unlike anything their families and educators have ever experienced. In addition to the stress and trauma brought up by the COVID-19 pandemic, youth of color have also witnessed devastating murders of Black individuals, unprovoked and often at the hands of police. Not only are youth constantly exposed to images of Black and Latinx death on screen, they have also witnessed nationwide organizing and civil unrest in response to the injustice. Thus, as they continue to be exposed to injustice within and outside of their schools, they develop tools to manage injustice through resilience and ingenuity. They are often able to

flourish in challenging and complex systems through their utilization of their own skills and knowledge; this study attempts to give space to these examples of learning and development.

Given this difficult time for students, it is imperative that researchers and educators consider student perspectives as they relate to the inequities the pandemic has exposed. Students have learned a number of skills and tools during this pandemic yet education researchers have relied on a deficit lens and have attempted to highlight students' loss of learning rather than collective resilience and new learning tools (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021; McKinney de Royston & Vissoughi, 2021). This unprecedented moment in history is bound to expose youth to ecologies that were once less pronounced. Listening to student concerns will allow researchers and educators to better understand how the current political uprisings and calls to defund the police have influenced their understanding of their schools, relationships, and power dynamics. Further, it is important to recognize that many school systems work tirelessly to positively highlight racial and ethnic differences are provide supportive structures to students. This study is not solely an effort to critique schools and label all of their practices as carceral. The goal is to highlight the systematic intersections of schools and prisons and how punitive practices create a carceral experience for students. The goal of the study is to better understand how nondominant students make sense of punitive school policies, their attitudes towards school discipline, and their extraordinary ability to combat oppressive systems.

Research Question 1

My first research question is: How do youth perceive and experience the carceral apparatus in their schools? Previous studies have explored the role of student perceptions of school climate as a factor to explain the discipline gap (Bottiani, Bradshaw, Mendelson, 2017; Shirley, Cornell, 2012). However, these studies utilize only quantitative measures in the form of school climate surveys which do not include questions about the effects of police presence at school. Further, some studies that have explored youth perceptions of school police have investigated majority white or majority Latinx student populations which fail to capture perceptions of students who are most victimized by carceral practices and school police (Jackson, 2002; Brown & Benedict, 2005). The current study will explore a diverse set of students who are majority Black and Latinx, thus providing opportunity to understand their strengths and challenges as they navigate carceral experiences.

In order to understand student perceptions and experiences with school discipline and police, I will administer a pilot measure I developed titled, **Perceptions of Discipline and Policing Injustice.** The measure will allow me to identify the varying levels of injustice students perceive to have experienced at their schools with regards to discipline and policing. Finally, focus groups will provide me with the opportunity to explore perceptions and experiences further with detail and care.

Research Question 2

My second research question is: How do students report that they are psychosocially and emotionally influenced by carceral logics? By asking this question, I aim to identify the psychological and/or emotional responses to varying forms of discipline and policing. As participants answer focus group questions, it is anticipated that both underlying and overt emotions will be expressed through their responses. Their responses to questions of perception, in conjunction with their experiences, will speak to their own psychosocial development as youth

experiencing the carceral apparatus at school and co-constructing their own identities (Spencer, Dupree, & Harmann, 1997; Shedd, 2015; Gutierrez, 2008).

Research Question 3

My final research question is: What are the skills and repertoires of practice that students utilize in order to navigate unsafe and inequitable spaces and experiences at school? It is evident in the literature that nondominant youth experience gendered and racialized carceral logics in the in their schools (Annama, 2016; Elias, 2013; Sojoyner, 2013; Hannon, Defina, & Bruch, 2013). Despite facing daily adversity in their place of learning, students continue to attend class, meet daily expectations, build relationships with peers and staff, and engage in various forms of learning. I argue that as young people navigate carceral spaces, they simultaneously develop skills to dodge and disrupt the school – prison nexus. In doing so, they are exhibiting their expertise as learners and as experts on inequitable school systems.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The School – Prison Nexus

Over the past 4 decades, researchers have highlighted how school systems funnel students into the carceral system through punitive policies, a process that has been deemed the "School to Prison-Pipeline"(Mallet, 2016; Skiba, 2004; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Losen & Martinez, 2015). The School to Prison Pipeline (STPP) posits that the political "tough on crime" narrative seeped into school systems in the early 1990's as policy makers attempted to increase student safety and reduce crime on campuses (Sojoyner, 2013; Wolf, 2013; Hirshfield, 2008). The zero-tolerance policies implemented allegedly *unintentionally* led to disproportionate punitive sanctions against Black, Latinx, Native and Special Education students with Black students and Black students with disabilities receiving the most discipline and exclusion - the same youth who are overrepresented in juvenile detention (DOE, 2014; Elias, 2013; Losen & Martinez, 2015). Thus, efforts to ameliorate the impact of the STPP have focused on reforming the punitive measures that were introduced 2-3 decades ago.

Over the past decade however, researchers have highlighted the theoretical weaknesses and flaws of the STPP (Sojoyner, 2013; McGrew, 2016; Fasching-Varner, Mitchell, Martin, Bennett-Haron, 2014). Challenges include evidence that punitive sanctions such as police presence, surveillance, and zero-tolerance discipline existed in mostly Black schools decades before the tough on crime era, countering the argument that push out and criminalization of nondominant youth is an *unintended* consequence of newish policies. Moral and political concerns were also highlighted as proposed remedies to combat the STPP are centered around changing zero-tolerance policies and ignored institutionalized anti-Blackness in school settings.

Surveillance and exclusionary practices such as classroom exclusion, suspension, expulsion, and policing serve as keep mechanisms for the reproduction of social disadvantage and the expansion of the carceral continuum, or the extension of prisons into schools that serve historically marginalized students of color (Shedd, 2015; Selman, Myers, Goddard; 2019). While efforts to both highlight and reduce youth criminalization in schools and communities has gained immense research and policy traction through the STPP literature, disproportionate rates of discipline continue to plague the lives of Black and non-dominant youth (Selman, Myers, Goddard; 2019; Schlesinger, Schmits-Earley, 2020). Reform efforts to achieve educational equity and reduce disproportionate discipline are often unsuccessful as they fail to acknowledge and oppose institutionalized anti-Blackness and continue to focus efforts on changing student behavior rather than changing the school system (Sojoyner, 2013). Further, reform efforts reflect the neoliberal turn to punishment (De Lissovoy, 2012) as carceral and educational systems implement reform while their institutions continue to uphold surveilling and criminalizing practices such as welcoming police presence in a place of learning.

The carceral continuum does not solely exist in schools and prisons but infiltrates an array of environments that youth occupy. However, for the purpose of this study, I will be reviewing three relevant bodies of work within the educational carceral continuum: juvenile prisons, school police, and disproportionate disciplinary practices. The structures are embedded within the K-12 education system, particularly in schools serving youth from non-dominant backgrounds, often mirror those utilized in the juvenile carceral system. The population of youth most victimized by juvenile prison mirrors the population of students most underserved, excluded, and oppressed in education systems across the United States. Thus, historical context of juvenile prison and a description of racialized carceral policies can help highlight the carceral

logics found in schools. An understanding of juvenile prison development provides insight into the criminalizing mechanisms adopted by both institutions. The presence of school police or school resource officers are among the criminalizing mechanisms implemented by both institutions. I describe the history of school police in two large California school districts to demonstrate the racialized and politicized rationale for police presence in majority Black schools and the policies surrounding school police today. Finally, I explore disproportionate disciplinary practices to highlight the carceral logics that remain embedded in school surveillance and controlling practices despite reform efforts. Each topic supports the argument that schools serving majority non-dominant youth operate utilizing carceral logics.

The Juvenile Carceral System. The first juvenile reformatory opened in 1825 in response to fears of a "lower class revolt against established moral and political authority" as a huge influx of European migrants, mostly from Ireland, settled in New York (Bernstein, 2014). Initially developed to prevent "delinquent youth" from going to adult prisons, juvenile prisons have become one of the most salient examples of racial injustice in the United States; nearly 700,000 youth were arrested in 2019 (Bernstein, 2014; U.S. Department of Justice, 2019). In 2017, the residential placement rate for children of color was two to four times as high as that of white children and Black children were 4.6 times likely to be incarcerated after arrest than their white peers (Department of Justice, 2019).

Juvenile prisons increased in popularity during the late 1800's as funding from the state and other establishments prompted increased confinement of mostly immigrant juveniles who could be detained without trial and for unsubstantiated reasons. Poverty and neglect were often cited as rationale for youth confinement while anti-immigrant ideologies fueled prison recruitment practices (Bernstein, 2014). The dismissal of impoverished and immigrant youth is echoed in the current education system as children living in poverty are less likely to finish high school and more likely to be incarcerated as teens and adults (Southern Education Foundation, 2015; The Office for Civil Rights, 2014). Jarjoura, Triplett, and Brinker (2002) found that the longer children lived in poverty, the more likely they were to become incarcerated. They found further that stints of poverty that occurred before age six and after age 10 were more likely to increase the risk of incarceration. It is estimated that nearly 50,000 youth are held in custody away from their homes and families on any given day in 2020, while hundreds of thousands are arrested each year (DOJ, 2018; DOJ, 2020). Though the political structures of today vary from those of the 1800's, racialized politics and venality continue to uphold juvenile prison institutions.

Today, the highly racialized utilization of punishment and removal as correction is prevalent and persists in carceral and education institutions throughout the United States. Bad neighborhoods" have been cited as explanations for delinquent behavior, but also as a basis for more severe treatment. Rodriguez (2011) examined 50 randomly selected youth court cases and found that parents who worked long hours and were unable to attend hearings and meetings were viewed by juvenile courts as incompetent, unstable, and unable to ensure that their children were staying out of trouble. Further, Black and Latinx youth were more likely to be committed or institutionalized than their White peers. Both race/ethnicity and concentrated disadvantage significantly influenced the mean ratio of correctional confinement. The study highlights the societal factors that are criminalized by court systems and produce carceral environments for nondominant youth (Rodriguez, 2011). The current study will explore how such experiences are influential in the lives of youth as they navigate the injustices that exist in their education system.

Reform efforts to reduce inequity and promote rehabilitation in the juvenile carceral system have existed since the development of juvenile prisons and continue into today (Bernstein, 2014; Smoot, 2019). The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2002 required an examination of disproportionate rates of minority youth at all entry and decision points of juvenile justice involvement (Kempf-Leonard, 2007). Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) can occur through police interactions, whether or not youth have already been detained, judge's preference to focus on priors or the youths current needs, how long youth are involved in the system, etc. Currently, there are no agreed on reduction strategies, nor a concrete explanation for why DMC occurs, despite over 2 decades of research into the issue (Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Chapman 2006; Rios, Carney, & Kelekay, 2017). Though there is no evidence that incarcerating youth reduces delinquent behavior, there is evidence that increased interactions with police increase both crime and chances of incarceration (National Research Council, 2013; National Academy of Sciences, 2014; Rios, 2017). The implications of police contact warrant a reduction in interaction between youth and police, yet underserved schools and neighborhoods continue to be highly surveilled. The emotional influence of police interaction and other carceral experiences warrant exploration and understanding as a means to reduce surveillance of non-dominant youth. This study contributes to education literature through an attempt to understand how youth experience police presence and discipline in their schools and communities.

School Police. Institutions of learning adopted policing strategies such as surveillance and punishment, ultimately functioning in conjunction with the carceral state. Contrary to the bulk of STPP literature, the institutionalized surveillance and policing of Black students did not begin after prison expansion but in the mid 20th century in response to desegregation efforts and Black liberation efforts (Sojoyner, 2013; Lissy, 2015). Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) partnership with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), a program known as *Police Role in Government* (1964)*,* developed in response to the 1965 Watts Rebellion and 1969 student strike (Sojoyner, 2013). LAPD officers were brought into mostly Black schools to promote positive perceptions of police, reduce crime, and promote pro-police youth programs. Over a decade earlier, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) established its own police force in response to the desegregation concerns of white Oaklanders as Black residents pushed to desegregate their low-resourced schools and over policed communities (Murch, 2007). Increased punishment and surveillance of Black students promoted racist logics that Black students were threatening and criminal. Thus, white families were able to promote the notion that majority Black schools were too dangerous to integrate and Black students were too threatening to share classrooms with their own children. The history of police presence in Oakland Unified and Los Angeles Unified captures the intentionality of school policing in California as farther reaching than a fear of crime policy. It further highlights that school policing exists as a highly racialized mechanism intended to control and surveil nondominant youth.

Today, nearly half (48 percent) of all public schools employ school police and students of color are more likely to attend schools with police on their campuses (NCES, 2017; NCES, 2018). Community and school segregation intensify the carceral experiences of non-dominant youth as under-resourced schools prioritize "security" above learning (Lissy, 2015) making school policing a racial, political, and economic issue. According to an examination of school police by the American Civil Liberties Union (2019), millions of students attend schools with police but without social workers, psychologists, or nurses. Police hold a stronger presence in U.S. schools than do healthcare providers despite the fact that there is no evidence that police

make schools safer or improve student outcomes (Kupchik, 2018; Allen et al., 2018). In fact, schools with police officers reported 3.5 times as many arrests as schools without police presence, increasing the overall number of juveniles in detention (ACLU, 2019; Kirk & Sampson, 2013; Torres & Stefkovich, 2009). There is also evidence that the number of arrests linked to school police is under reported due to inconsistent data collection by both schools and police departments (Allen et al. 2018). Though research substantiates that police presence on school campuses can be harmful to students (Anderson, 2018; Legewie & Fagan, 2018; Weisburst, 2018; ACLU, 2016), no studies in the U.S. have utilized a mixed methods approach to explore how youth from a majority Black and Latinx high school experienced school police presence and other disciplinary school level practices – this study intends to fill this gap in the literature.

Though school police are becoming more and more common, the situations which warrant police involvement vary vastly. According to a study by Education Week (2018) one in three school resource officers (SRO) reported that their school does not provide any guidance regarding which student behaviors to intervene in. In California, 57.4% of schools give their staff full discretion to call the police when dealing with students who are disrupting the classroom or disturbing the campus (ACLU, 2016). Full discretion may encourage teachers and administrators to involve police officers when managing student behavior, particularly when they are ill-equipped to manage the behavior or are feeling overwhelmed. The lack of officer oversight allows officers to utilize their own discretion regarding student intervention. It is no surprise then, that school police officers over criminalize Black youth in the same manner that community police officers do, arresting Black youth at a rate that is 3 times the rate of White youth arrests (Wolf, 2013). In a study of Delaware school arrests, it was found that nonviolent misdemeanor offenses made up over 90% of school arrests and that Black youth made up 65% of arrests despite making up 32% of the school population (Wolf, 2013). Though current research highlights the harms of school police, few studies have investigated *how students* from non-dominant communities perceive and experience SRO presence and how the presence of police influences their social emotional well-being (Shedd, 2015; Brown & Benedict, 2005; Ruck & Wortley, 2001).

Disproportionate Disciplinary Practices. The school carceral continuum extends beyond school police and encompasses carceral practices, policies, and logics at the school level. Evidence of racialized school level carceral practices can be found in both juvenile detention and school disciplinary data. Black children make up 14% of the U.S. child population but represent approximately 41% of all children held in confinement and are 3 times more likely than their white peers to be suspended or expelled (Sickmund, 2019; Education Office for Civil Rights; 2014). Suspended students are more likely to come from low-income backgrounds and qualify for special education services (Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014; Losen & Martinez, 2015; Elias, 2013; McKinney, 2005). Moreover, students with disabilities make up 32% of youth in juvenile detention centers, although they only make up 8.6% of public school children in the U.S. (Elias, 2013). The statistics presented indicate a systemic reproduction of white supremacy and anti-Blackness which cannot be explained solely by national policies aimed at promoting school safety as the majority of punitive practices are in responses to non-violent and non-criminal behavior (Petrella & Gomer, 2016; Wolf, 2013; Hirshfield, 2008; Williams, 1987). The following study explores student perceptions of carceral practices in schools that serve majority nondominant students.

Ruck and Wortley (2001) explored perceptions of discipline practices among students in Canada. Participants completed questionnaires assessing perceptions of school disciplinary practices and aspects of the school environment. Questions were framed around the students' self-identified race. For example, they asked, "Do you think students from your racial group are more likely to be suspended than students from other racial groups for engaging in the same types of behavior?" The study explored perceptions among a student population that was majority White. The current study will explore similar perceptions among students in the United States. The country variation is significant given the U.S.'s unique and disturbing response to racial injustice and a world-wide pandemic.

The experience of both school exclusionary practices and police interactions have provenly led to deleterious effects on youth outcomes (Sweeten, 2006; Annamma, Miller, Jackson, 2020; Rios, 2017). Interactions with police increase the chance of future police interactions and arrest, while punitive sanctions reduce access to learning in the form of school incompletion, reduced grades and attendance, and distrust of school in general, while also increasing the chances of entrance into the juvenile carceral system (Rodriguez, 2011; Sweeten, 2016; Stone & Zibulsky, 2017). Though statistics provide clear evidence regarding the racial inequities of the carceral logics which operate across educational institutions and the negative outcomes associated with police and prison involvement, less is known about the psychosocial influence of school level carceral practices on youth psychosocial development. Adolescence is a pivotal stage of development and it is imperative to explore how youth respond to, perceive, and are influenced by systemic injustice and experiences of exclusion. Further, the skills and practices that youth incorporate into their day to day entanglements with injustice have yet to be explored as we attempt to understand the personal influence of school and community level carceral logics. I intend to examine the school – prison nexus through youth perceptions.

Analytical frameworks for conceptualizing educational inequity and criminalization

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory

I will utilize phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory as an analytical tool for understanding how youth experience and making meaning of criminalizing practices. Developmental theoretical frames can be helpful in conceptualizing the process by which youth co-construct their worldviews. *Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST)* seeks to better understand how interactions and experiences shape individuals' understanding of the world and their place within society (Spencer, Dupree, & Harmann, 1997). PVEST combines Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (EST) with a phenomenological perspective of the processes through which development occurs (Ravitch, 2016). The theory focuses on the "how" of development rather than focusing on the "what" as ecological systems theory does. I draw on) PVEST model to understand how youth perceptions of carceral experiences develop over time and how their experiences shape their understandings of themselves.

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory consists of five levels of systems that surround an individual and influence their development. The *individual (adolescent), microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem,* and *macrosystem* describe the various systems that interact with and surround an individual, or adolescent at different levels (Halloway, 2017). While highlighting the multiple systems of the ecology, EST has been problematized by scholars who highlight the limitations of a theory that oversimplifies an ever changing and dynamic process

(Packer, 2010; Gutierrez, 2016). Though development can take place across multiple systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), individuals co-construct their understanding of themselves and their world as they navigate mutually constitutive systems and spaces (Gutierrez, 2008). Thus, as nondominant youth navigate the carceral logics embedded within community, home, and school ecologies, they simultaneously co-construct their identities, perceptions, and worldviews to survive potentially threatening spaces. I describe PVEST as an analytical frame below to help situate the exploration of psychosocial development and emotional influence in my study.

PVEST both problematizes and expands on ecological systems theory by considering individuals' perceptions of their environment as "important meaning-making factors" to consider when examining adolescent issues such as educational equity, surveillance, and neighborhood safety (Spencer & Swanson, 2013). Spencer argued that regardless of the intent of educational policies which aim to promote equity, adolescent perceptions of such policies and how they influence students' daily interactions are the factors that most influence their identity development. The theory considers culture and context to represent an identity focused cultural ecological perspective which I utilize to analyze the co-construction of knowledge among youth that has taken shape over space and time. However, I critique the use of PVEST levels as seemingly separate areas and instead view them as mutually constituted for the purpose of this study.

Exploring the perceptions of the carceral continuum in schools among ethnically and racially diverse youth and how such perceptions influence psychosocial and identity development provides an additional layer to investigations into the influences of surveillance and control in schools. While outcomes related to school completion and incarceration are important to highlight, alone, they fail to recognize the emotional, psychological, developmental, and personal influences of the carceral continuum. The conjecture that youth perceptions are just as, if not more important, than the intent of educational policy should be widely considered as researchers and policy makers identify best practices to support equitable and safe learning environments for all students.

Psychological Impacts of Inequity

Racial discrimination and punitive practices can adversely affect youth mental health and educational attainment (Assari et al., 2017; Annamma, Miller, Jackson, 2020; Rios, 2017; Wolf, 2013). Similar to the impacts of suspension and removal, perceived discrimination in schools has been linked to decreased academic engagement and school performance (Benner & Graham, 2013; Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, Sellers, 2006). Research shows that structural inequities, including educational inequity, are linked to chronic stress, which consequently leads to physiological stress related symptoms and behaviors (APA, 2016; Sue et al., 2007). Racial trauma refers to events of danger related to actual or perceived experiences of racial discrimination, threats of harm, shame, and/or witnessing harm to other ethnoracial individuals (Comas-Diaz, 2017). Carter (2007) argued that race-based stressful incidents produce psychological and emotional injury similar to other traumatic events such as combat or rape. Thus, the current study aims to explore youth experiences of punitive practices from a developmental and psychosocial lens to identify whether such experiences have elicited emotional and influential responses (Spencer & Swanson, 2013).

Trauma literature indicates that experiences direct brain development, particularly experiences that occur during sensitive developmental periods such as adolescence (Van der kolk, 2014; Teicher, et al., 2016). Thus, youth experiences and perceptions of school level

carceral practices have the potential to influence youth development, mental health, and behavior. Given that Black and Latinx students are most exposed to carceral practices such as removal, surveillance, and suspension, researchers, educators, and mental health professionals should consider how school level interactions not limited to discipline can be perceived as racial discrimination by students and can lead to chronic stress and trauma responses.

When trauma is experienced in the early stages of development, emotions and responses to triggers become more difficult for children and youth to navigate as the brain increases use in areas meant to uphold survival and consequently decreases use of areas meant for regulation (Van der Kolk, 2014; Teicher et al., 2016; Herman, 1992). Thus, many youth are classified as *troubled* in the classroom when they are unable to meet the challenging expectations set for them in classrooms (i.e., sit quietly, raise your hand, lower your voice). Students are expected to follow these behavioral norms even when they are feeling distressed and or triggered but those with trauma histories may struggle to meet these expectations. Not surprisingly, youth involved in the carceral system are much more likely to experience trauma and to manage a variety of mental health disorders (Baglivio, 2014; Dierkhising et al., 2013; Kang & Burton, 2014). In order to disrupt the link between prisons and schools, schools must stop responding to what they perceive as problem behaviors and work to ensure that their practices are equitable and nurturing. School systems should ask how their youth are being influenced by ongoing perceptions of racism, control and injustice in their schools.

Perceptions of Police and Injustice

Studies which examine attitudes towards police (ATP) found that minoritized ethnic groups generally have less favorable ATP than whites (Taylor et al., 2001; Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Fine, Donley, Cavanagh, Cauffman, 2020). A recent study examined cross-sectional cohorts of 12th graders each year from 1976-2016 and found that white youth consistently perceived law enforcement the most positively and that racial/ethnic gaps in perceptions appear to be growing (Fine, Donley, Cavanagh, Cauffman, 2020). Given that police officers are more likely to be present in schools that are majority Black and Latinx (ACLU, 2019; Harper & Temkin, 2018), the ways in which these students view officers is of utmost importance and should be considered as school districts consider whether to remove or retain district police forces and other forms of police presence at their schools.

Hagan, Shedd, and Payne (2005) utilized conflict theory to conceptualize the role of race/ethnicity in juvenile detention. They argued that increased group contact across race led to increased conflict between individuals of different racial groups. They hypothesized that perceptions of injustice among Black individuals would increase as interactions with White individuals increased. Theories of social psychology point to similar outcomes as intergroup contact not in context of equal status and shared goals creates conditions for conflict. Using a hierarchical linear model, they examined perceived injustice and attitudes towards law enforcement. They found that Black individuals had increased perceived injustice when they had more interactions with Whites ($t=33.5$) and more so than Latinx populations ($t=16.48$). Latinx youth were more sensitive to police contact than Black youth. “Experience of the expected” mitigated perceptions for Black youth; they expected to be treated poorly by police and were thus less sensitive to negative interactions with police. Both Black and Latinx youth experienced negative interactions with police at a higher rate than White youth and viewed law enforcement in a negative light due to these interactions. Said findings are important to consider as nondominant youth both expected to be treated poorly by police and had less favorable

interactions with police than their white peers. The current study will explore how Black and Latinx youth perceive police and other forms of discipline on a qualitative level.

Police are more likely to be present on school campuses that enroll majority nondominant youth, perhaps continuing to contribute to the negative perceptions Black and Latinx youth have towards police. (Harper & Temkin, 2018). Moreover, involvement with police can lead to harmful outcomes. Gottlieb and Wilson (2018) examined different levels of police contact and the impact on educational attainment. They found that police contact, even contact that does not result in arrest, and vicarious police contact are all associated with lower educational achievement. The current study aims to connect youth experiences and perceptions not only of police presence, but various forms of discipline at school. It is the hope that student voice will be more widely considered as districts and educators make decisions that will impact the freedoms of students.

Repertoires of Practice

As youth navigate complex and inequitable systems, they are forced to reference their past experiences and cultural knowledge to navigate and survive these challenging systems. Gutierrez & Rogoff (2003) referred to “linguistic and cultural-historical repertoires” to describe the engagement in activities which stemmed from participating and observing cultural practices. They argue that it is necessary to understand repertoires for participating in practice and individual and communal forms of learning across cultures in order to characterize a student’s repertoires and support their learning and development accordingly. I extend their use of repertoires of practice to analyze and better understand the practices of non-dominant youth as they navigate often discriminatory and racialized institutional practices. They utilize their cultural knowledge and experience to dodge disciplinary action, build relationships, present themselves as “learners,” and ultimately remain in school.

Chapter 3: Methods.

Participants

The sample of participants for the current study includes 30 high school students from a public high school in the state of California. The participating school's student population is majority Black and Latinx and the majority of enrolled students (>75%) qualify for free and/or reduced lunch (CDE, 2020). Free and reduced lunch is indicative of students from families that are considered working class or low-income. Disciplinary data on the school district indicate that Black and Latinx students are suspended and expelled at higher rates than non-Black and non-Latinx students with Black students being suspended at much higher rates than their peers (CDE, 2020). Disproportionate suspension rates likely indicate inequitable disciplinary practices in the school's district.

The school has functioned with police presence for the past several decades utilizing a police force specifically developed for their school district (McBride, 2020; Drake, 2020). Grassroots organizing to remove police from school campuses reached success in the summer of 2020, during distance learning. Thus, students have only recently been physically present at the high school while police were not also on campus. They were asked to consider their experiences as students attending school prior to the pandemic and currently, while police are no longer on campus.

Students at the school had been organizing to remove police from their district for several years. Their efforts were targeted towards their own school and they met as a group to identify strategies to remove police from their campus. Unfortunately, these students were not included in the organizing efforts that took place to remove police from the district and planned to continue organizing this school year. It is possible that adult organizers were unaware of their efforts given that student efforts were not district-wide but focused on their specific high school. They were informed by school staff that the school board voted to remove police from the district. Though organizing efforts for police free schools are typically supported by students, the situation at this school is an example of how youth who are directly impacted by education policy are often left out of the conversation and the conceptualization of the policies and practices. The current study provides the opportunity for students to describe their experiences with police and discipline and how such experiences have shaped their worldviews. And this will be useful in developing more situated policies and practices that actually account for how they impact students in the short and long run.

All participants completed a measure on discipline and policing injustice and a short survey, which will be described below. Among the 30 participants, 22 students also participated in hour long focus groups. A total of three focus groups were conducted. A description of each of the participants can be found in Appendix D.

Data collection.

The methods utilized to collect qualitative and quantitative data are informed by research questions and are presented in that format.

Research Question 1 . How do youth perceive and experience the carceral apparatus in their schools? In order to explore this research question, I administered a measure on discipline and policing injustice. The measure allowed me to quantify varying perceptions of carceral logics and categorize perceptions into levels of injustice. Public record reviews of education data

will provide contextual information regarding the racialized layer of carceral logics in schools as noted by disproportionality in discipline rates (suspensions, expulsions, arrests). Focus group data allowed me to further explore perceptions and experiences through youth discourse so that I could better understand collective and phenomenological experiences.

Research Question 2. How are students psychosocially and emotionally influenced by carceral logics? Focus groups were utilized to answer the second research question. As youth shared their experiences with discipline and policing in their schools and communities, I utilized critical discourse analysis to capture social-emotional responses that are both explicit and implicit, capturing language and interactions linked to mental health and emotion. Focus group questions were designed to provide the opportunity for students to share emotional responses if they chose to. They also provided the opportunity for students to engage in discussions with one another regarding their opinions and experiences. Transcripts were then coded and analyzed for emotional and psychosocial responses.

Research Question 3. What are the skills and repertoires of practice that students utilize in order to navigate unsafe and inequitable spaces and experiences at school? Similar to question 2, youth were engaged in focus groups to answer the third research question. Here, I focused on the participants' utilized strategies as a unit of analysis in an attempt to understand individual and collective practices and categorize their strategies as instances of resilience, expertise, and successful navigation of a challenging system. During the focus groups, it was my intention to create safe spaces for youth to openly share their methods of coping, navigating, and processing their experiences collectively and as individuals in order to best receive the information they shared.

Qualitative data collection.

Recruitment

Focus groups and interviews were a main source of data collection for the current study. Study participants were recruited through a verbal presentation and flyer which was recorded and attached to an email. The email was shared with two teachers and two counselors, the staff then shared the email and information with their students and their parents. Thus, five staff members at the school supported the recruitment for the study by sharing the opportunity with their students. This researcher also provided a verbal presentation (along with a flyer) of the study to two classrooms during synchronous (virtual) learning time. The presentation occurred during distance learning as students were preparing to transition back to in person schooling. Students were informed that they would require parent permission via signatures in order to participate in any form of the study if they were under the age of 18. They were also informed that investigators would not access the names and email addresses of prospective participants/parents in order to send out recruitment materials. Students who participated in the survey indicated whether or not they were interested in the focus group and provided contact information to the administrator.

The email that staff members shared included information regarding the survey, focus group, interviews, the purpose of the study, as well as what is hoped to be learned. In the email, students were informed that they would be entered into a raffle to receive $20 for their

participation in the survey. Students were also informed that they would receive $20 for their participation in a one hour focus group.

The counselors who supported this researcher with recruitment were instrumental for this study. One female identifying counselor of color supported tremendously in the organization of focus group participation on the day of focus groups. She suggested that students be separated in focus groups based on their identified gender. Given that participants are teenagers, she anticipated that they would feel more comfortable sharing experiences, particular if they were gender centered, if their group matched their gender identification. This researcher agreed with her sentiment and all focus groups were separated by gender. I needed support gathering students from their classrooms, identifying a space, and writing students passes to leave and return to class and this counselor supported her throughout the process.

Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus group was to create a safe, semi-structured space where students can openly discuss their perceptions of both school police and school discipline with other students. The verbal and open participation of some students encouraged participation of other students. Participants were encouraged to discuss their experiences, ideas, and perceptions through conversation with their peers. Though discussion was facilitated by focus group questions, participants were encouraged to share related information in order to keep the conversation flowing. Participants were reminded that their identities will remain anonymous to readers, administrators, and parents and that the stories of others should not be shared to others outside of the group. I anticipated that students will be more forthcoming about their own experiences with police and discipline in a space where other students are present and discussing the same topic. The purpose of the interview was to gain in-depth information from students regarding their memorable experiences with discipline and police interactions, as well as information regarding the emotional and psychological influences of policing and discipline.

During the focus groups, participants were provided with guided discussion prompts to facilitate conversation. The prompts included an introduction and a disclaimer regarding confidentiality. Based on previous works which highlights adolescent perceptions of discipline and disproportionate police contact and policing (Shedd, 2015; Rodriguez, 2011; Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005) and the aforementioned research questions, the following holding questions were developed for the focus group. Participants were asked to discuss the following questions, (1) have you ever seen someone get in trouble? What did it look like? (2) have you ever been disciplined at school? (3) do you believe that you have ever been unjustly or unfairly disciplined at school; if so, briefly share your experience, (4) why do you feel that the received discipline was unjust and how did it make you feel? (5) how do you feel about having school resource officers on school campuses? (6) what is your understanding or how familiar are you with recent social justice movements to defund or abolish the police? I worked as a facilitator throughout the focus groups to clarify questions but attempted to reduce my own voice in order to encourage their interactions with students and build student-led conversations. I asked follow up questions regularly in order and maintained a semi-structured interview strategy in order to follow the flow of conversation while considering my research questions.

I completed three large focus groups which consisted of six to ten students per group. Two focus groups hosted participants who identified as girls and one focus group hosted participants who identified as boys. Due to a global pandemic, students were engaged in what is known as distance learning and were not physically present at their school campus when this

dissertation proposal was completed. Thus, it was anticipated that in winter of 2021, focus groups would take place electronically, using Zoom, a video communication platform which provides users with multiple ways to communicate including reaction emojis, a chat, and audio and visual communication. Students were able to return to in person schooling in the fall of 2021. Thus, focus groups were able to be held in person. Two focus groups were held in a small multi-purpose room. The final focus group was held in a classroom. Focus groups each lasted one hour long.

Existing data

The California Department of Education (CDE) collects a wide range of information from public California schools. Information about the school, including suspensions and expulsions, reasons for suspension or expulsion, and demographic information of students will be collected in order to inform and highlight measure and focus group and interview findings. The CDE information will allow me to compare disciplinary history between the two school districts which may inform potential discrepancies in student perspectives.

Development of Perceptions of Discipline and Policing Justice Measure.

The Perceptions of Discipline and Policing Justice measure was developed for the purpose of the study. The measure was developed based on Shedd's (2015) carceral apparatus and Wilson's (2005) four building blocks model. Shedd utilized both qualitative data, including youth interviews, fieldwork and survey questionnaire: Perceptions of Social Injustice and the Legitimacy of the Law and Compliance with the Law to investigate the carceral apparatus in Chicago schools. The current measure adapted some of the themes utilized in the Chicago Public Schools measure to ensure that the measure would capture carceral practices (interactions with police, racialized experiences, discipline, etc.). Wilson's four building blocks model involves developing a construct map, item responses, an outcome space, and then selecting a measurement model to test how well the items and respondents fit the construct map. These methods were utilized with Wilson's guidance as a process of measure development. Aspects of Wilson's (2005) measure will be utilized along with descriptive statistics to best understand student perceptions and experience.

Measures

Measure Development

The intent of the measure was to identify varying levels of perceived injustice among students as they consider disciplinary policies and treatment of themselves and other students, as well as their perceptions of the police on (or formerly on) their school campuses. Perceptions of discipline and police will be measured utilizing 12 items. Participants will report their level of agreement to each statement utilizing a 4 point Likert scale (1 = Almost always , 2 = Often, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Never). Two constructs made up the items of the survey; Equity of discipline and School Police Perception. Each section included 6 separate items that asked about student experiences with both phenomena. Sample items include but are not limited to; "Students are more likely receive a punishment if they are of a certain race or ethnicity," "I feel I am disciplined fairly at school," "When students break a rule, they receive a fair consequence," "The police at my school are biased and do not treat all students fairly," "Police officers are needed on my campus community." The purpose of the measure is to gain a wide level understanding of how students perceive their school's disciplinary practices and school police officers and to what

level do they believe officers are biased and/or fair. Responses may help inform both focus group discussion.

Survey

The purpose of the survey is to collect demographic information about respondents, as well as the occurrence of memorable punishment. The participants answered the following questions with yes/no responses. (1) Have you received a punitive sanction (including but not limited to, asked to leave the classroom, after school detention, Saturday school, non-voluntary community service, in school suspension, out of school suspension, expulsion, parents called due to behavior, parent shadowing) at your current school or at a previous school? (2) Have you received a consequence or discipline at school that was memorable and/or significant to you? (3) If yes, do you feel the memorable discipline received was fair or unfair? (4) Was the memorable discipline received emotionally distressing to you (for example: caused worry, anxiety, uneasiness, etc.)? (5) Did the discipline in question involve police interaction? At the end of the measure, students were asked to report their grade, age, and race/ethnicity. The purpose of the survey is to better understand the frequency of student experiences with discipline and/or policing at school, as well as the potential emotional responses from such interactions and experiences. Administering the survey to students provides the opportunity to analyze student responses to school policies that may be harmful to students' socioemotional wellbeing.

Given that the measures were first distributed to students during distance learning, participation in the survey was limited. It was initially intended that a larger number of responses would be collected for the survey portion of this study, yet electronic distribution did not heed promising results. Students who agreed to participate in the focus group also participated in the electronic survey. Survey responses are made up of students who responded to emails from their teachers and students who participated in the focus groups. The number of responses presents a limitation for the study as results of the measure may be impacted by low numbers.

Analytic approach

Qualitative data reduction and analysis

A critical phenomenological and critical discourse analysis approach was utilized in the study in order to examine student experiences and how their experiences shape their consciousness, and perceptions, and how they make sense of discipline and policing.

***Critical Phenomenology*.**

I drew from Annamma's (2018) analytical approach to her work on dis/abled girls of color in the school-prison nexus to guide my own analytic approach. Annamma (2018) explored how incarcerated girls of color who were labeled as disabled experienced the school-prison nexus using critical phenomenology. Willen (2007) describes critical phenomenology as an approach which "demands attention to two interrelated dimensions of social life," the first dimensions she describes includes the conditions of structural inequality which shape individuals' status or position and the second dimension describes the impact of said factors on individual and collective experiences of "being-in-the-world." The goal of critical phenomenology is to consider the underlying historical, cultural, and political factors which shape individuals' experiences and the ways in which they navigate the world. Though Willen (2007) adapts critical phenomenology to explore migrant "illegality," Annamma (2018) extends

Willen's utilization to include dis/abled girls of color. Though Annamma utilized a case study, ethnographic approach, we shared a goal of understanding the lived experiences of youth who have been severely marginalized by carceral institutions and systems.

Through her work, I drew the comparison that a critical phenomenological approach would enable me to investigate the shared and individualized experiences of nondominant youth as they navigate carceral logics in their schools, and work to mitigate the challenges of this experience. Further, it would allow me to consider the cultural and political factors which have shaped their experiences and status as non-dominant students. Phenomenological approaches to research uncover phenomena as they are described and experienced by participants, and focus on the core of the human experience of participants (Creswell, 2003). As I studied the phenomenon of carceral logics in schools and the overarching school-prison nexus, this analytical approach was fitting in understanding how said processes are perceived by and experienced by participants. Annamma (2018) draws on Willen (2007) to describe the fit of critical phenomenology as an approach that pays attention to both conditions of structural inequality and violence and the impact of said conditions on individual and collective experiences. Critical phenomenology was utilized as a mode of inquiry to help me understand both the structures that produced carceral experiences for youth and the youth's experiences and responses to said treatment.

Critical discourse analysis

In order to understand how racialized institutional control influences individual sensemaking, development, and self-perception I employ a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Drawing from the CDA literature, I describe the historical context and overarching goals of CDA as a frame for the current study while also exploring morality and emotion discourse as analytic frames.

CDA posits that discourse is a social phenomenon and studies the relationship between language and society (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2018; Wodak, 1995). This form of analysis is concerned with both the analysis of varying forms of discourse through language and with examining discourses within the wider contexts of social power (Penncook, 1994). Fairclough (1992) developed a three-part framework for conceiving and analyzing discourse which included discourse-as-text, discourse-as-discursive-practice, and discourse-as-social-practice. CDA situates individuals as self-constructing as they move through social categories and institutionalized discursive regimes. Thus, CDA is socially shaped and socially constitutive and regards discourse as language as a social practice (Fairclough, 1992).

CDA draws on the work of Michel Foucault (1972, 1977, 1979, 1980), who expressed that discourses form the concepts that are spoken about and the discourse on such concepts shape societal hierarchies. Thus, individuals can potentially participate in discourse that holds them into lower levels of societal hierarchies. Foucault (1972) posited further that knowledge-power relations are developed through constructed "truths," which are used by governments and institutions to build and monitor societal hierarchies. Not only are varying levels of society disciplined and surveilled at different levels, communities themselves participate in discourse, thus confronting, resisting, and becoming complicit in their own moral regulation. Thus, top-down ideological manipulation is not the sole culprit for the societal inequity that exists. Complicity occurs when discourses are internalized by members of monitored communities (Foucault, 1980; Luke, 1995).

Foucault's influence on CDA heavily shapes the current study. Schools and policing institutions are constituted by discourse and discursive relations - discourse constructs individuals as members of these systems shaped by political, societal, and governmental influence (Luke, 1995). Foucault's poststructuralism problematizes "truth" and inspires education researchers to work beyond descriptive research to utilize CDA as a means to challenge dominant systems and institutionalized practices. CDA as a theory and analytic frame will support my exploration of how individuals who have been placed at or towards the bottom of societal hierarchies respond to and engage in discourse directly involving methods of institutionalized control.

Data Analysis

Field notes were collected on recorded focus group interactions. Field notes included a summary of the observations, detailed notes regarding setting, conversations, interactions, etc., additional or related questions regarding observed information, and observer comments. Memos were also developed around the topic of discipline and power/control, parenting, and social emotional wellness and development as well as related literature references, theoretical underpinnings and a synthesis of observation findings. The development of memos throughout the data collection and analysis process guided conceptualization and theoretical responses to the guiding questions. Interview audio and video were recorded and utilized to create activity logs which included short summaries of interview audio, nonverbal forms of communication, observer comments, and interview participant information. Interviews were also transcribed in full.

In order to complete the report and answer the presented research questions, the data was extensively analyzed using a thematic content analysis and critical discourse analysis approaches. Transcriptions and field notes were reviewed closely and coded using a bottom-up approach in an attempt to reduce bias. Once codes were developed, they were separated by category. Grandparent codes, parent codes, and child codes were then developed. An index which includes each code and the location of the code (field note, memo, activity log) was also developed. A thesaurus will contain detailed descriptions or definitions of each code.

Quantitative analysis

Given that the sample size is relatively small and that I will be utilizing qualitative data to inform the work, the quantitative portion of this study will be exploratory in nature and will allow me to gain some understanding of participants' perceptions of discipline and policing at school. I began by examining the internal consistency of the PDPJ measure by running a Cronbach's alpha. In order to examine structural validity, R software was utilized to produce a Wright map, mean threshold locations, and infit mean squares statistics. I also examined the descriptive statistics of demographic data compiled from the non-standardized survey. Specifically, I assessed where variations among student perceptions of discipline and police and bias exist across the data set.

I also compared perceptions of discipline and policing among students who indicated that their memorable disciplinary event caused emotional distress with students who indicated that their memorable event did not cause emotional distress by determining the mean of both groups, and using the standard deviation to run a T-test. To investigate how items behave with different subgroups in a sample, I performed a differential item functioning (DIF) analysis. A DIF analysis also allowed me to compare students who engaged with police with students who did not engage

with police. I also completed a discriminant analysis to determine how useful and accurate the variables are in identifying emotional responses to discipline.

Taken together, this mixed-methodological approach allows me to examine the carceral continuum in schools from different dimensions of student perception and experience. Quantitative methods allow me to explore a measure on levels of perceived injustice among students who also participated in focus groups, while qualitative methods provide an opportunity to learn from students' shared experiences of injustice and control through both narrative and discourse.

Chapter 4: Assessing Perceptions of Disciplinary and Policing Justice

Racial and ethnic disproportionate discipline practices are present in schools and have negatively impacted the educational and life outcomes of students from non-dominant backgrounds in the form of school failure and carceral involvement (Sickmund, 2019, Losen & Martinez, 2015; Elias, 2013; McKinney, 2005). The examination of the skills, knowledge, and coping practices that are utilized in response to experiences of inequitable discipline highlights the mental and emotional load young people must utilize to navigate inequitable environments. In this chapter, I quantitatively explore student perceptions of inequitable disciplinary practices and school police through a pilot study on a developed measure on perceptions of disciplinary and policing justice (PDPJ). I seek to explore the validity of the developed construct as a potential tool to identify the level at which students believe their schools' disciplinary practices are equitable. Participants also responded to additional survey questions, separate from the measure, as a means to gather additional data regarding more detailed information about students' disciplinary experiences. In the two following chapters, I utilize youth focus group testimony to phenomenologically explore the shared and individualized carceral experiences of non-dominant youth and the strategies they utilize to resist inequity and labeling. The instrument discussed in this chapter will shed light on the perceptions youth have of their schools' disciplinary policies, including their perceptions of policing in their places of learning. Taken together, I hope to better understand how non-dominant youth perceive and experience the carceral apparatus in their schools. Methods and design will be reiterated for reader clarity and familiarity.

The Four Building Blocks of Instrument Development

The present instrument is designed to measure non-dominant youth's perceptions of their school's disciplinary practices and shed light on their feelings of safety at school. The approach to develop the instrument revolves around the four building blocks of instrument development. According to Wilson (2005), this approach begins with the (a) construct map phase, (b) the item development phase, (c) the outcome space phase, and (d) the measurement model phase. Education researchers have utilized the approach to establish metrics which would allow for accuracy when evaluating students. Learning Today Computer Adaptive Tests, for example, utilized the four building blocks to create a valid measure of student knowledge and improvement over time (Brown, 2007). In the following section, I will elaborate on three of the four building blocks. For the final building block, the measurement model, I will discuss its utilization in the results section of this paper.

Construct Background and Positionality

During the 2018-2019 school year, I completed my clinical internship at Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall. I served as a psychologist intern and therapist to the girls and boys who were held in detention there. I managed a caseload of roughly 10 clients at a time, some who were held for long term sentences (6-18 months) and others who were held pending charges (10-20 days). In order to better understand their experiences, goals, and trajectories, I began to collect data on their school history. Though I have done extensive research on the connection between schools and prisons, their responses were shocking and disheartening. Nearly all of my clients, 85%, had been suspended from school at least once, often for minor behaviors. Many had been suspended multiple times and could not name a single teacher or administrator who was

supportive to them. Others went straight from school to juvenile hall as their school resource officer made the arrest for a behavior that occurred while they were in a place of learning. They experienced what is known as the carceral apparatus in their schools and were pushed aside by their schools either due to both indirect push out or direct push out (Shedd, 2015).

Throughout my time in school districts as a trainee and professional I have witnessed what has been extensively shown in the literature – that Black and Latinx students receive higher levels of punishment and surveillance and lower levels of compassion and academic expectations, even when they do not have a history of suspension or incarceration. I have witnessed many students say things such as, “that’s not fair!” or “that wasn’t even me!” after being redirected for behaviors. I have noted their demeanors shift and their participation decrease after confrontations with staff. I hope to explore their perceptions and experiences in this chapter.

Construct Map

The construct map serves as a visual representation of the construct utilized in the instrument and assumes the construct spans across a spectrum and is continuous. There are two components of a construct map which include, a coherent and substantive definition of the construct and an ordering of the respondents and/or an ordering of item responses (Wilson, 2005). In order to represent my construct map, I developed a visual representation to show the spectrum of student perceptions of disciplinary and policing injustice. Multiple revisions of the construct map were necessary in order to develop the final version. The initial map included an overrepresentation of a level of injustice that was harmful and items were worded more negatively. With feedback from Dr. Wilson and peers, I developed items and levels that were more objective and allowed a range for students to consider.

The first and lowest level of the construct map is titled, Level 1: Destructive/Harmful. At this level, students perceive that discipline and policing practices are overall unjust. Student stories remain unheard or ignored. They do not feel emotionally safe at school. Students perceive discrimination by teachers and staff and that the police treat students unfairly. They are fearful of both school punishment and police interaction. The lowest level has the least amount of perceived justice from students, hence it is situated at the bottom of the spectrum. The second level is titled, Level 2:Unjust. At this level, students feel that the level of discipline and policing they receive is unfair. They might feel that some level of justice occurs but more often than not, school disciplinary policies and adults on campus are unfair.

The third level of the construct is titled Level 3: Fair/Just. At this level, students believe that their school implements disciplinary practices fairly. They feel that most disciplinary practices are unbiased. They do not experience complete emotional freedom at school but believe that students receive just consequences when they do something wrong. Finally, the fourth level of the construct map, Level 4: Restorative, represents students’ beliefs that all adults at their school treat students with respect. At this level, students feel emotionally safe to express themselves freely at school. Students in this section do not perceive to experience discrimination or bias from the adults at school. The final version of my construct map can be found in Figure 1.

Item design

I administered items that ask questions related to overall school climate/culture as well as student perception of police on campus. Though the two may seem separate, I argue that police presence should be considered a part of a school’s disciplinary culture and school climate. Thus, if students have negative perceptions of school police, this should be considered in their overall

perception of their school's disciplinary justice. However, I considered feedback regarding the separation of police presence and school climate and reported police perception responses independently as well. I included items on emotional safety, safe spaces, perception of fairness, discrimination, relationships with adults, and police perception. Given that the majority of youth who attend the school are youth of color, I asked questions regarding differences in treatment based on race and/or ethnicity. Prior studies that have explored student perceptions of school police have investigated homogenous student populations (Brown & Benedict, 2005; Jackson, 2002). The population of students surveyed in this paper came from diverse, often underserved backgrounds.

Multiple choice items related to demographic information were included. Students provided their race/ethnicity, grade level, age, and gender. Though the utilization of a Likert scale was a potential approach, including other item designs provided more clarity in the analysis process. The following items fall within each level of school disciplinary and policing justice. I adopted a Guttman scale for some of the items and Likert for others. The Guttman scale includes items, which are typically written as statements, that are answered with unidimensional answer options. I used a simplified Guttman which only provided two potential responses. The goal of the scale is to capture extreme attitudes from respondents, for example, very positive or very negative, rather than providing the opportunity to provide a response that falls within a range. The item design phase enabled me to classify a particular observation and name items into specific categories (Wilson, 2005).

The items were reviewed through a presentation to roughly 35 peers who provided verbal feedback, four peers who provided written feedback, a graduate student instructor, and Dr. Wilson and Dr. Kris Gutierrez from UC Berkeley. Items were reviewed by others to ensure that students would not be swayed to answer items in a particular way and to ensure that youth were making decisive responses. Thus, some Likert scales were changed to Guttman scales, encouraging participants to respond with a yes or no response. Further, language was altered to ensure that questions were not portrayed with double negatives and opportunities to highlight positive policies from the school were implemented.

Outcome space and measurement model

The purpose of the outcome space phase is to assign numerical scores to recorded observations which is to serve as a scoring guide for the measure (Wilson, 2005). I developed 14 multiple choice items for my measure. Each item response corresponds with certain levels of the construct map. For example, one of my items reads, "When a student does something wrong, the adults listen to their side of the story before implementing a punishment." For participants who responded "never," their response corresponded with level 1, the lowest level of perceived disciplinary and policing justice which was titled harmful/destructive. Respondents who responded with, "sometimes," their response corresponded with level 2, the unjust level. When participants responded with "often," their response corresponded with the third level which was classified as fair/just. Finally, when participants responded with "almost always," their response corresponded with the highest level, level 4, which was titled the restorative level.

In order to develop the scoring guide, responses were scored according to the four levels of the construct map. For example, participants read the 4th item of the measure, "I feel I can express myself freely (through dress, behavior, language, etc.) at school without being corrected or asked to change." Potential responses included "never," "sometimes," "often," and "almost always." Participants who responded "almost always," received a score of four which indicates

that they have a high level of perceived justice at their school and their perceptions reflect those of a restorative school experience. Participants who responded "never," received a score of one which indicates that they have a low level of perceived justice and a potentially harmful school experience.

Results of the Measurement Model

The intent of the current measure *Perceptions of Disciplinary and Policing Justice* is to examine youth perceptions about their school's disciplinary practices, including their perceptions about school police. Unjust disciplinary policies can create unsafe learning environments for students and interactions with police can increase their chances of future arrests. I plan to measure the level to which students feel that their school implements just disciplinary policies and that their school police serve them equitably. I administered the measure to youth of color, or non-dominant youth at a large urban high school on the west coast region of the United States. I also collected data on whether or not they have had disciplinary practices that were memorable and upsetting to them and whether or not these events involved school police.

Respondents reported demographic information which included racial and ethnic identity, gender identity, and grade. Respondents ranged from grades 9 through 12 and indicated whether or not they were 18 or younger. Respondents reported ethnic backgrounds that ranged from Latinx/Hispanic, Black or African American, and 2 or more races. Demographic information is displayed in Tables 1-3.

Given that respondents used Qualtrics to complete the measure, but analysis would be conducted via the Berkeley Assessment System Software (BASS), the data was reviewed and edited prior to calibration. The scoring process described above was conducted via Qualtrics with minor modifications made in Excel. Once responses matched the levels in the construct map, calibration was conducted via BASS. Calibration encompassed the adjustment of items to the proposed model, which provided insight into model uncertainty. Once the data was calibrated, the BASS system created maps, images, and information regarding the reliability and validity of the measure.

Reliability

Once the data was calibrated into BASS, a BASS calibration page was created and provided a number of insights into the measure. To assess the reliability of the instrument, multiple types of reliability evidence needed to be calculated. Expected A Posteriori (EAP) and Weighted Likelihood Estimates (WLE), which represent separation reliability, or the probability that a person will endorse a particular item, were calculated at 0.721 and 0.706, respectively and represented acceptable reliability scores. Each of these statistics give information on

With regards to internal consistency, which measures how well the Cronbach's alpha was calculated at 0.75 while the Pearson separation reliability was 0.79, which also represent acceptable scores and a moderate to high internal consistency reliability. The split halves reliability was calculated using two forms of the measure that were provided to respondents in the forms of A and B surveys. Given that two of the items asked questions that were similar in nature, one was asked on form A while the other was asked on form B. Thus, each form had 14 items and the split halves reliability coefficient was 0.62.

Validity

In order to assess the validity of the measure, content validity, response processes, relationship with external variables, internal structure, fit indices and DIF were calculated.

Instrument Content

In order to develop the instrument, I defined the variable that I intended to measure as "perceived disciplinary and policing justice." By reviewing surveys which capture some similar perceptions, such as The California Healthy Kids Survey and Carla Shedd's (2015) survey to understand youth, neighborhood, and school level safety and discipline, I developed the construct map using guidance from Wilson's (2005) four building blocks model and Shedd's (2015) carceral apparatus theory. Once the theory for the construct map was developed, I generated items for the construct map and implemented appropriate revisions based on conversations with peers, course instructors, an advisor, and other educators with experience working with non-dominant youth. Initially, only Likert scales were going to be used in the measure, but an instructor suggested Guttman scale questions as well. I also shared the instrument with my advisor, Kris Gutierrez, who specializes in qualitative research which provided immense support with item development as she helped me to formulate questions that are clear for respondents. Dr. Gutierrez made suggestions to edit 5 of the items and reword them so that they were less leading to the reader and more objective. Two questions were removed from the instrument after conversations with Dr. Gutierrez as they seemed repetitive. The measure was finalized after multiple conversations with the aforementioned individuals.

Response Processes

Given that many of the youth who completed the measure also participated in a focus group, I was able to ask 22 out of the 30 respondents about their thoughts on the items. Two students left the focus group setting early and were unable to provide their feedback. The focus group ran a few minutes over class time and the two students were concerned that their tardiness would not be excused and their parents would be notified. Though they were ensured that administrators would clear a tardy if their teacher forgot about the excuse, they referenced having issues with excusing tardies in the past, thus I respected their wishes to attend their class. I asked students about clarity, overall opinion, and opinion regarding whether or not my items captured what I was trying to understand. Eighteen respondents, or 81% of participants reported that the measure was appropriate to assess student perceptions of disciplinary and policing injustice. The final four students reported that their involvement with police feels separate at times with their overall feelings about the school as a safe space, even though the police were present at their school for many years. Ninety percent of the respondents reported that the questions were clear and they understood what was being asked while 10% reported that they were unsure, and that maybe a few questions were hard to answer. Overall, 100% of respondents reported that the measure was quick and easy and that they would not mind taking it again.

Internal Structure

During the calibration process, BASS generated a Wright Map. The Wright Map is a visual tool to interpret measures by combining the Rasch model with the developed construct map. It allows us to interpret the locations of the respondents and the item thresholds of the construct (Wilson, 2005). The Wright Map that is displayed in Figure 2 shows the relationships of students' perceptions of disciplinary and policing justice to the probability of response.

The graphing on the left side of the Wrightmap shows the frequency of responses from the 30 respondents through an on-the-side histogram. The shapes in the middle of the map demonstrate the location of the participants' responses which are represented by the four levels

of the construct map and the items that represent each level. The varying shapes and colors represent the different items. When scrolling over each colorized shape in BASS, one can see the item that is represented by the colorized shape. A key is located at the bottom of Figure 2 as well. The furthest right area of the map represents the relationship of the construct to the probability of the response through logits.

The map indicates that there is overlap between levels three and four and levels two and four. The overlap that exists between levels two and four is due solely to item 11 which reads, "The school has a safe space students can go to when they feel overwhelmed or frustrated." Respondents responded either yes or no to item 11 which indicates a high level of perceived justice or a low level. Thus, if utilizing the measure in the future, item 11 would be omitted as it does not appropriately represent the intention of the model. The Wright Map further demonstrates that items are represented by the difficulty of the threshold. Thus, level four is more difficult than Level 3. To an extent, the increasing difficulty by level is evidence to support the quality of the model and its' ability to achieve the intended measure.

It should be noted that two Wright Maps were demonstrated by BASS. The second Wright Map is graphed similarly and represents the three thresholds that exist for the four levels and is represented in Figure 3. The thresholds and mapping demonstrated show that the highest level of the construct map is most appropriately represented by the measure as items in the top area of the graph, in the positive range (orange square). The second threshold in green (diamond) is also reasonably accurate and is demonstrated by some negative and positive items but remains in the middle level, as it should. The lowest threshold shows the most inconsistencies as items are represented in areas ranging from -3 to 1 (blue circle). One blue circle is just as high as an orange square which indicates that item represented (item 13) is not accurately represented in the model and requires adjustment in order to improve the appropriateness of the model. Overall, the items that needed to be completed with a Yes or No response showed the least consistency in the model while the items represented by Likert scales seemed less likely to waver from the model.

Instrument level internal structure

The validity of the instrument level internal structure assesses the ranked order of the gammas, which indicate whether the empirical item scale value matches the order of the hypothetical order according to the construct levels. The gammas are exhibited in a table in Figure 4. The gammas are listed in ascending order while the items are listed on the left side, in descending order. Overall, it does appear that difficulty does increase as levels increase, as most gammas per item indicate an increase in difficulty. It appears that only item 5 does not represent this, as the difficulty does not fit with the difficulty flow of the other items. The table also shows items 8-15 and item 1 only exhibit one or two gammas, which indicates that not every construct level was utilized for that particular item. For example, there are two gammas for item 14 and only one for items 8 through 13. The items that were framed as yes or no questions were consistently the items with fewer than 3 gammas.

Item level internal structure

The mean locations of each group/category can be found in Figure 5. The absolute frequency column here, represents the number of respondents placed at the specific level for the particular item. Thus, for item 1, the highest number of students were categorized into level four of the construct and reported that adults on their school campus *almost always* treat students fairly. The response *never* would have been categorized in level one and had a very low absolute

frequency of two. Thus, item one informs us that students are more likely to believe students are treated fairly at their school and as a result, the students are more likely to score in the higher levels. Wilson (2005) explains that we should expect respondents who score higher on the construct would also score higher on each item. So, the mean location of each group is expected to increase as the category or level increases. Figure 5 depicts some of this, as the mean among grouped item levels appears to increase and each item ranks from lowest to highest. The variations in the items indicate that the item is in fact differentiating respondents. From this perspective, it appears that we have an item internal structure that is acceptable. The Point Biserial Correlation is represented in the column titled rpb WLE and represents the correlation between the level score and the total raw score. Negative numbers in this column may indicate an issue with the correlation.

Fit indices

Item fit was investigated through the mean square fit statistic. The weighted mean square value is depicted in Figure 6. An acceptable mean square value should fall within the reasonable lower bound of 0.75 and the reasonable upper bound of 1.33. The lower bound represents the lowest number that can be rounded to get an estimated value while the upper bound represents the highest. The values 0.75 and 1.33 represent the range in which the mean square will fall. According to the scatter plot in Figure 6, which shows both outfit and infit estimates, most of my items fit within reasonable bounds. However, a few items were just outside of reasonable bounds. For example, category two item 14 (1.44) and category two item 3 (1.5) were just outside of reasonable bounds. Item three asked how often teachers spend a significant amount of class time (more than 10%) correcting student behavior. There was great range in this item and it perhaps did not fit well with the construct as many teachers, regardless of students' sense of justice in their school deal with behavioral correction. Item three inquired whether or not participants believed that the police who worked at their school were trustworthy and helpful, responses were yes or no. The variation could be explained by the fit of the items to the construct or could very likely be explained by the low sample size of 30. Overall though, fit was appropriate among most items.

Relationship with external variables

Pearson estimates were correlated with the external variables. I chose to examine highest grade students and lower grade students. Respondents reported their grade level and students who were in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade were grouped in the lower group while 12th graders were in the upper group. Seniors were grouped separately as they made up roughly 53% of the sample and included some respondents who were over the age of 18. I was unsure whether or not there would be a divergent relationship between my construct and the external variable as grade level and perceptions of discipline have not been covered in the literature, to my knowledge. I separated respondents by lower and upper groups and ran an independent sample t-test with the two groups in order to determine whether or not there were significant differences between them. The results of the t-test were as follows; for students who responded with higher level grades ($M = .19$, $SD = 0.4$, $p > .09$) and students who responded with lower level grades ($M = .17$, $SD = 0.3$, $p > .08$). Thus, there did not exist a significant difference in perceived justice between students who were in higher versus upper level grades. There are a few potential reasons for these results; it is possible that the perceptions of 11th and 12th graders are very similar given their closeness in age and experience. It is also possible this relationship canceled out any large differences

between 9th and 12th graders, as 9th graders made up the lowest fraction of the sample. Another possibility is that by the middle of high school, students have already had enough experiences in school to develop a level of perceived school justice, thus what happens between grades 10 and 11, for example, is less significant.

DIF

The differential item function (DIF) analysis was conducted to determine evidence of fairness. In this section, I utilized DIF to examine whether or not the items function similarly across racial demographic groups. It is expected that items will function in a similar way across subgroups (Wilson, 2005). Thus, it is expected that Black and Latinx respondents are at the same location, or exhibit no evidence of differential item functioning. In order to determine this, I calibrated Black respondents and Latinx respondents separately. Then, I determined whether or not there were differences within item parameter estimates between the subgroups.

The DIF analysis determined that for all but three of the items, one group does not perceive injustice at a greater or lesser level than the other group. It is expected then, that the groups can occupy the various levels within each item dependent on their own perceptions. The three items that indicated perceived difficulty greater or less than the other group included items 12 and 13. Both of these items asked questions regarding perceptions of police. Item 12 asks whether students believe that police care about their school community and item 13 asks if the police who worked at their school were trustworthy and helpful. The literature finds that minoritized youth are more likely to have negative attitudes towards police. Some studies find that Black youth have increased perceived injustice over Latinx youth regarding police (Hagan, Shedd, and Payne, 2005). For item 11, level two, there were only four respondents who answered no to the item: *The school has a safe space students can go to when they feel overwhelmed or frustrated.* Thus, after evaluating the number of respondents included in the item, I deciphered that the difference was nonsignificant and could be explained by the small sample.

Consequences of Use and Future Directions

When considering the consequences of use for the measure, I considered the benefit of the construct and the potential harm. A potential benefit of the instrument is that it provides a tool to better understand levels of perceived injustice among students and can be used at particular school sites to gauge how students are feeling about their school environment, including the policing that takes place at the school. For example, when more students are scoring in level four, they are indicating that they have a high level of perceived justice at their school. The school can then determine that potential reform efforts, culture shifts, etc., have been impactful and are improving students' perceived justice. Though there are a few measures on school culture, this instrument includes personal perceptions of freedom, safe spaces, policing, and time spent learning and considers the experiences of marginalized students. These elements are unique in that together they capture both day to day experiences and overarching perceptions of youth and consider factors that are often overlooked in school climate measures and literature

Some of the potential harm associated with the measure are that utilizing some of the items that may not appropriately fit into the construct and may thus provide inaccuracies. I recommend the removal of item 11 and additional pilot studies to assess the fit of items 12 and 13. If there are errors with item fit and person fit, the stakes are high regarding the potential actions schools may take in response to the survey. Moreover, events and socio political happenings may influence student perceptions of their school experience.

In order to utilize the measure as intended, future administrations of the instrument would need to be carried out with a larger sample of students. Though there is some evidence to support the quality of the measure, for example, level four is more difficult than level 3, overall, there were a number of data points reported above that speak to a need for revision. There were a number of issues with item 13 that may be explained by low sample size but may also be explained by a lack of fit with the measure. Thus, additional rounds of survey distribution and revision should be conducted prior to use as intended.

K-12 students are often a difficult demographic of students to gain access to due to the fact that most students will need parental consent in order to participate in research and schools are understandably protective of their students. Nonetheless, high perceptions of injustice among students should be identified and actions should be taken in order to improve perceived justice, as literature informs us that students who are disconnected from school are less likely to stay in school and/or be successful in school.

Descriptive Statistics and Additional Survey Information

Race/ethnicity and discipline

After reviewing the validity of the PDPJ measure, I reviewed the additional survey questions to which participants responded. These questions explored demographic information as well as information regarding experiences with discipline. The additional discipline related questions were represented in questions 18-22 and included; 18) Have you received a punitive sanction or discipline at your school? 19) Have you received a consequence or discipline that was memorable and/or significant to you? 20) Was the discipline you received emotionally distressing to you? 21) If the event caused distress, to what extent did the event distress you? 22) Did the discipline in question involve police interaction? Descriptive statistics regarding the responses to these questions can be found in Table 4.

The majority of participants reported that they had received a punitive sanction (55.2%) and that the consequence was memorable or significant to them (65.5%). The responses indicate that the consequences youth receive are regarded with significance and as memorable life events. Though the sample size is low and cannot be used to generalize among larger groups of students, it encourages us to consider the emotional influence of punitive discipline on students. Given the results of these items, a Chi-Squared Test was performed to examine the relationship between receiving a punitive sanction and race/ethnicity. The results can be found in Table 5. Given that youth from Black and Latinx backgrounds are more likely to receive disproportionate discipline, I wanted to compare my sample to what was stated in the literature. The relationship between these variables was significant $X^2\ (2, N = 30)\ 8.25, P = .016$. Race predicted punitive outcomes for students; 90% of Black participants reported receiving a punitive sanction while 43.8% of Latinx participants reported receiving a punitive sanction. The differences in punitive sanctions among Black and Latinx youth was vast and represents the disproportionate discipline that Black youth face in comparison to their non-Black peers.

In order to explore the influence of punitive sanctions further, an additional Chi-Squared Test (see Table 6) was performed to examine the relationship between race/ethnicity and emotional distress due to disciplinary action. It was determined that the relationship between these two variable was not significant $X^2\ (2, N = 28)\ 3.00, P = .861$. Black participants were slightly less likely (43.8%) than their Latinx peers (50%) to become emotionally distressed by their memorable discipline. The results of both Chi-Squared Tests indicate that though race predicts punitive sanction, it does not predict the extent or whether or not youth experience

distress from the disciplinary sanction they receive. Additional analysis determined that gender and grade also did not predict emotional distress.

Emotional Influences of Discipline

The survey explored the potential influence of punitive sanctions on participants. As mentioned above, a majority of participants reported that they had received a consequence or discipline that was significant and/or memorable. Participants were then asked if the discipline caused distress, such as worry, anxiety, anger, or uneasiness. Sadly, 64% of participants responded yes to this item. Finally, participants were asked about the extent of distress they experienced due to the discipline they received. Overall, 66.6% of participants reported some distress to a very high level of distress, indicating that the majority of participants experienced distress due to the disciplinary action. While 9.5% of participants reported very little distress, 23.8% reported no distress. The results of the distress level item indicate that youth do in fact experience negative emotions when faced with punitive forms of discipline. They may experience worry and anxiety when receiving a consequence, creating an additional consequence that is psychosocial. It is also important to consider how students may function or access learning when they are experiencing a lack of psychological safety and are experiencing distress.

As schools strive to provide safe spaces for students, it is important that they consider the emotional impact of disciplinary action. The act of implementing a punitive sanction in itself welcomes a duality of discipline where students must face a school level consequence and face the emotional distress that comes with receiving discipline or getting in trouble. Though the sample size of the survey was small, the results still warrant consideration as the emotional influence of discipline has not been explored as thoroughly as rates of disproportionate discipline.

Perceptions of school police

Descriptive statistics regarding school police were analyzed in order to gain a better understanding of how youth felt about the police officers who used to occupy their campus and whether or not they find their presence helpful. The responses to policing questions that were also included in the PDPJ measure can be found in Table 7. All PDPJ measure questions can be observed at the bottom of this chapter, after tables and figures. Two additional police questions that were not a part of the PDPJ measure were also included in the overall survey and included; 16) Police officers are needed in my campus community and 17) Police officers should continue to work on school campuses. Overall, participants had generally negative perceptions towards school police. A majority of participants reported that police at their school were not trustworthy and helpful (69%), while over half of participants (55.6%) reported that students were fearful when interacting with police, even when they had done nothing wrong. However, 55.2% of participants did report that police officers cared about their campus community. It is important to note that two police related questions did not fit into the PDPJ construct, thus perceptions of police may be best assessed separately when attempting to measure disciplinary justice at school.

In response to the policing questions unrelated to the measure, participants overwhelmingly reported their desire to have police officers off of their school campus. A large majority (83%) of respondents responded "no" when asked if police officers are needed on their school campus. However, many were unsure regarding whether or not school police were needed on school grounds in general. While 50% of participants responded "no" when asked if police should continue to work on school campuses, 36.7% were unsure and 13.3% responded "yes."

The results may indicate that the respondents were sure about the conditions on their school campus and the potential harm of police presence but did not feel comfortable generalizing to other campuses.

Conclusion

Several more pilot studies should be conducted utilizing the PDPJ measure, including the suggestions detailed above, prior to a wide range use in schools to measure levels of disciplinary and policing justice. Though some items indicated a lack of fit within the measure and the sample size created concerns, the PDPJ measure shows promise to measure the construct it was intended to measure. The measure showed that difficulty increased as the measure increased and responses and results related to the intended population were sensical. Additional survey items were included with the measure in order to better understand participants' experiences with discipline and their perceptions of police. It was determined that policing and perceptions of school level discipline should be considered separately as police related items were less likely to fit within the measure. However, for the purpose of this overall study, the responses to questions about policing were necessary to answer the research questions.

The additional survey questions further speak to the emotional influence of punitive discipline and the relationship between race/ethnicity and discipline. Black participants were most likely to receive a punitive sanction but were not more likely to have an emotional response to the disciplinary action. Nonetheless, students from numerous backgrounds reported emotional distress as a result of a school level consequence and the influence of discipline on psychosocial functioning should be considered.

The present chapter discussed the construct validity of a pilot study on the PDPJ measure as well as general perceptions of police and experiences of discipline among a small sample of non-dominant students at an urban southwestern high school. The quantitative results of this portion of the study will be considered with qualitative focus group data on the same sample of students in the next two chapters. Taken together, the results of all portions of the study uncover the emotional influence of punitive sanctions, the varying levels of injustice youth experience at school, and the varying forms of resistance students utilize to challenge inequity.

Chapter 5: Youth Accounts of the Emotional Influence of Discipline

Focus group conversations demonstrated that psychological influences to situations of perceived injustice were common and influential among participants as they attempted to make sense of their disciplinary encounters. In this section, I provide accounts of stories told by youth participants and observations of their demeanor to explore their emotional responses to shared experiences of institutional racism, violations of trust by adults, punitive and unjust disciplinary action, and high levels of surveillance and control. I represent their narratives through both summaries of their stories and their own words, I then analyze these stories in an attempt to understand emotional responses to disciplinary action. Further, I report how participants' experiences and stories influence their perceptions of their world's and themselves and how they believe the experience developmentally influenced them, ultimately helping construct participants' own identity development.

As participants shared their experiences with discipline in a room full of peers of the same identified gender, the emotional toll of said experiences was apparent to this author. Participants were asked to describe instances when they got in trouble or witnessed someone else get in trouble. The term "trouble" was interpreted in various ways. Based on the nature of the questions, it was expected that negative experiences and corresponding emotions would be observed. Students used a number of strategies to illuminate and/or minimize their emotional experiences. Despite the collective resilience that was demonstrated throughout the groups, distressing emotions were prevalent across the three focus group spaces and among each of the youth as they shared their stories. Thus, strong emotional responses to discipline were a common theme of the study, and negative emotions were common across the groups. Participants referenced emotions such as anger, frustration, and despair as they discussed situations in which they or others around them experienced "trouble" or discipline by school staff or family members. The presence of strong emotions in relation to institutional discipline exemplifies the emotional stress that young people undergo as they attempt to navigate a culture in which disciplinary action is commonplace (APA, 2016). Participants engaged in a practice Anzaldua (1999) refers to as storytelling. I argue that, like Anzaldua, participation in oral storytelling, or verbal personal accounts of an encounter or happening, allowed youth to challenge preconceived notions by institutions of who they are and, utilizing the storytelling practice as a tool to reclaim their identities. This study attempts to capture not only the emotional responses to discipline, but the analytical lens' youth incorporate to make sense of expectedly negative experiences. In other words, it is expected that when youth perceive injustice and are treated unfairly, they will have corresponding negative emotions. Later in this work, I discuss the skills and expertise youth utilize to successfully manage said negative emotions and navigate challenging systems.

The honesty, vulnerability, and candidness among participants created an energy among participants and fueled rich conversation among all three focus groups. As the group facilitator, I attempted to create a safe and supportive space for youth to share their experiences. However, it was the participants who quickly (co)constructed the space they wished to occupy at that moment. In the next chapter, I describe in more detail how participants collectively collaborated to create a positive community environment. The culture that was established allowed participants to safely share their experiences and emotions without fear of judgment or retribution. The emotional influence of the experiences was evident and easily identifiable as youth shared both observed and direct experiences with discipline and injustice. Given that I was interested in the youths' emotional response to discipline in order to understand the influence of

their carceral experiences, I directly asked participants to consider how they felt emotionally when they experienced a form of discipline that was memorable to them. I expected that the answers to this question would make up the majority of this findings section. However, emotional responses were shared openly throughout the focus groups, prior to and after this question was asked. In fact, the question seemed to reduce the richness that had previously existed in the storytelling process. Overall, in response to the direct question, youth responded with uncertainty regarding how they felt and often provided brief answers such as, "I guess I was mad." However, when considering the entirety of the focus group, youth were able to articulate and express their emotions with detail and confidence. Thus, participants provided rich answers through their storytelling and not necessarily through direct responses to specific questions.

As students collectively shared their experiences with discipline, their tone, language, and enthusiasm shifted and ranged. Through their shifts in tone and language, I was able to identify a number of emotions that were common across participants and groups. Their vulnerability in sharing these emotions was shaped by both the stories they told and the collective (co)learning of what the experience may have meant to the student. Students were influenced by the perspectives and responses of their peers, and were often affirmed in their feelings by co-participants as they shared their stories.

Overall, 15 different emotions were coded throughout the 3 focus groups through the coding process outlined in chapter three. Exploring which emotions came up for participants as they shared their stories allowed me to better understand the emotional influence of carceral or disciplinary experiences. The identified emotions included but were not limited to, confusion, frustration, regret, shame, shock or surprise, worry, nervousness, anger, despair, fear, anxiety, and sadness; I also categorized physiological responses to an event as an emotion. Physiological responses included shaking, crying, pausing, and heavy or quick breathing. This set of emotions speaks to the psychological challenge of managing challenging harsh disciplinary environments. For brevity in this section, I will be discussing the emotions that were identified most often throughout the focus groups in this section and the situations that caused the negative emotional response. These include feelings of fear, detachment and distress, and anger. While anger was found more often than other emotions, fear, detachment and distress were much more common responses across the focus groups and remain the dominant narratives in this section.

"Well, I just felt really scared."

Emotional safety is a necessary component of a positive learning environment while unsafe school environments can create emotional stress, and hinder learning and development (Shean & Mander, 2020). Despite a societal ideal that schools are safe spaces for students, many students not only feel unsafe at their schools, but experience fear in response to their institutions and the strategies that adults implement to control behavior. Feelings of fear and being afraid were common throughout the focus groups and were almost always a direct response to a consequence for a behavior. The term *fear* was coded in the data a total of 26 times throughout the three focus groups, demonstrating the highest code frequency among emotion codes and represents common the groups experienced fear at school. In comparison, the emotion that was drafted second most often was coded roughly 16 times. Below I discuss examples in which participants described fear as well as the strategies that institutions and individuals utilized to elicit fear among their students.

Fear as an emotional response to discipline

Rosa was small in stature with long dark hair. She was among the first to speak openly and participated in the first all-girl focus group. She spoke with confidence and a slight Spanish accent. She used Spanglish without apology throughout the focus group and did not hesitate to respectfully disagree with the majority opinion of the group. Rosa had a big sense of humor and used humor throughout her storytelling. She was clear and descriptive with her storytelling, providing details so that her audience would create their own pictures and feelings about what she shared. Rosa described a situation in which she bumped into a teacher who singled her out and made her clean the classroom often.

> I had a racist teacher, she would make me like clean for her. Like clean the classroom. Like it would be another kid doing a mess and she would be like, "Rosa can you go pick it up?" So then, once, I got really fed up with it. And…I didn't push her, okay? I like gave her a little [nudge motion]…you know? Cuz I like picked up the trash right…but she was also in the way…I kind of just elbow her a little and she was like, "Rosa! Did you just push me?," you know, doing the whole act and stuff. And then I was like "no, I just kind of bumped into you." And then she was like, "Nope, I'm calling the principal," tararara. She made like this big ass thing.

In this example, Rosa shared how her teacher used her positional power to control student behavior. Rosa perceived injustice in her treatment and classified the treatment as racism. She used her own sociopolitical understanding of the world and her place as a Mexican girl in society to make sense of her experience (Spencer, Dupree, & Harmann, 1997). Rosa expressed that her teacher was singling out a Mexican female student do the cleaning of the classroom as this is the role society has projected onto Mexican women and girls. Though Rosa engaged in a form of protest through her action to elbow or bump her teacher, the teacher quickly took back her control by implementing a consequence for her action. According to Rosa, she made "big ass thing," dramatizing the situation to justify her decision to call the principal in an effort to elicit fear in Rosa.

> And then to the principal I'm like "I didn't do nothing!" Like, I started crying. Because I was like smaller. When I was smaller I was a little more scared of my parents than now but um cuz back then it was like the biggest threat for me was if they told my dad, well, because I'm the only girl. So then with my dad, I was like you know, his little princess and everything. I could never do anything bad. And then my parents had recently just gotten divorced. So then like, they seem to like use that as more of a threat. So, then, they were just "I'm calling your dad." And I'm like "No!," you know, "Don't call him!" Like, I'm over there crying my ass off in the principal's office. Like, I didn't even push her!

Rosa's sociocultural circumstances created additional layers of fear. Her parents' divorce and her identity as the only girl in her Mexican family produced familial and gender-based obligations to perform. Her role as the only girl created even more fear as she awaited a consequence from her principal, and then from her father. Rosa's decision to share gendered experience exemplifies that students enter the classroom with particular identities which carry social, cultural, and political meanings; these identities create additional layers for youth to navigate as they encounter injustice. Rosa also described begging and crying. Despite witnessing a severe emotional response from Rosa, an elementary school student at the time, neither the teacher nor the principal attempted to alleviate her panic and instead did exactly what she asked them not to do, causing additional emotional harm. Thus, they deliberately intensified her fears,

ignored her protests, and created a distressful and unsafe environment for Rosa. Rosa experienced intense fear, resulting in a physiological response, verbal cries for help, and self-doubt regarding her own value as a family member.

Evocation of fear among youth and their families

It was clear through collective storytelling that teachers and administrators often used the threat of calling caregivers in order to elicit fear among their students. Choosing this strategy to control student behavior indicates an expectation that parents will be disappointed in their child and will thus implement their own punishment. Despite this assumption, schools will also implement a school-based punishment for the same behavior. It is no wonder, then, that students reported feeling the biggest sense of fear when their school did or threatened to call their families.

Christian had a big personality. Though he participated in the largest focus group, his presence was known and he was able to take up the most space, but in a way that was not overbearing and allowed others to chime in. He was larger than the other students and described himself as "big for my age." Christian spoke openly about how he came from a strict African family and though he identified as African culturally, he was also heavily influenced by his town and neighborhood, a majority Black, low-income neighborhood in a diverse but highly segregated city with a rich history of social justice movements. Jaden, on the other hand, was soft spoken and took up minimal space in the group. He waited until others were quiet to speak, was patient for his turn, and spoke softly when he shared stories. Christian and Jaden spoke of the disciplinary intersection of home and school.

Jaden: Some people like, have strict parents. They may extra punish you. You get suspended for like a day and they suspend…like ground you for like a year.

Christian: You can get in trouble at school [but] you ever had to get in trouble and go home? *shakes head.

CV: That's worse?

Christian: Man! Yes, bruh! That drive home is the scariest moment of your life!

Jaden and Christian's remarks speak to the disciplinary dynamics between schools and families. Despite their differing personalities and backgrounds, Jaden and Christian experienced similar reflections regarding the disciplinary intersection of home and school. As parents receive calls from their students' teachers and administrators, they are also likely to experience a sense of fear, as phone calls are traditionally considered signs of wrongdoing. Parents are unlikely to receive phone calls when their child receives an A on a quiz or helped their peer with their classwork. When parents are integrated into the disciplinary process, they must balance their relationships with their children and the expectations from the school to *do something* about their child's behavior. Here, parents navigate the carceral apparatus in schools, adhering to pressure and information provided by the school in order to implement a home punishment that will parallel a school-level punishment. Caregivers may fear being perceived as a *bad* or *irresponsible parent* when receiving information from the school while the data in this study clearly demonstrates that youth fear a negative or harsh response from their parents.

Fear in response to expected consequences was common across the groups, even when youth expressed that they did nothing wrong to warrant a punishment. In the second focus group, Jennifer spoke about how fear prevented her from defending herself from an instance of injustice. Jennifer was very small in stature. She wore a hijab, spoke often with her hands, and gave the impression that she was spunky, and outspoken. Her voice was softer but raspy and she sounded younger than the other students, though she was also in 10th grade. Jennifer spoke of her experiences with school police and school security.

> Yeah, I've had an issue with [them] and it was kind of about my race too. So then I was like, I was just mad. But, I didn't tell nobody. I was like more scared of the consequences. Like if I tell them, cuz (long pause) so I was just like, for what?

Jennifer expressed that she was racially targeted by the officers on her campus, but did not complain to a staff member because she was cognizant of the power dynamics between her and the police officers. Jennifer's long pause during her story telling suggested a level of distress as she remembered what she experienced. Jennifer did not feel comfortable repeating or sharing what the officer did, further demonstrating that fear was prevalent not only at the time of the incident but also as she recalled what happened.

As participants recounted their experiences with teachers, administrators, police and security, their language and behavior indicated that fear was a common emotional response to discipline. As Jonathan, a soft-spoken Black-identifying 11th grader, shared his response after being caught with marijuana, he summed up how others expressed feeling in similar situations. He shared, "I was just scared when I got caught. I was scared. Scared of the outcome." Like Jonathan, participants feared what was to come from their school staff and families. Given our understanding of the importance of emotional safety at school, the presence of fear and other negative emotions as a result of school policies should be addressed and mitigated to reduce distress among students.

"It got me upset...I had to talk to the counselor"

Students witnessed and shared experiences of school staff controlling spaces and causing harm to students; these actions reinforce the carceral apparatus by undermining the school systems' role of facilitating a space of learning and safety (Shedd, 2015). Participants recounted scenarios, often multiple scenarios, which created anguish and sometimes even reduced their engagement in school. As school support reduced, distress increased and students showed a pattern of detaching or removing themselves from the individual or system that was causing distress. In this section, I share stories from participants which led to emotional discomfort. Further, I share the participants' responses to these situations and the ways that they protected their emotional safety.

Emotional and perceived developmental influences of distress, discrimination, and racism

Julie was a petite 10th grader who identified as Arab. She was the smallest in the room and spoke often with her hands. She wore a gray hijab and sat between two peers who she seemed to be friends with. She reported having strict parents and asked multiple times if her time away from class would result in an absence as she was concerned her parents would be upset by an absence on her record. Julie participated in focus group two, an all girl focus group that was not video recorded, but audio recorded at the request of multiple parents, including Julie's. Julie shared a story about her 9th grade Algebra teacher with the group.

> So, another algebra teacher. And should I say his race? Okay like, you know, I'm Arab and like, he's Jewish. Like, yeah, so he already like, we already disliked each other. I'm not gonna lie, I disliked him, and he disliked me. And I would never like say anything or disturb anything. But ever since like, the first day - I had him for like, a month or two. And he would always like, pick on me, like, pick on me like try to get me angry or upset. And he would always try to make me in trouble, and he gave me like a D, like for, like for the quarter. And he would try to like to call my dad and just made me upset in any way.

Julie was quick to name the social political dynamics that were at play in this interaction between her and her teacher. Due to her identity, she *expected* to have conflict with her teacher, admitting to disliking him because of his identity, but also showing awareness that the feeling was

mutual because of her identity. Sadly, her explanation seemed very matter of fact, as if being disliked by her teacher because of her identity was predicted. Julie’s recognition of her positionality in a space led by a Jewish teacher speaks to her understanding of social political contexts and the ways that they can impact how people are treated and perceived. Further, it exemplifies that there are social political histories that play out in the classroom and that students are directly impacted by these dynamics (Fashing-Varner et al., 2014). She continued her story.

> And then, one time I was absent, and my friends told me…because we would sit in a group. They told me that he never went to their table, not once. Like, yesterday. But like when I'm there, he would always come and like, I'm not the type to talk out loud, or like, like simple stuff like that for him to actually come. He would just be like, if I'm looking at him while he's teaching. He would look at me and say, “What are you staring at?” like he would literally say that. [laughs] Yeah, so like, I had switched classes cuz like... It got me upset to the point where like, I had to talk to the counselor about it.

The treatment that Julie received from her teacher was not only noticeable to her, but to her peers as well. They found it necessary to share with Julie that they too received different treatment due to her absence, re-affirming to Julie that she was being mistreated. Julie’s teacher utilized his power to alienate and control her, giving her poor grades and ostracizing her in front of her peers. In doing so, he created an unsafe environment for Julie and the other students in the class. Julie was understandably upset by their dynamic and recognized that she was no longer in a space to learn while in his classroom. I asked Julie if she told the counselor why she wanted to leave his class.

> Yeah, I told her everything. Like, it got me a little bit emotional too because, like, at that time I liked school [other students laughed]. And it's like, it's when I get to his class. It just like ruins my day.

Julie’s response here is significant as it demonstrates the beginning of a developmental shift. Julie reported to have liked school during this time, indicating that she no longer likes school and implying that this interaction created a disdain for school in general. The laughter by other participants suggested a shared understanding that as time progresses in high school, students tend to dislike school more and more. Their experience in school is directly shaping their attitudes towards school and resulting in students who distrust their teachers and staff and respond to threats appropriately (Spencer, Dupree, & Harmann, 1997). Julie’s teacher participated in unwarranted punishment, alienation, discrimination, and ultimately the elimination of Julie as his student through her removal from the space. In doing so, he implemented carceral school level practices and engaged the shadow carceral state in the classroom (Selman, Myers, and Goddard, 2019). Despite the discrimination Julie experienced, she was expected by the institution to learn and perform.

The situation appeared to take an emotional toll on Julie which was noted through my observation of her testimony and the language she used to tell her story. She used the words “upset” and “emotional” to describe her mental state as she cried to her counselor about the treatment she received. She reported that her teacher picked on her continuously over the course of two months in order to cause distress. Her response suggests that negative and threatening dynamics between students and school staff influence students psychologically and cause emotional harm. Further, the harm influences their development as adolescents and students as they begin to question their identity as learners.

Julie shared this story in response to the question, “Do you all think that the race of your teachers has been a factor in the way that they treat you or other students?” Though the goal was

to ensure that all questions asked in the focus groups were open-ended, I asked this question as a follow-up to previous testimony from another student who had experienced racism in the classroom and highlighted that her teacher was white. Julie was able to recall this memory immediately. There were no pauses in her story, indicating that the memory was fresh in her mind despite the year that had passed since her experience. Julie's detailed story and the stories of her peers indicate the significance of their experiences with discipline as events that have shaped their social and educational development. Another participant, Zara, empathized with Julie and attempted to build solidarity with her by sharing her own story.

> I feel like teachers sometimes, like take their relationship with their students, like personal like, if something happens between them, they're like, for the rest of the year, they would be like, mean, or like, you know, disrespectful, like, you know, that, like, have a bad relationship with a student. Yeah, I had a teacher in eighth grade. And I wouldn't say like, I got in trouble because she was, you know, kind of, like, it had to do something with my race, but she would like, say, some stereotypes about my religion and race out loud like in front of the students. It will be embarrassing and like, I was so uncomfortable in that class.

Zara also identified as Arab. She was tall, towering over Julie when they stood up. Zara participated in the group mostly through active listening. She nodded her head often as others spoke and always looked up at the person who was speaking. The excerpt above is the first story she shared about a personal experience. It seemed that Zara wanted to affirm what Julie was saying about how teachers can make students feel through the language they use and the dynamics they create. Zara spoke about her discomfort in the classroom, not because the teacher targeted her as Julie was targeted, but because the teacher used racial and religious stereotypes, forms of microaggressions, that were offensive to Zara. Like Julie's, her experience represents the social political history that manifests into classrooms and directly influences students' mental state and their perceptions of school in general. Though Zara was unable to switch out of the class, she shared her experience with her brother who had the same teacher the following year. Zara utilized her experience and understanding of tropes and stereotypes to protect her sibling. In sharing her story, she affirmed her peers' experience and provided solidarity. Zara demonstrated resistance and through her storytelling (Anzaldua, 1999)

"Was the kid white?"

Responding to harm and racism at school

Jazmine, a Black female student, entered the space after the focus group had begun. She brought in a bag of chips and a gatorade and we went through introductions once more to welcome her. Jazmine made sure the rest of the group knew that she was a senior, as the other participants were 10th graders. She often referenced how much she had learned during her time in high school and how happy she was to be in her final year. When she shared her stories, she spoke with a teaching tone, as if her experiences would become lessons for her peers. When Julie and Zara finished their stories, I asked the group if there were any other thoughts and Jazmine decided to chime in, as if she had just remembered something.

> Oh, my French teacher, I had to switch out of her class. She, one day I was in class. It was like, the day after my senior portrait, I went to class. And then she was like, she was like, "What's your name? Are you new?" I was like, bro, my backpack is the same every day. Like it's in front of me right now. So I know you see my backpack and she was like, Oh,

she's like "oh you got your hair done, you don't do that often." Like, dam [laughs] I don't do my hair often because I don't have to, I don't want to.

Jazmine went on to share that her teacher was white and that she gets picked on by "a lot of white teachers." She also added that she did not have anyone to impress at school, nor did she want to spend money on "looking fine every day." Jazmine's decision to defend her appearance to her peers demonstrates the possible embarrassment and/or shame she may have experienced when recounting this experience *and* the discomfort her teacher must have caused. As a high school student, Jazmine should not have to worry about being treated differently because she changed her hair and should not have to rationalize her appearance to her peers. The lack of recognition by her teacher is an example of experiences that are unique to Black students, experiences that can cause racial trauma (Comas-Diaz, 2017) and negatively influence students' experiences at school (Assari et al., 2017; Annamma, Miller, Jackson, 2020; Rios, 2017). Further, Jazmine's need to switch classes indicates that there were likely multiple negative interactions in this class and the onus was on Jazmine to protect her learning space by switching out of the class. Jazmine's story demonstrates another resistance practice that youth engaged in to protect themselves from harmful learning environments. Forms of resistance will be explored further in the next chapter.

In an attempt to reframe her experience as a lesson, Jazmine reported that she was picked on by a lot of white teachers "because I don't let them talk to me no type of way." Throughout the many stories Jazmine told, she relayed the strategies that she and her family members implemented to reduce the harm caused by school staff. She attempted to guide her peers by encouraging them to defend themselves and reminded them that their respect should be earned, even by adults. As a senior in high school, she developed into a student who had learned how to successfully navigate the school system. Further, she expressed the need to share her wisdom with her younger classmates who were in a different stage of development as students. Jazmine was othered and unrecognizable to her white teacher because she changed her hair. Her experience likely affirmed her perception that she is picked on by white teachers, reinforcing her need to develop strategies of defense against injustices. Jazmine turned her discomfort and shame into a lesson for others, just as Zara had.

Sociocultural framing by youth

Raymond was a tall and thin 11th grader with twists in his hair. He only spoke when he was called on and allowed others to take the lead during discussions. A school counselor who was in the room while the focus group took place described Raymond as respectful and someone who always took care of others. He praised Raymond while he quietly went around the room to collect trash from his peers after they had finished eating and were participating in the discussion. When the group was asked to share about a time they got in trouble, Raymond made sure to wait until others were done telling their stories before he spoke. When another student finished their story and two seconds of silence passed, Raymond finally shared an incident that occurred in middle school.

He reported that he got in trouble by his principal for not passing another student the ball during touch football, which they played during lunch break at school. He added that he also was in trouble with his mother because he responded "crazy" when the principal confronted him, elaborating he questioned the principal's judgment and tried to defend himself, explaining that it was a game and that other students were better players. Raymond's peers responded with remarks such as, "What?," "Are you serious?" "That's too much," and many laughed due to how ridiculous Raymond's story sounded. Raymond's counselor pointed out that he got in trouble by an administrator for engaging in typical "kid" behavior.

Raymond: Yeah, I wouldn't pass him the ball so I got in trouble by the principal because I was bad. I was like, you're (himself) like not getting in trouble for not passing the ball. I didn't do the "respectful thing" [air quotes]
Multiple Participants: [laughter]
Christian: You should've faded that kid for snitching
Raymond: But he didn't harm me, he was just upset I didn't pass him the ball. But I didn't play football for the rest of the year. For being an unfair player.
Multiple participants: What! Wow!
Christian: Was the kid white?
Raymond: Yeah.
Multiple Participants: Oh my god. Of course. That makes sense
Christian: That's some racism shit right there.
Raymond: I didn't really care.
Christian: What type of shit is that?
Raymond: They all stopped playing football like two weeks after that. It just wasn't fun after everybody found out.

Raymond had little emotion while he shared his story while his peers were highly animated, engaged, and upset by what they heard. Though Raymond clearly disagreed with the treatment he received, his temperament stayed consistent throughout his storytelling. Raymond exemplified great maturity when he challenged his peer who said that he should have fought the boy who told the principal. Developmentally, even as a middle schooler, Raymond understood that his treatment was systemic and coming from those in power, so he did not take his frustration on his peer but on his principal. Christian demonstrated sociocultural and sociopolitical understanding of a Black youth's experience by asking if the other student was a white student. Based on Raymond's treatment as a Black male, Christian made an appropriate assumption that the other student must have been white in order to receive such preferential treatment from administrators. Christian's accuracy with this assumption speaks to the youth's understanding of race in schools and the differential treatment they receive as Black male students in comparison to white male students.

Later in the discussion, participants were asked to try to recall how they felt in the moments when they were in trouble. Again, Raymond waited until he was sure that no one else was speaking. He reported "I was upset that I got in trouble for that. I felt disrespected but like, that's when I really…like that year I stopped caring [pause] about like school shit or how they feel about me I just stopped caring." I responded by asking Raymond, "So, would you say that experience had a long term consequence in that it changed your mindset?" Raymond responded, "Definitely." Raymond was unable to play football at school for a year because he did not pass a white student the ball. Based on his reflection of the situation, it seemed he understood that his treatment was unjust and it caused him to have negative feelings towards the school system. Raymond's emotional response was common, as we consider the responses from his peers.

Participants reported feeling upset, afraid, and detached from school after their experiences with injustice. Many were afraid of potential consequences from both the school and their parents, even when they expressed that they did not deserve a punishment. Sometimes, this fear resulted in a physiological response such as crying or shaking, indicating a deep negative response to the stressor. In the examples of fear that were shared, youth were able to share great detail regarding their state of mind and the details of their experience. Their ability to recall

events that often occurred many years ago indicates that these memories have stayed with them and may influence the ways in which they navigate school and their environments.

Disciplinary Influence

Like Julie, an experience of injustice with a school staff member caused feelings of detachment from school for Raymond. Their experiences indicate that students may begin to feel aloof and disinterested in school when they perceive that they are not being treated fairly. Further, if they are being mistreated, they are unable to receive a quality education; what then, is the point of caring about school? Moreover, the youth in the present study demonstrated a great ability to identify they are being treated unfairly due to their identities and experiencing injustice. As an elementary school student, Rosa was able to infer that she was being asked to clean because she identified as a Mexican girl while Jazmine understood that her experience of not being recognized by her own teacher was a highly racialized experience. Christian identified that Raymond's treatment was also an experience of racism because the complaining student was white. As each of the youth shared their stories of injustice, they received support, empathy, and appropriate outrage from their peers, (co)constructing a space of safety.

In the present chapter, I utilized storytelling as data to better understand the emotional influence of disciplinary practices on non-dominant youth. By engaging youth in focus groups and utilizing a semi-structured interview technique, I began to develop an understanding of the emotions that were elicited by carceral practices and the ways that youth resisted institutional discipline. I also utilized observations of participants' demeanor to explore their emotional responses to shared carceral practices including violations of trust, punitive disciplinary action, surveillance, and experiences of racism. I observed their demeanor and analyzed their stories in an attempt to accurately detail their experiences and responses to harmful treatment. In the next chapter, I discuss the forms of resistance youth engaged in to navigate carceral practices and explore youth perceptions of what it means to be in trouble.

Chapter 6: Perceptions and Experiences of *Trouble* & Strategies to Mitigate and Survive Injustice

Overview of Chapter

The empirically derived purpose of the current chapter is two-fold. Firstly, I hope to understand and describe how non-dominant youth perceive and conceptualize discipline. Participants were asked to describe a time when they saw someone get in trouble, then they were asked to describe instances in which they "got in trouble." The term "trouble" was subjective and up for interpretation but participants were able to collectively (co)construct a uniform definition of the term. Often, participants' collective definition of trouble made reference to the carceral system, highlighting the link youth make between school discipline and prison systems. The ways in which they (co)constructed meanings of trouble exemplifies the many acts of resistance youth demonstrated throughout the focus groups as they challenged stereotypes, reframed negative experiences, and built community.

The second purpose of this section is to examine the unique repertoires of practice that youth utilized to navigate disciplinary situations and combat oppressive institutional practices. As mentioned previously, repertoires of practice refer to engagement in activities which stemmed from participating in and observing cultural practices utilizing cultural-historical repertoires (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Participants employed a number of strategies as they experienced discipline and shared their experiences with their peers. Across the three focus groups, three main strategies used to challenge carceral practices emerged across spaces: collective agency vis-à-viscommunity building through humor and affirmation, the individual and collective rejection of negative tropes and stereotypes, and demonstrated repertoires of resistance to highlight participants' self-awareness and sociocultural knowledge of societal views of non-dominant youth.

Understanding the situations which led to disciplinary action and how youth make meaning of these experiences sheds light on the importance of day to day interactions among youth and the systems which create carceral environments. In order to frame the perceptions of discipline among participants and how they combat punitive practices, I will begin by describing the disciplinary practices that they encountered. Next, I will explore how participants individually conceptualized and (co)constructed the term "trouble" and the links they made between trouble and the carceral system. Then, I will provide examples and analysis to describe the three strategies that were utilized to challenge punitive practices. Despite regular encounters with disproportionate discipline in schools, participants of this study became historical actors, reframing how institutions and society view them and navigating challenging carceral environments in their schools.

Implemented disciplinary practices

Participants experienced discipline and perceived *trouble* in both individual and collective ways. In order to frame and provide context for the perceptions of discipline that unfolded throughout the focus groups, I will describe the most common examples of discipline that participants experienced. Providing this context further speaks to the influence of zero tolerance or one size fits all approaches to discipline and how students make sense of and respond to these policies . Each focus group was asked to describe situations in which they and/or others got in trouble as a means to identify communal versus individual experiences and to provide an opportunity for participants to share their perceptions. In this section, I will

describe the disciplinary actions that were taken by authority figures and institutions and interrogate the situations that led to disciplinary action for participants and their peers. Understanding the circumstances that led to the implementation of consequences is important to consider as this study attempts to highlight everyday interactions between students and systems in order to best understand youth perceptions of discipline and their influence. Further, it provides additional analytic context and greater insight on the environment of participants as they navigate punitive consequences.

Institutionalized consequences and experiences of discipline

A number of school-based consequences were identified by participants when they were asked to describe a time when they or someone else got in trouble. Students described the following school-based disciplinary actions during our discussions: labor, removal by teacher?, administrator intervention through removal, search of property and/or persons, police intervention, in- school suspension, out of school suspension, increased surveillance, expulsion, and contact with parents or guardians. It should be noted that many students experienced additional disciplinary action from their parents. The school-based consequences listed above are not unique to the participants of this study as minoritized students of color. Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students have and continue to receive disproportionate levels of discipline in their U.S. schools (Sickmund, 2019, Losen & Martinez, 2015; Elias, 2013; McKinney, 2005). Participants reported "getting in trouble" at school for dress code violations, "talking back" or verbal arguments, theft, substance use, tardiness, having a weapon, and attendance issues. Minor examples of trouble such as talking to peers during quiet time or not turning in homework were not referenced in the focus groups. Participants focused on behaviors which had more severe consequences; thus, (co)constructing ideas of trouble as something severe and not necessarily school related. Later in this chapter, I will speak to the participants' perceptions of trouble and their awareness of the ways in which they and students who look like them are disciplined and perceived.

Suspension as an institutionalized punishment

Suspension was the consequence that was referenced most across the three focus groups; participants described 21 different examples of suspension that they experienced or witnessed. Through close coding of focus group transcriptions, responses to the question regarding their observed and firsthand experiences with trouble were coded under the term "trouble," as a parent code while the examples of trouble, including suspension, were coded as child codes. The term suspension was also searched throughout the transcripts as some participants referenced suspension outside of the direct question regarding experiences of trouble. Thus, this researcher would establish suspension as a common institutionalized practice experienced by non-dominant public high school students. Below, I describe some examples of discipline that were shared by participants and their perceptions regarding the punishments implemented.

In the all male focus group, participants were in agreement that fighting at school automatically led to a three day suspension, regardless of the circumstances. However, Christian reported, "I feel like some situations and fighting, like the reason to fight…should be like, like based on how the punishment…how bad the fight was." Here, Christian was clearly advocating for more nuanced punishments and verbalizing his disagreement with a one size fits all, or zero-tolerance approach. Christian stumbled through his statement as if unsure how to share his belief that punishments should be based on situations and not zero tolerance policies, even for fighting.

He challenged the zero tolerance policy and resisted a carceral reaction to the behavior by offering an alternative to a zero tolerance policy.

Josh, a senior who spoke often in the group and shared many lengthy stories, provided examples that contradicted zero tolerance policies, indicating that varying circumstances of privilege and advocacy led to varying treatment for students. Josh reported that he had never been suspended because his mother advocated for him and spoke with school officials any time he got in trouble. Josh was small in stature and identified as a Black male. He and Christian presented as the leaders of their focus group. Christian was physically the largest person in the group and Josh was the smallest, yet Josh took on a leadership role in the group. Josh went on, "some people is more fortunate than others, when it comes to uh like when it comes to… family and their advocation [advocating], it's basically like having a lawyer." He added that though he had engaged in fighting, he had never been suspended because his mother always spoke to administrators on his behalf. He offered an example where the student he fought with was suspended but he was not because the other students' mother "wasn't around." Josh's reference to the legal system speaks to students' understanding of the carcerality of punishment in schools. He compared parent advocacy to legal representation and inferred that a lack of or poor legal representation would lead to a harder punishment. The comparison exemplifies how youth can (co)construct experiences of discipline as carceral experiences as they make reference to legal and carceral systems when they describe their experience. The link is clear enough to them that they feel comfortable sharing the link with their peers. Further, as Christian questioned the justice of zero tolerance policies, Josh demonstrated how, like the carceral system, youth use their privileges and advocacy to evade punishment.

Participants reported being suspended for one or several days or noticing that a student did not return to school for one or several days after being sent to the office, implying that they were suspended. Participants provided reasoning for suspension that ranged from being "disrespectful" to teachers, to throwing a ball at another student, to marijuana possession, to stealing, and fighting or physical altercations between students. Fighting was the most common circumstance to lead to a suspension, with half of the suspension examples, 11 in total, involving fighting.

Chronic suspensions were also reported by participants. Despite the frequency of suspensions among Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, the psychological impacts of suspension have only recently begun to be interrogated in education and psychology literature. Cohen et al. (2020) investigated the psychological and behavioral outcomes of suspensions; they found that the majority of Black participants showed a reduction in emotion regulation, prosocial behavior, and ability to concentrate. However, their disruptive behavior increased. Participants in the present study demonstrated similar responses to suspension. Jacob, a Black male from the same focus group shared, "I got suspended 11 times at one school like, I just stopped caring at one point. Even if I got in trouble now it's just like - you're 18 now, so it's whatever." Jacob was the last person to join the focus group and reported later that he transferred schools often. His response seemed to reflect a numbness from institutionalized consequences such as suspension, arguably countering their intention to reduce or prevent undesired behaviors. Jacob's statement speaks to how repeated suspensions disrupt connection, trust, and ability to learn at school and ultimately led him to feel disconnected from the school community.

Other participants had similar experiences with chronic suspension, one participant shared, "I got suspended a lot," and another reported, "in middle school, like my 8th grade year I got suspended eight times." Participants shared their stories in a matter of fact tone, with little to

no demonstrated emotion. As their peers listened to these stories, there were no shocked or appalled responses, only quiet listening and agreement in the form of nodding heads. It was apparent that the existence of chronic suspensions among this group, Black and Latino males, was normalized and even expected. Their experiences are representative of the disproportionate discipline that Black and Latinx students receive across the United States and alludes to the potential psychological harm that suspensions can cause. Unsurprisingly, many students referred to in-school suspensions as a positive outcome in relation to an out of school suspension. In-school suspensions occur when students are removed from their classrooms but remain on campus in a detention-like environment with other students who are also receiving an in-school suspension.

Josh: I've had in-school suspension though
Reggie: Yeah I got a lot of in-school suspensions
Christian: like my mom talked it down to in-school suspensions
Christian: that's a blessing right there [if] they give you in school
Josh: I mean not even because I never really cared.
(Four students speaking over one another at once)
Josh: I'd rather have an in-school suspension. It's like you stay in the office and just chill. It's really like…
Christian: You in the office all day but get escorted around.
Jacob: Exactly, they escort you around!

In-school suspensions (ISS) were regarded here as the lesser of two evils. Christian even described ISS as a blessing. The acceptance and appreciation of ISS by students exemplifies how the shadow carceral state can function unquestioned as an unseen mechanism to control and surveil youth of color (Beckett & Murakawa, 2012; Selman, Myers, and Goddard, 2019). Because they are accustomed to zero-tolerance policies such as suspension, a punishment that removes them from their peers and learning environment, a punishment that keeps them in closer proximity to the school and students is viewed as a privilege. The frequency in which participants experienced suspension in multiple forms could influence their perception of the consequence as a less severe consequence. Carceral logics become normalized, accepted, and often expected among youth through the carceral continuum (Shedd, 2015). Despite the fact that ISS removes students from their classrooms and the general student population as a form of punishment, youth appreciated that they were still able to remain in school and accepted the punitive consequence over more extreme forms of removal. Their responses speak to a desire to remain in their place of learning and to remain in close proximity to their peers. Their responses further reflect the importance of space and how the space in which they receive the punishment influences how they experience it. Complete removal, for example, is experienced as a more severe consequence than an in-school suspension due to the space in which the students are serving their punishment.

Perceptions and the (co)construction of trouble

As youth shared their experiences with discipline, their perceptions of trouble were unveiled as they (co)constructed definitions of the term. As participants chose which examples to share with the group, their own definitions of trouble were established. In this section, I hope to interpret the varying ways that participants (co)constructed the concept of trouble. Participants often rejected notions of trouble when referring to their own experiences with discipline, but

were able to utilize the term to describe minor infractions that led to disciplinary action when referring to what they observed among their peers. Perceptions and (co)constructions of trouble became a major factor to empirically investigate in this study and broadened the understanding of the environments that non-dominant youth are forced to navigate. As researchers continue to investigate zero-tolerance policies and disproportionate discipline, understanding students' perception of said experience can shed light on alternative ways to manage student behavior and provide ideas that are student-centered. Much of the literature on school-based discipline focuses on the behaviors that lead to discipline, the severity of consequences, and the racial and ethnic disproportionality of implemented consequences; this study expands on disciplinary literature by exploring how youth perceive discipline and how they utilize their repertoires and expertise to navigate institutionalized discipline. It should be noted that a number of policy and reform efforts have demonstrated some success, such as the literature on restorative justice in schools, but overall, disproportionate discipline and inequity persists in schools across the country (Joseph-McCatty & Hnilica, 2023). By understanding the lived experiences of and observations with discipline among non-dominant youth, we can begin to mitigate potentially negative influences and learn from their collective expertise.

"But yeah, I've never really been in *trouble trouble*." Rosa concluded her story, which was shared in the previous chapter, with this statement; the story about her teacher sending her to the principal's office for allegedly pushing her. Despite Rosa's account of an emotional response to the consequence when it occurred (crying, severe anxiety, fear), and the involvement of her parents and school administrators, Rosa decided to complete the narrative of her seemingly traumatic experience with the phrase, "*I've never really been in trouble trouble.*" Rosa's decision to utilize this specific language speaks to one of the major themes I will continue to discuss in this chapter as I explore how youth perceive experiences of *trouble.* Rosa uses language to reject her connection to trouble by reclassifying the term as "trouble trouble" and distancing herself from the new term. The second, is how youth utilize collective agency, reframing, and other repertoires of practice (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003) to resist carceral actions in order to survive and flourish in highly surveilled and controlled spaces of learning.

In Rosa's example, she uses her own sociocultural understanding of what it means to be in trouble which is based on her perception of what trouble is and who typically gets in trouble. Ultimately, her repertoire of sociocultural knowledge allowed her to reject labels and identities that are perceived as negative by institutions. As a result of her conceptualization of trouble, Rosa represents herself in a positive manner by saying she has not been in "trouble trouble" and rejects the stereotypes that often surround students perceived as challenging or trouble makers. Her rejection of this trope is especially important given Rosa's identity as a translingual Latina as she perceives differential treatment from teachers because of her identity. Rosa shared multiple stories of oppressive disciplinary practices that she experienced as a student of color. However, throughout her stories, she continued to reject language that would classify her as anything but a responsible and well-behaved student and daughter. She utilized her cultural dexterity to reframe her experiences; she admitted to being *caught* but denied being in trouble, despite being faced with often serious consequences for minor behaviors. She also reported that she would call her mom to explain the situation, even if her teacher or an administrator did not yet threaten to involve her parents.

> Actually, I just end up calling my mom myself…because I kind of just tell my mom everything now, because I feel like that's what makes our relationship better if I just told her what happened before she finds it out. Because that's when I really do get in trouble

when she finds out when it's from another person. And it's not from me. So then it was only I guess, like, yeah, I never really got in trouble.

In this excerpt, Rosa continued to emphasize the idea that she never gets in trouble. She described utilizing her strong and trusting relationship with her mother to resist any form of punishment that may come from the home as a result of a situation that happened at school. Rosa utilized her relationship with her mother as a space to develop a positive sense of self, even when school staff perceived her as a disruptive or even violent student. Rosa understood that trust from her mother would result in a layer of protection from additional punishment. Since her childhood, it seems that Rosa has made deliberate and calculated decisions to combat oppressive disciplinary policies at her former and current schools. The emotional and cognitive labor of her actions cannot be understated and speaks to the immense pressures and barriers non dominant youth must overcome in order to be successful and be perceived as "good" at their schools.

Perceiving trouble as a form of carcerality

Perceptions of trouble among participants were often related to carcerality. The term carceral refers to "relating to or suggesting jail or prison" (Webster, 1963). Contemporary references to carcerality include systems and practices which expand a carceral experience (Miller, 2019). As participants shared their perceptions of trouble, they referenced prison and shared their perceptions of school police. Below, I will describe how participants made these links to the carceral system and how their references speak to an overarching carceral experience at school.

As participants shared stories of punishment, they made references to the carceral system and aligned their school-based consequences with carceral consequences. The first question that participants were asked was, "Tell me about a time when you saw someone get in trouble." Raymond was the first among the group to raise his hand, beating three other participants by seconds. As previously discussed, Raymond is the student who was sent to the principal for not passing the ball during a lunchtime football game to a white peer. He was soft spoken, making it difficult to hear what he was saying at times. He took bites in between his sentences as he spoke, looking down at his food then briefly making eye contact with me. Raymond shared the following story,

Raymond: Um, I saw my big brother get arrested. For…umm I think…robbery

CV: Can you tell me what happened?

Raymond: I think him and his girlfriend got into it…and… he was in touch with her but she wasn't answering. So he threw a brick through a window. And the cops came and they arrested him and yeah that's it.

It was clear from Raymond's story that this was a core memory for him, as he immediately raised his hand after hearing the question. Instead of sharing school level consequences when asked about seeing others get in trouble, Raymond was reminded about his brother's interaction with police and openly shared a personal experience that likely held significant emotional weight. His definition of the term *trouble* was constructed to include arrests and police involvement. Participants of focus group three who shared after Raymond also referenced interactions with police, responding to examples of trouble with stories of arrests. They referenced police involvement for domestic abuse, robbery, and possession. As participants continued to openly share their observed and direct experiences with police, they (co)constructed

trouble as more than a school-based infraction, but as an event that was carceral in nature and could lead to *legal* consequences..

Carceral references were made at different points throughout focus group three. As participants continued to talk about the experience of ISS, carcerality continued to come up in the discussion. The interaction below is a continuation of the interaction referenced above regarding ISS, which ended with a comment by Jacob affirming that students in ISS are escorted.

> Christian: I ain't gon lie they do…that sh*t was like on some prisoner type sh*t if I think back on it bruh.
> CV: Why do you say that?
> Christian: Because like, when I think back on it I think they used to like, they gotta walk you to the bathroom, walk to you to lunch? I'm like bruh what the.
> Carlos: They walk you to the bathroom?
> Christian: Yes! They used to walk you to the bathroom. "You gotta go to the bathroom? We'll walk you."
> Jacob: I used to hate that bruh.
> Christian: But in school bruh, it *was* like some prison sh*t, I think back on it now.
> Josh: They gotta watch you at all times.
> Christian: They gotta watch you at all times bruh. I guess I'm gonna sneak off campus or whatever. And why would I do that?

The comparison of ISS to a prison speaks to a process of meaning-making among the participants. Here, Christian utilized his sociocultural knowledge, based on his understanding of how prisons function, to compare ISS to a prison-like environment. The participants reference the high levels of surveillance, as students in ISS are constantly being watched and followed, as evidence that the treatment of students in ISS is similar to how prisoners are treated when incarcerated. Further, their comparisons speak to youths' ability to understand the inequity in the treatment they receive and even reference the similarities between schools and other carceral institutions. In this interaction, the participants view the ISS consequence as an example of their school treating their students like prisoners. Interestingly, participants had referred to ISS as a "blessing" in comparison to an out of school suspension just moments prior. Their seemingly contradictory perspectives speak to the complexity of youth perceptions and how discussions can shape their ability to make meaning of a circumstance.

Christian utilized sarcasm to highlight his disagreement with the surveillance policy associated with ISS. He says, "I guess I'm gonna sneak off campus or whatever," in a sarcastic tone, perhaps in an effort to emphasize his disagreement with his own treatment in ISS. Christian also references "thinking back on it" twice during this discourse, implying that his realization of ISS as a prison-like experience is new or that he had not considered it before. His words further demonstrate that as youth reference and discuss previous interactions with school punishment with others, they may better understand the punitive nature and inequity in their experience as they develop and make meaning of past experiences.

Exploring perceptions of police as a form of trouble

Students in focus groups two and three also referenced prison and police brutality when participants were asked about their thoughts regarding school police. I inquired about participants' perceptions of school police as police interaction is often associated with misbehavior. Thus, I considered policing as a potential tool for "trouble" and expanded perceptions of trouble to include perceptions of policing in their schools. Students were asked,

"how do you feel about having police officers on the school campus?" Participants in focus group two responded.

Zara: No, it's too much. And then like, obviously, like, with what's going on? You know, police brutality and stuff. I feel like, it would just…
Jennifer: Make it worse
Zara: Yeah it would make it so much worse, especially for students.
Jennifer: Yeah. And I've had an issue with the security.
Jazmine: Yeah, no, they disrespectful.

In chapter 5, Jennifer's negative interaction with security was shared. She reported that the negative treatment was related to her race. Zara immediately followed her comment by saying the following:

Zara: Another reason for why it's not a good idea. It's just gonna make, like, school feel like a prison more than it already does. You know, you're being watched. It's not good.

Like Christian, Zara referenced how schools create carceral environments for students. Zara made it clear that the presence of school police did not solely create a prison-like environment as she stated police will make school feel like a prison, "more than it already does." Zara did not specify the other factors which create a prison-like climate at school, but her comment speaks to her own conceptualization of school in general as a carceral environment. Zara also referenced police brutality and demonstrated her socio-political understanding of national police perceptions in late 2021. During 2020 and 2021, the murder of George Floyd by a police officer triggered uprisings throughout the country and even internationally as members of society sought police reform, police defunding, abolition, and accountability. Participants' perceptions were likely informed by the discourse around the uprisings and their social world. Zara's response further demonstrates how youth utilize their sociopolitical and sociocultural understandings of the world to make meaning of their observations and experiences and develop opinions about institutional practices (Annamma, 2015; Gutierrez, 2008).

Participants of focus group three go on to share additional opinions regarding police presence at school. Julie, the petite sophomore mentioned in Chapter 5, pointed out that police might be needed in case of a school shooting while Jazmine, the senior, seemed to affirm Julie by stating that students have brought guns to school in the past. Jazmine went on to share that while school security officers do not get physical with students, she has seen school police kick, sit on, and physically assault students. As the group discussed the pros and cons of police presence, they seemed focused on developing a collective stance. It is worth noting that participants were not asked to agree and were reminded that it is okay to have differing opinions on the topic, but they continued to discuss potential strategies collectively. They ultimately agreed that police officers do not belong on their school campus but that they should be nearby in case of an emergency. Their desire to reach a shared understanding speaks to the community building that occurred in all three focus groups, an act of resistance I will discuss later in this chapter.

Participants of focus group three also participated in a discussion regarding the presence of school police. When asked if they believe that police should be at schools, Christian responded immediately.

Christian: Police should not be at school, this is not a prison. They should not be at school.

> Josh: It should be like ex-police but not like active ones you know *and* they gotta be Black. He has to be Black.
> Jacob: Nah, even the Black ones be on some shit.
> Christian: Yeah.
> Josh: Yeah they should only come up here when they get called to.
> Carlos: I feel like we already have security though.
> Christian: I don't think police should be up here!

Josh's perspective that school police officers must be Black received two nods of agreement by other participants. Yet, Jacob disagreed and stated that Black police officers also "be on some shit," implying that they also engage in discriminatory or problematic behavior. Perceptions of police officers who share ethnic or racial backgrounds with youth was not explored in this study, but may be worth exploring given the differing perspectives on this topic in this majority Black male focus group. Carlos was the only Latino in the group. He sat next to this author and was actively engaged when the focus group began but became slightly less engaged as the session continued. He seemed unsure of when to speak but began to raise his hand before speaking. The comment by Carlos reminding his peers that security is already present at school was a reminder of the lack of guidance regarding the role of police officers at school and the situations which warrant their intervention, especially considering the existing presence of school security guards (Education Week, 2018). Carlos implies that the presence of both security and police is unnecessary, perhaps indicating a lack of understanding regarding the difference in roles between the two professions and/or disagreement regarding the need for the presence of both. Christian was passionate about his stance on school police. Other participants nodded in agreement as he vocalized his disagreement with Josh. I noted that the majority of participants seemed to be against police presence and asked participants to elaborate. Unsurprisingly, given his initial response, Christian responded.

> Because I feel like…in a way school is…in a way school is kind of like a prison, in a type of way, you just added police to it. It's like…I feel like when you treat people like criminals, they're gonna become criminals. So, if you have police watching and sh*t it's gonna make them [students] rebel. You're gonna make them rebel.

Immediately after Christian finished his statement, the other participants began speaking at once, sharing their own perspectives of police, seemingly in agreement, with the peers around them. His comment triggered multiple side discussions and participants became more engaged and eager to share their perspectives. A school counselor who supported recruitment and was observing the group quieted the side conversations and asked students not to speak over one another. After a few seconds, participants finished their thoughts and an 11th grader named Caleb raised his hand and began to speak. Caleb had short blonde-ish dreads and was tall in stature, he was quiet at the beginning of the focus group session but his engagement increased as time went on. Caleb stated that with the presence of police officers "it's an incident waiting to happen," Josh agreed and Caleb continued that a "police officer with his gun on and all these kids around? An incident waiting to happen…" Both Christian and Caleb agreed that police presence impacts the school climate and weighs on students. They argued that the presence of police influences students, either making students feel like criminals or instigating situations to warrant police intervention against students. Their perspectives perfectly exemplify that the students in this study believe that carceral institutional strategies are emotionally and

behaviorally harmful to students and can create an atmosphere where students feel like prisoners in their own schools. Despite the potential negative influence of carceral school practices, participants engaged in a number of strategies to combat carceral practices and protect their well-being. In doing so, they resisted a carceral experience and negative labels to successfully navigate the institution.

Navigating and combatting carceral experiences and punitive systems

Through the coding and analysis of focus groups, situations of injustice faced by non-dominant youth have been highlighted and we learned about the emotional toll of carceral experiences. I want to end my findings by describing the skills, knowledge, and collective resilience demonstrated by the participants of this study. Despite facing immense challenges, participants demonstrated a number of strategies to resist carceral practices and environments in order to remain in school and successfully navigate their institution.

Collective resilience

Semi-structured youth focus groups were designed to allow participants to engage in discussions, bring up concerns, and share information while answering a number of discussion questions. Though some participants seemed to be familiar with one another prior to the focus groups, every participant met a student they had not previously encountered before the focus group. I expected that this lack of familiarity within a group of adolescents would create reservations and verbal participation would be low. However, youth were heavily engaged with the questions and with one another throughout the three focus groups. Situations of community building came up throughout the groups.

Community building through humor and affirmation

Humor was coded 32 times across the three focus groups, it was the most popular code to appear throughout the analysis process. Humor was coded when a participant responded to or shared a story using humor and it was followed by laughter from the majority of the group. Humor was also utilized to create playful banter among the participants and was commonly utilized as a repertoire of practice to alleviate tensions and build solidarity as participants shared situations of injustice. Many laughs were shared in focus group three as participants built community and decreased tension through jokes and laughter. As students shared experiences with suspensions and fighting, Christian reported that he got into a fight with a peer in an effort to defend a girl he liked. He reported, "So, I was like, 'leave her alone!'" Josh responded, "you said, 'leave her alone?'" and the entire group exploded in laughter. Christian laughs along with his peers and admits that he was being a "corn ball" and was trying to impress the girl. He proceeded to incorporate humor into the story, despite the fact that he was suspended due to the fight and he disagreed with the consequence he was given. The interaction created a climate where participants felt comfortable appropriately interjecting when others shared, often to affirm or joke about an experience. The playful interjections seemed to reduce the negative weight of the often traumatic or uncomfortable stories that youth shared.

Focus group one was composed of three 11th graders and three 10th graders. The students within the same grade knew one another but did not know the students in the other grade. The 10th grade students were not as vocal as the 11th graders during the first half of the focus group. Thus, when asking students to describe a memorable time when they got in trouble, I asked if participants on the right side of the table had anything to share. Leah was a shy 10th

grader with short curly hair. She wore a beanie low on her forehead and a mask, so only her eyes and the top of her cheeks were visible. She looked at her fellow 10th grade peers before responding to me, as if to say, "Okay, I will answer for us." Leah reported "It was very stupid of me. But…I got caught…umm…doing edibles at school." Leah hesitated to share this, as noted by many pauses, her hand over mouth, and speaking softly but with a quiet awkward giggle. It seemed by Leah's nonverbal behavior that she was embarrassed by the story. She prefaced the story by stating "It was very stupid of me," in order to acknowledge wrongdoing and take accountability.

Maria, an 11th grader with dark curls down her back, was dressed in a red sweatsuit and spoke often and with confidence throughout the focus group. She presented herself as a leader early on during the session as she often answered questions first and offered her perspectives after other participants spoke. She immediately responded to Leah's comment by saying "We've all been there!" She waved her hand as if to brush away any shame Leah might be feeling after sharing her story. The other participants laughed and another 11th grade participant nodded. Leah also laughed and began sharing the details of the story. Kayla, another 10th grade participant who sat next to Leah began adding to the story as she was present when Leah got caught with the edibles. Kayla had not verbally participated in the focus group prior to this. It seemed that Maria's comment and use of humor eased some of the uneasiness Leah and Kayla were feeling in that moment. The interaction was one among many where participants utilized humor to affirm the experiences of their peers.

Raymond's interaction with injustice was described in chapter 5. Raymond shared a story about getting in trouble by the principal for not passing the ball to a white student. As Raymond shared his story, his tone was serious and matter of fact. In response to his story, Raymond's peers used humor to lighten the seriousness of Raymond's tone. The group seemed to agree that racial dynamics were to blame for Raymond's treatment when Raymond reported that the student who told on him was white. Despite the severity of the situation, participants laughed when expressing their shock at Raymond's story. They responded with comments such as "oh hell no," and "that's wild!" and would laugh together in a sort of communal shock. They provided options for what Raymond should have done with sarcasm, one student reported he should have fought everyone, even the principal, in response to his mistreatment. Raymond finally laughed in response to this comment.

Sandberg and Tutenges (2019) explored humor theory across interviews with incarcerated men and found that humor was used to critique authority and alleviate the pain of tragedy. They argued that given the nuance of humor and its lack of fit within common qualitative or theoretical categories, it should be explored as a means to understand marginalized groups and their experiences. I argue that the participants of the current study utilized humor in similar ways. Humor was utilized often when situations of injustice were shared and participants responded with humor to alleviate the emotional weight of the story being shared by their peers. In these instances, humor may have been applied throughout the focus groups as a cognitive coping strategy to assuage negativity and promote positivity and community within the group.

Individual and collective resistance to labeling and stereotypes

As Rosa shared multiple examples of getting in trouble in elementary school, she incorporated humor regularly into her stories to reject negative labeling and alleviate the weight of her story. Rosa shared that she tried to sharpen a crayon in the pencil sharpener in elementary school. Her punishment was that she had to work in the office, missing her lunch time for an

entire month. Despite Rosa's humor in delivering the story, the response from the group was genuine shock and disagreement with her consequence. Participants responded seriously, "a whole month?!" and "what!" as she shared her story. Rosa continued to use humor and positivity throughout her story telling. She stated, "Yeah, they would make me go get my lunch and go to the office. And then I had to, like, file all the papers and stuff. I GOT SECRETARY EXPERIENCE!" She nodded her head and waved her hands as she said the last sentence, applauding what she was able to accomplish out of an unjust situation.

As stated above, Rosa also rejected labels and negative perceptions. Despite sharing multiple stories in which she received severe and unjust consequences as an elementary school student, she proceeded to report that she had never been in *trouble trouble*. Members of the group, including myself, attempted to point out the contradiction when Rosa ended her story by stating that she had never really been in trouble.

CV: I might argue that you got in big trouble for that, because of the consequence.

Maria: Yeah. I would think maybe like a couple days.

Leah: Maybe one recess?

Rosa: That was…nah. But I was like why did I even have to pay for the pencil sharpener? Because they were like, I had to work off the payment for the pencil sharpener.

Leah: wow

Maria: Yeah, in elementary, that's a long time.

Rosa: It was pretty messed up. But then, when I finally went outside, it was like ahh (reaching her arms out above her head). It felt good getting some fresh air.

As we collectively attempted to point out the injustice Rosa experienced, she continued to identify the positive aspects of the situation and rejected any sense of victimhood. She may have been utilizing humor as a coping mechanism to alleviate some of the pain associated with her experience as well. Rosa ended her story by highlighting how wonderful it felt to get fresh air after spending her lunch time inside for an entire month. Though Rosa did not disagree with our comments and likely understood that she had been mistreated, she chose to focus on the positive aspects of her experience and entertained her peers with humorous storytelling in the process.

Throughout focus group one, participants rejected the notion that they were students who "got in trouble," but were able to share examples of other students receiving consequences for particular behaviors - they called it trouble. Leah shared a story of a student who was suspended for being drunk at school and stated that she felt the suspension the student received was warranted. Others reported stories of students cursing at teachers and being sent to the principal. Despite the fact that all of the six participants also shared an example in which they received a consequence for a behavior, four out of six began or ended their stories with comments such as, "I never really got in trouble," or "I don't get in trouble." Leah, for example, was nearly suspended for having edibles in her backpack, she was also among the participants who stated that she doesn't get in trouble. Maria shared a story about her lighting a piece of paper on fire with her lighter and reported that she didn't receive a harsh consequence because she never got in trouble. In each of these scenarios, participants resisted association with the term *trouble* and presented themselves as good students. In doing so, they rejected the labeling and negative perceptions which tend to follow students of color.

Jacob shared that he had been suspended 11 times and that he stopped caring about school and consequences. He reported that he used smoking marijuana to self-medicate and went through a behavioral and emotional spiral.

"I was like I just don't care. I'm smart enough to get my grades back if I wanted to. I just went off the deep end…started doing things I would have regretted at any moment. I ended up becoming just a terrible person that didn't really care about, like, was it affecting people?"

As Jacob spoke openly about his experience and how negatively he viewed himself, the room became quiet while students politely listened. Christian then responded, "I wouldn't say terrible person, I would say misunderstood." Jacob nodded to Christian in a nonverbal agreement and he seemed to appreciate of Christian's comment. Their interaction is an example of the community building that took place across focus groups as participants collectively affirmed each other's experience and supported one another in rejecting negative labels. Jacob was provided space to reframe his experience and opportunity to provide himself with grace.

Repertoires of resistance: sociocultural understandings and responses

Participants demonstrated a number of repertoires which highlighted their understanding of sociocultural factors which influence how they are perceived by society. In many of the examples highlighted throughout this study, participants understood how they were perceived by the institution and worked to challenge negative perceptions and practices. Rosa resisted when she was asked to clean the classroom as she recognized that her ethnicity and gender were likely causing her teacher to assign her that task. Julie recognized how political and historical happenings may have shaped how she was being treated by her Jewish teacher and switched out of the class to protect her emotional safety and ability to learn. Christian and Jacob made references to the carceral system when describing school disciplinary practices and voiced their disagreement with these policies. In each of these examples, participants utilized their racial, political, historical and cultural knowledge to resist and navigate oppressive situations.

I borrow from Gutierrez and Rogoff's (2003) work on repertoires of practice to argue for the exploration of repertoires of resistance, which I define as the utilization of cultural-historical repertoires to resist carceral practices and other forms of oppression such as negative labeling in order to successfully navigate institutions. Rosa exemplified her repertoire of resistance when she reframed her punishment to something positive. Her consequence for breaking a pencil sharpener was to work in the office for a month. When asked if Rosa felt anger towards the school or teacher for implementing the consequence.

> At first I was just like you know, like, why am I here? But then after…But for the same reason, like I said, I've always been chill with admin and stuff. So I was cool with the secretary. So you know I'm just hanging with the secretary. You know, at recess, helping her file her papers and stuff.

Earlier in the session, Rosa referenced how being "chill with admin," or having a positive relationship with the administrators on campus, helped her avoid trouble and potential consequences as a high schooler. Not only did Rosa develop relationships with administrators as a means of protection from harm, she also resisted having a negative perception of her experience and highlighted her relationship with the secretary to emphasize that she got the most out of her experience.

Participants of focus group three engaged in a discussion about racial dynamics at their school. As a group 3-4 upperclassmen discussed how in previous years Black male students and Mexican students had "beef," and would engage in physical and verbal altercations often. When Lucas, a senior who arrived late to the focus group but engaged in this conversation stated, "It's these Mexicans that be trying to start something. Always starting something." Josh responded,

"Yeah, Mexicans and Blacks used to funk." Then, Christian responded, "That's some prison shit bruh. That's some prison shit right there. We really was beefing with Mexicans." Christian's tone was incredulous, as if he was shocked by their behavior. As Lucas began to speak in the present tense, Josh and Christian used past tense to describe the dynamics between the two student groups and Christian pointed out how the behavior they engaged in was carceral in nature as two oppressed groups were battling one another inside of an institution.

As the conversation continued, the group discussed the reasons why the tensions occurred and agreed that the situation was unfortunate and silly. The Black participants stated, "now we got Hispanic friends," and described how "race riots" and "wars" were a thing of the past. During this discussion, the participants demonstrated their understanding of historical racial dynamics and prison culture and worked together to reject the adoption of these perspectives and practices. When peers tried to make generalizations about a particular racial group, they were challenged or corrected by informing me and one another that these issues were in the past. Though it is possible that many students continued to hold negative attitudes towards different racial groups, the group collectively decided to move on from this mindset and move forward. They utilized their repertories to resist societal stereotypes and reject prison culture in their schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the varying circumstances which led to disciplinary outcomes for participants and explored the repertoires they utilized to resist oppressive or carceral practices and navigate their institutions. Suspensions accounted for the most common disciplinary outcome for participants. Student participants cited a number of student behaviors that would lead to a suspension and agreed that fighting was the most common reason they and their peers received suspensions. As participants discussed observed and direct experiences of trouble, they (co)constructed varying definitions and perceptions of trouble. Many participants identified the link between carcerality and school discipline as they referenced prison-like policies and behaviors.

Participants utilized their cultural-historical knowledge to resist carceral practices. The repertoires they pursued included community building via humor and affirmation and resistance to labeling and negative perceptions. Participants' repertoires of resistance enabled them to reframe carceral thinking and practices and present themselves as learners and school community members. Throughout the focus groups, participants comforted, affirmed, and supported one another as they each shared stories that were often tragic. They collectively reframed negative situations while affirming the challenge of the experience to their peers. All in all, the participants exemplified skill, expertise, and compassion as they shared their experiences.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The current dissertation presents an empirical mixed-methods attempt to explore how non-dominant youth perceive, make meaning of, and are emotionally influenced by punitive disciplinary practices. Through the coding and analysis of youth storytelling and discourse, I also sought to understand how youth experience and resist carceral institutional practices. In this discussion chapter, I review the findings and consider various themes that build upon existing themes in the literature on the school-prison nexus and highlight the strengths and collective resilience of youth as they navigate complex institutional practices. I reflect on the implications of the study on education research, policy, and practice and highlight the potential significance of an interdisciplinary approach to school-prison nexus literature. I end the work with the various limitations of the study and provide considerations for future research.

Findings and relevant themes

In this section, I review the initial research questions, related findings, and relevant themes which have been explored and identified throughout this study.

Exploring perceptions of trouble

I utilized a mixed methods approach to empirically identify themes associated with the ways in which youth perceive and experience the carceral apparatus in their schools. Perceptions of discipline or trouble and policing were directly explored. An exploration of youth perceptions contributes to the educational discipline and school-prison nexus literature as it highlights the lived experiences of students and how they make meaning of carceral experiences. It should also be noted that the analysis of participant experiences as carceral is made by this author given the definition of carceral logics and the similarities in policies that extend from prisons to schools. However, participants did not always use terms like carceral or prison to describe many of their experiences and the nuance of their experiences should be considered as educators and researchers begin to interrogate oppressive practices in schools and categorize potentially harmful policies. Understanding the perceptions and day to day experiences of non-dominant youth provides an opportunity for educators and policy makers to make student focused decisions regarding policy.

A measure to explore perceptions of discipline and policing

In order to explore this research question quantitatively, I developed a measure on Perceptions of Disciplinary and Policing Justice or PDPJ and included additional survey questions on experiences and emotional influences of discipline. Though the sample size was relatively small with XXX participants and a few items showed a lack of fit considering the intention of the measure, the measure proved to be a promising tool to identify the varying levels of justice youth perceive to experience at their schools. Responses by participants fell in one of four levels which ranged from a high level of perceived justice, or a restorative perception to a low level of perceived justice, or punitive perception. Additional pilot projects which include the suggestions listed in chapter four should be conducted prior to widespread use of the measure. However, the PDPJ could help schools understand the levels of disciplinary and policing justice their students perceive at their institutions. Low levels of justice among large numbers of students, for example, can indicate to schools that shifts in disciplinary culture need to be made to enhance student satisfaction and safety within their schools.

Perceptions of trouble and trouble as carcerality

The theme of carcerality came up consistently throughout the focus groups as I attempted to understand participants' perceptions of trouble. When participants were asked to describe situations when they or others "got in trouble," references made to policing and arrests. These examples were brought up regularly and often prior to references of school-based consequences. This connection may indicate that the term trouble is associated with legal trouble for non-dominant youth. It further speaks to how youth utilize cultural-historical knowledge to make meaning out of terms and experiences.

As mentioned above, institutional disciplinary practices such as ISS were compared to prisons. When providing her perspective on school police, one participant stated, "it's just gonna make school like a prison more than it already does." It should be noted that the question regarding police was the last question to be asked during the focus groups. The question was saved for last as I did not want to create a bias or connection towards anything explicitly carceral as I asked participants about their experiences with discipline. Nonetheless, multiple youth brought up terms such as prison and lawyers independently when asked about their experiences with trouble and their peers agreed with their perspectives. Their references to carcerality when describing school discipline is significant and speaks to the emotional weight of disciplinary practices on non-dominant youth.

Perceptions of policing were also explored through the measure, survey questions and focus group discussions. A total of 30 students responded to the survey and 22 of them also participated in focus groups. 83% of participants reported that officers are not needed on their school campus. The majority of participants reported that students are fearful when interacting with school police and that school police were not trustworthy or helpful. Overall, perceptions of school police were negative.

Focus groups further explored perceptions of both trouble and policing. When participants were asked whether or not they believed police should be on school campuses, varying perspectives were discussed. However, as discourse continued, participants moved towards agreeing on a collective answer. Some participants referenced the need for police in case of emergencies, such as school shootings. Others pointed out that police can escalate situations and make matters worse for students. Participants in focus groups three and four referenced how police presence creates a prison like environment at school. Both groups collectively decided that police should not be on school campuses while focus group one could not come to a consensus.

Disciplinary experiences

Descriptive statistics among a sample of 30 students indicated that over half of participants had experienced a punitive form of discipline and among that group of students, 65% of them found the discipline to be significant or memorable. Chi-square tests determined that Black students were more likely than their non-Black peers to receive a punitive punishment but were not more likely to find the punishment significant or memorable.

During focus groups, participants described a number of behaviors which led to disciplinary consequences. Suspensions were among the most common form of discipline that students both witnessed and experienced. The perceptions of discipline among students was mixed. Participants often agreed that suspension was a fair consequence for behaviors such as fighting or having illicit substances on campus. As participants discussed in-school-suspensions (ISS), however, they began to link the consequence to a carceral experience. Participants cited high levels of surveillance and exclusion when describing ISS as a prison-like experience.

Emotional responses to discipline

One of the goals of the study was to understand how and/or if students are psychosocially and emotionally influenced by school level carceral logics. Though many emotions were coded in the qualitative data, fear was the most pronounced emotion to come up for the participants. They spoke in great detail about situations that occurred as far back as middle school and remembered crying, shaking, and being scared as they waited for a consequence or received a consequence. They referenced the fear of duplicate discipline at home and school as many used the word fear to describe their emotional state. They knew their parents would be called and they would be receiving a consequence from the school and their families.

Some participants reported feelings of numbness as they experienced chronic discipline and discrimination. Multiple students shared stories about being discriminated against by an administrator or teacher. Some then referenced negative feelings towards school as a result of the interaction. As one participant shared a story of conflict with a teacher that she felt was due to her race, she prefaced the story by saying, "and at that point, I still liked school." The detail provided in these stories further speaks to how significant the disciplinary situation was for many of the students as they were able to remember small details a year or many years after the situation occurred.

Participants reported feeling upset, angry, scared, or detached after experiencing punitive discipline and many described experiences of racism and discrimination as they shared their examples. Survey results indicated that over half of youth experienced a form of discipline that was significant or memorable and that they experienced negative emotional responses as a result of the disciplinary action. Overall, the emotional influence of discipline proved to be significant and should be considered as schools as districts create and implement disciplinary policies.

Resisting a carceral experience

Despite the many challenges participants described in their stories, their accounts were also filled with examples of triumph, strategy, and institutional knowledge. Participants utilized a number of repertoires to resist carceral experiences and successfully navigate conflicts and injustice. Stories of tragedy and injustice were common across the focus groups, yet cultural-historical knowledge and references, humor and affirmations, and the rejection of labels were equally common as participants collectively built community to challenge punitive discipline.

Borrowing from Gutierrez and Rogoff's (2003) literature on repertoires of practice, I argue for the exploration and implementation of repertoires of resistance to describe the utilization of cultural-historical repertoires to resist carcerality. Throughout this empirical study, it was evident that youth understood the ways in which they, as Black and Brown youth, were perceived by the school system and society. Understanding that they were at a higher risk of getting in trouble, they utilized tools such as developing relationships with administrators and ensuring that their parents trusted their word, to prevent and navigate disciplinary action. Further, they utilized their knowledge to make sense of the injustice they received. When they felt that their treatment was racially motivated, they made efforts to remove themselves from the actor who caused the harm. Their understandings of societal perceptions of them was clear and they impressively utilized a number of repertoires to resist and prevent emotional harm and injustice.

Humor was utilized to lighten situations, reduce peer discomfort, and challenge the implementation of carceral institutional practices. Humor was the most common code identified across the three focus groups as 32 instances of humor were identified. Participants laughed and made comments to one another such as, "isn't that wild bro?" when their peers shared

experiences of racism and discrimination by administrators. Playful banter and joking was utilized to lighten the mood when serious examples of injustice were shared. Participants also utilized humor to build solidarity. This was exemplified when Leah shared her story about getting caught with edibles and Maria said "we've all been there!" The entire group laughed and the comment seemed to comfort Leah who seemed to be feeling some shame and embarrassment as she recounted her story.

In addition to humor, participants resisted labeling and stereotyping as they recounted their stories. Rosa, for example, reframed her disciplinary experience (she had to work in the office during her lunch time for an entire month) by highlighting the positive aspects of her experience. She noted that she made positive relationships with the office staff and that she earned secretary experience. She also stated this with a humorous tone, earning laughter from the entire group. Rosa resisted any sense of victimization and rejected negative labels using humor and reframing. Participants also comforted one another when they sensed the storyteller was experiencing shame or low self-esteem. Christian encouraged Jacob to reframe the statement, "I was just becoming a terrible person," and offered that perhaps Jacob was just misunderstood in that instance.

Through their discourse and storytelling, participants who were once unfamiliar with one another built community in their groups. They worked to create collective definitions of terms and came to consensus regarding particular topics such as their position on school police. Despite the many differing opinions that were openly expressed, participants worked to understand opposing views and were respectful in verbalizing alternative viewpoints. They were often in agreement with one another and expressed affirmation as others told their stories.

Despite the many examples of injustice that were reviewed throughout the analysis of the data, examples of hope and resistance were equally common. The findings of the current study speak to the importance of recognizing how youth are both influenced by discipline and how they make meaning of experiences of trouble. Based on their responses and discourse, it was found that youth make direct links between discipline and carceral tools and systems. These links and the negative emotional influence of discipline should be noted as school leaders and policy makers attempt to develop disciplinary policy in school. Youth voice should be at the forefront of policy decisions which directly impact students, their emotional well-being, and their development.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations to the current study. Sample size was the most prominent limitation, particularly for the quantitative section of the study. A larger sample would have been more effective in evaluating both the validity and reliability of the PDPJ measure. It was difficult to assess reliability given the sample size. Though the measure showed promise, some of the issues with the measure could be explained by the small sample and not necessarily a lack of fit within the measure. Regarding the sample included in the focus groups, an additional focus group could have strengthened some of the themes. More specifically, I believe that additional focus groups would have allowed me to further demonstrate the affective and emotional influence of disciplinary practices. Additional groups of students discussing similar topics could have further demonstrated that discipline and injustice was psychologically influential to youth. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to recruit participants during the 2020-2021 school year. When students went back to school in person in the fall of 2021, schools were reluctant to allow researchers on campus and the number of visits and

visitors to schools were limited. Thus, the school allowed only three focus groups to take place. Had there been an opportunity to administer additional groups, I would have kept the same semi-structured interview questions but focused more on the emotional responses of participants and worked to identify common emotional responses across the groups. Though I am satisfied with the rich data I was able to collect during the three focus groups, one or two additional groups would have allowed me to strengthen themes and potentially develop additional themes.

Considerations for Future research

There were a number of themes in this study that had less empirical support and were thus not discussed in this work but warrant further investigation. Gender dynamics and the influence and role of parents were among these potential themes.

Gender dynamics emerged across the focus groups. Given that the focus groups were divided by gender, it opened up the opportunity for participants to safely share gendered experiences. For example, Christian openly discussed how he got in trouble because he was trying to defend a girl he liked and ended up in an altercation. Several girls referenced how they receive differing expectations from their parents in comparison to their brothers. It is unclear whether or not the responses from youth would have been different had the groups been co-ed. This study did not have the capacity to analyze said dynamics as a focal point of the work and future studies should consider how gender shapes emotional and developmental responses to discipline.

The role of parents and caregivers was brought up often by participants. Some students brought up situations in which their guardians were contacted, then they received additional disciplinary action from their parents which included losing phone privileges, losing the privilege to attend social events, corporal punishment, verbal threats and expression of disappointment. Others referenced how their parents were able to get them out of disciplinary action through their advocacy. Some students described their frustration at their caregivers as they believed the school staff over their children. Others said that they told their parents what happened at school before the school could call, that way they were more likely to be believed. Overall, the role of parents was perhaps the most nuanced as participants had very different parent-child relationships and experiences. It was clear that their experiences with discipline were mediated by their relationships with their parents, and the schools' relationship with their parents. Further study on the role of parents as mediators to school-based discipline should be explored.

The analysis of unjust and oppressive experiences as carceral is an assessment made by this author, but brings up the question of how researchers and educators should analyze and/or categorize said practices. The question, "at what point does a practice become carceral," is one that I did not have the opportunity to explore in this work, but could be explored in future studies. It is established that non-dominant youth experience racism, racial bias, and mico-aggressions in their daily lives and the shared experiences of participants could have been categorized by these experiences. However, I bring in carceral logics to highlight the link between prison and school practices. Future research may work to tease apart these nuances and identify an approach to analyze unjust experiences.

Conclusion

Education systems across the U.S. reify and reproduce the carceral continuum through exclusionary practices, surveillance, and police presence (Sojoyner, 2013; Annamma; 2015;

Shedd, 2015). Despite the negative outcomes associated with police interactions and exclusionary practices, nondominant youth continue to experience these phenomena at their school sites and at higher rates than white students (Gottlieb & Wilson, 2019; Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Mendelson, 2017). The ways in which youth allow punitive school practices to shape and influence their worldviews and development is widely unknown. To date, no study has explored how youth are psychosocially influenced by disciplinary experiences while exploring youth perceptions of school police and discipline at a U.S. high school that is majority Black and Latinx. The current study fills this gap in the literature by highlighting youth perspectives to identify psychosocial influences of carceral logics that exist in school systems and explore the skills and knowledge youth utilize to navigate carceral experiences and institutions.

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Appendix A

Chapter 4 Tables

#	Field		Choice Count
1	Male	35.71%	10
2	Female	60.71%	17
3	Non-binary / third gender	3.57%	1
4	Prefer not to say	0.00%	0

Table 1. Identified Gender

#	Field		Choice Count
1	Black or African American	35.71%	10
2	Latinx/Hispanic	57.14%	16
3	Asian	0.00%	0
4	Pacific islander	0.00%	0
5	Native American	0.00%	0
6	White/Caucasian	0.00%	0
7	2 or more	7.14%	2

Table 2. Identified Race/Ethnicity

#	Field		Choice Count
1	9th	10.71%	3
2	10th	17.86%	5
3	11th	17.86%	5
4	12th	53.57%	15

Table 3. Identified Grade Level

Q18:...ool?	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	13	44.8%	44.8%
Yes	16	55.2%	100.0%
Total	29	100.0%	

Q19:...you?	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	10	34.5%	34.5%
Yes	19	65.5%	100.0%
Total	29	100.0%	

Q20:...e was	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
Unfair/Unjust	12	48.0%	48.0%
Fair	13	52.0%	100.0%
Total	25	100.0%	

Q21:...c.)?	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
Yes	16	64.0%	64.0%
No	9	36.0%	100.0%
Total	25	100.0%	

Q37: If th...tress you?	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
Very high level of distress	2	9.5%	9.5%
High level of distress	4	19.0%	28.6%
Some distress	8	38.1%	66.7%
Very little distress	2	9.5%	76.2%
I did not experience distress fr...	5	23.8%	100.0%
Total	21	100.0%	

Table 4.

	Q18: Hav...sch...		
Q25: Ple...identify	No	Yes	Total
Latinx/Hispanic	56.3%	43.8%	100.0%
Black or African Amer...	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%
2 or more	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total			

Table 5

	Q21: Was..., et...		
Q25: Ple...identify	Yes	No	Total
Black or African Amer...	43.8%	37.5%	
Latinx/Hispanic	50.0%	50.0%	
2 or more	6.3%	12.5%	
Total	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 6.

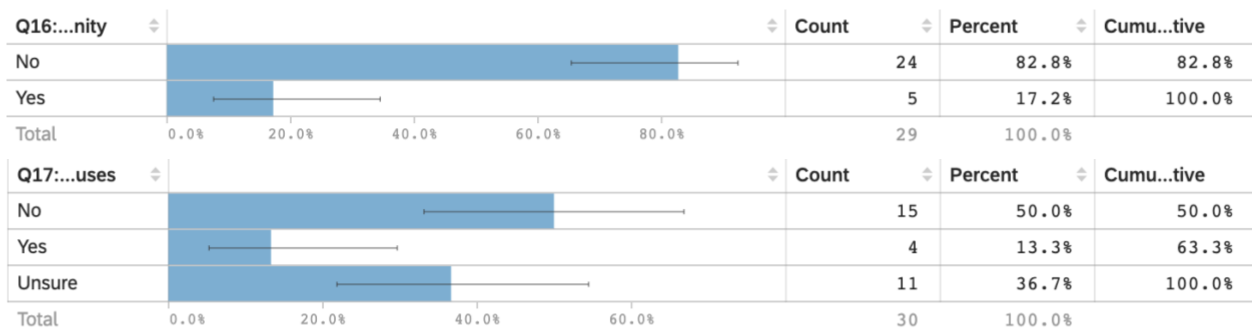
Q12:...nity	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	13	44.8%	44.8%
Yes	16	55.2%	100.0%
Total	29	100.0%	

Q13:...pful	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	20	69.0%	69.0%
Yes	9	31.0%	100.0%
Total	29	100.0%	

Q14:...irly	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	13	48.1%	48.1%
Yes	14	51.9%	100.0%
Total	27	100.0%	

Q15:...rule	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	15	55.6%	55.6%
Yes	12	44.4%	100.0%
Total	27	100.0%	

Table 7.



Q16:...nity	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	24	82.8%	82.8%
Yes	5	17.2%	100.0%
Total	29	100.0%	

Q17:...uses	Count	Percent	Cumu...tive
No	15	50.0%	50.0%
Yes	4	13.3%	63.3%
Unsure	11	36.7%	100.0%
Total	30	100.0%	

Table 8.

Appendix B

Chapter 4 Figures

Respondent	**Sample Responses**
Level 4: Restorative Students believe that all adults at their school treat students with respect. Students feel emotionally safe to express themselves freely at school. Students in this section do not perceive to experience discrimination or bias from the adults at school.	Responses demonstrate a perception of disciplinary practices that are restorative. ● Q2 - When a student breaks a rule, they receive a fair consequence (almost always) ● Q5 – I feel I can express myself freely (Yes) ● Q6 – I feel emotionally safe at school (almost always)
Level 3: Fair/Just Students believe that their school implements disciplinary practices fairly. They feel that most disciplinary practices are un-biased and t↕hough they may not have complete emotional freedom at school, they believe that students receive just consequences when they do something wrong.	Responses demonstrate fair levels of perceived disciplinary justice from school staff and school resource officers. ● Q1 The adults at my school campus treat students fairly (often) ● Q2 When students do something wrong at school, they receive a fair consequence (often) ● Q4 – When a student does something wrong, adults listen before implementing punishment (often)
Level 2:Unjust Students feel that the level of discipline and policing they receive is unfair. They might feel that some level of justice occurs but more often than not, school disciplinary policies and adults on campus are unfair.	Responses demonstrate unjust of perceived disciplinary practice from school staff and school resource officers. ● Q3 - During class, teachers spend a lot of time (more than 10%) correcting student behavior (Yes) ● Q10- The level of consequences vary based on race/ethnicity (often) ● Q14- Police are bias (Yes)
Level 1: Destructive/Harmful Students perceive that discipline and policing practices are overall unjust. Student stories remain unheard or ignored. They do not feel emotionally safe at school. Students perceive they are discriminated against and that the police treat students unfairly. They are fearful of both school punishment and police interaction.	Responses demonstrate that students perceive that the disciplinary and policing practices are destructive and harmful to students. ● Q8 - Students are more likely to receive punishment if they are of a certain race or ethnicity (yes) ● Q10- The level of consequences vary based on race/ethnicity (almost always) ● Q15 – Students are fearful when they interacted with police (Yes)

Figure 1. Construct Map.

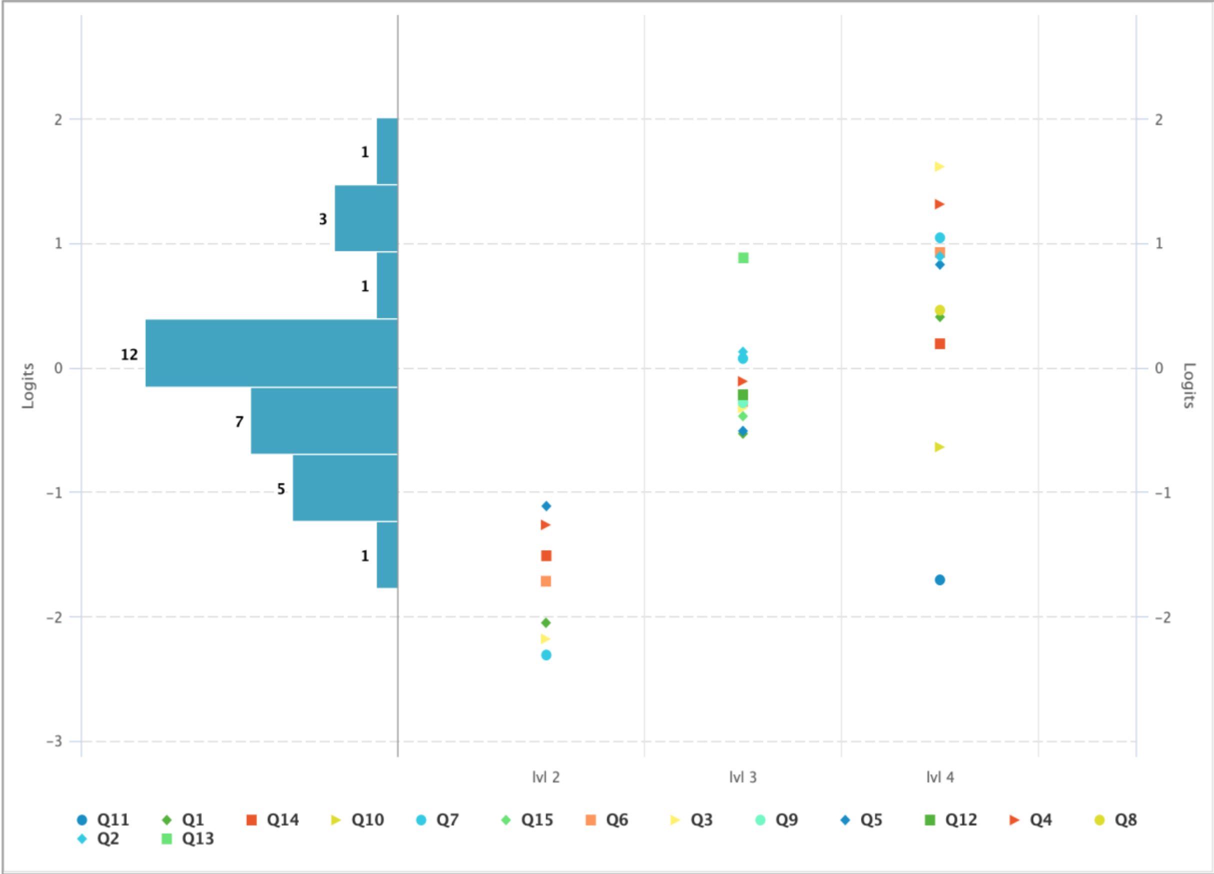


Figure 2. Wright Map 1

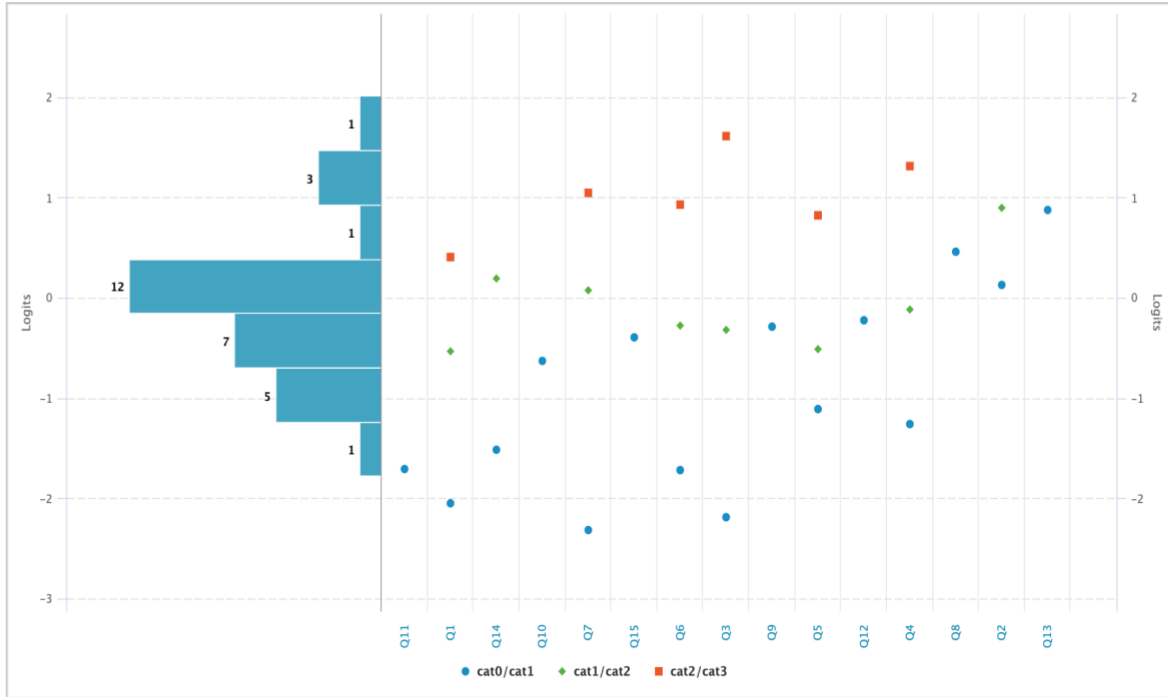


Figure 3. Wright Map 2

Scoring Guide	Gammas
Q15	-0.39
Q14	-1.31, 0.00
Q13	0.88
Q12	-0.22
Q11	-1.70
Q10	-0.63
Q9	-0.28
Q8	0.46
Q7	-2.25, 0.45, 0.60
Q6	-1.50, -0.18, 0.63
Q5	-0.41, -0.97, 0.64
Q4	-0.93, -0.22, 1.11
Q3	-2.03, -0.33, 1.48
Q2	0.75, 0.28
Q1	-1.87, -0.28, -0.03

Figure 4. Instrument Level Internal Structure

Item No	Item	Absolute Frequency	rpb WLE	MWLE
15	Q1	2	-0.46	-1.30
15	Q1	8	-0.36	-0.46
15	Q1	9	0.05	0.05
15	Q1	11	0.53	0.52
14	Q2	16	-0.54	-0.38
14	Q2	7	0.11	0.14
14	Q2	7	0.53	0.72
13	Q3	4	-0.12	-0.23
13	Q3	13	-0.11	-0.11
13	Q3	10	0.14	0.14
13	Q3	2	0.11	0.31
12	Q4	5	-0.59	-1.00
12	Q4	9	-0.16	-0.18
12	Q4	11	0.13	0.12
12	Q4	5	0.62	1.04
11	Q5	5	-0.35	-0.60
11	Q5	5	-0.16	-0.27
11	Q5	12	0.11	0.10
11	Q5	8	0.31	0.38
10	Q6	3	-0.36	-0.81
10	Q6	9	-0.43	-0.48
10	Q6	10	0.10	0.12
10	Q6	7	0.61	0.83
9	Q7	13	-0.63	-0.52
9	Q7	2	-0.09	-0.25
9	Q7	8	0.16	0.21
9	Q7	6	0.65	0.98
8	Q8	17	-0.44	-0.29
8	Q8	11	0.44	0.40
7	Q9	12	-0.55	-0.43
7	Q9	16	0.55	0.40
6	Q10	10	-0.68	-0.69
6	Q10	18	0.68	0.41
5	Q11	5	-0.42	-0.69
5	Q11	24	0.42	0.16
4	Q12	13	-0.52	-0.43
4	Q12	16	0.52	0.37
3	Q13	20	-0.69	-0.34
3	Q13	9	0.69	0.80
2	Q14	4	-0.41	-0.75
2	Q14	12	-0.18	-0.15
2	Q14	11	0.48	0.48
1	Q15	16	-0.30	-0.16
1	Q15	11	0.30	0.32

Figure 5. Instrument Item Level Internal Structure

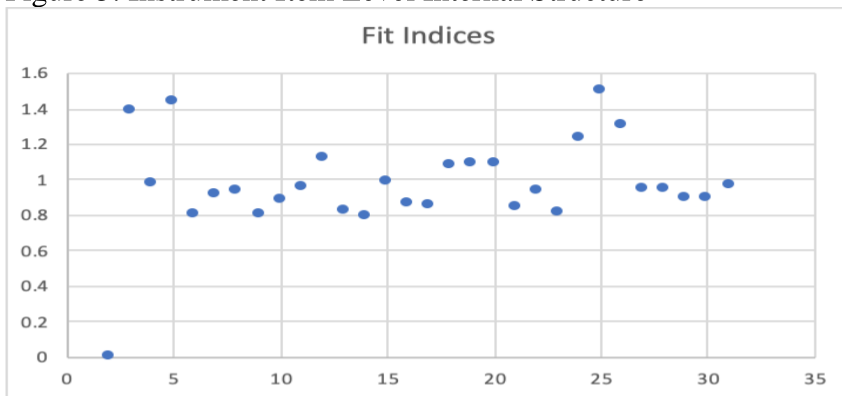


Figure 6. Fit Indices

Appendix C

PDPJ Measure Items

Q1

The adults on my school campus treat students fairly.

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Q2

When students break a rule, they receive a fair consequence.

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Q3

During class, teachers spend a lot of time (more than 10% of total class time) correcting student behavior.

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Q4

When a student does something wrong, the adults listen to their side of the story before implementing a punishment.

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Q5

I feel I can express myself freely (through dress, behavior, language, etc.) at school without being corrected or asked to change.

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Q6

I feel emotionally safe at school.

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Q7

Adults at school go above and beyond to support students.

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Q8

Students are more likely to receive punishment if they are of a certain race or ethnicity.

No
Yes

Q9

Students are disciplined fairly at my school

No
Yes

Q10

The level of consequences students receive after breaking a rule will vary based on their race or ethnicity

No
Yes

Q11

The school has a safe space students can go to when they feel overwhelmed or frustrated

No
Yes

Q12

The police officers who worked at my school care about my school community

- No
- Yes

Q13

The police who worked at my school are trustworthy and helpful

- No
- Yes

Q14

The police at my school were biased and did not treat students fairly

- No
- Yes

Q15

Students were fearful when they interacted with school police, even if they had not broken a rule

- No
- Yes

PDPJ Measure

Appendix D

Focus Group Participants

The following document describes the participants who participated in focus groups using pseudonyms. The purpose of this document is to guide the reader in understanding which youth was speaking, as the same youth are referenced across multiple chapters.

Focus Group 1

Name	Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Brief Description
Maria	12	Latina	Long curls, dressed in red sweatsuit, presented as a leader in the group and spoke with confidence, comforted Leah and Kayla, offered differing perspectives.
Alex	12	Latina	Sat between Maria and Rosa, remained neutral when they disagreed, also wore a beanie, story was unfortunately not covered in the work.
Rosa	12	Latina	Small, spoke with an accent. Rosa was sent to the office for "pushing" her teacher and had to work during lunchtime.
Leah	11	Latina	Presented as shy, short hair, wore a beanie, seemed embarrassed by her story about bringing edibles to school.
Kayla	10	Latina	Friends with Leah, low participation, was with Leah when edibles incident occurred.
Sara	10	Latina	Seemed to know Leah and Kayla, quiet, low participation, story unfortunately was not covered in the work.

Focus Group 2

Name	Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Brief Description
Jazmine	12	Black	Established herself as a leader of the group, brought chips, gave advice to other participants, shared story about her hair style.
Jennifer	10	Middle Eastern	Petite, wore hijab, spunky and outspoken, had an issue with school police, spoke in raspy voice.
Julie	10	Middle Eastern	Wore gray hijab, also petite, smallest in the group, strict parents, concerned about absences, had issue with her Jewish Algebra teacher.
Zara	11	Middle Eastern	Tall, non-verbal engagement, utilized her experiences to support her younger sibling, affirmed peers.
Yesenia	10	Latina	Quiet, avoided eye contact initially, smiled when she agreed

			with others, story was unfortunately not shared in this work.

Focus Group 3

Name	Grad e	Race/Ethnicity	Brief Description
Carlos	12	Latino	Sat next to this author, slightly reduced engagement over time, found police to be unnecessary due to having security guards.
Josh	12	Black	Spoke often, small in stature, presented as a leader along with Christian, spoke about how his mother advocated for him so he was able to avoid suspension.
Raymond	11	Black	Tall, athletic build, long twists in hair, was described fondly by the counselor, unjustly banned from football.
Jaden	10	Black	Soft spoken, patient, spoke about how some students get punished more harshly by their parents than the school.
Jonathan	11	Black	Soft spoken, eyes and head kept low throughout the session, described being caught with marijuana, reported being scared.
Reggie	10	Black	Sat furthest from moderator, slouched and kept head down but looked up to watch others speak, responded to some questions briefly, was referenced in a dialogue section.
Jacob	12	Black	Joined the group late, attended many schools, spoke with a sadness, reported many suspensions, felt disconnected from school.
Caleb	10	Black	Wore short bleached dreads, increased engagement as session continued, polite, always raised his hand before speaking, shared reservations about police at school.
Christian	11	Black	Self described as “big,” identified as Jamaican and was a leader in the group. Described school and ISS as a prison.