The Influence of Family on Justice-Oriented Young Women of Colors' Understandings of Oppression and Imaginings of Liberation

by

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother Ocita Edulene Calixte Guillaume and my father Castel Guillaume.

Thank you for teaching me how to do good things.

L'union fait la force.

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ABSTRACT

The current study grounds itself in the voices of self-identified, justice-oriented, YWOC (N = 7) who participated in a community leadership program. In concert with their peers, these YWOC received training on how to design and implement a social change project in their communities. I explore these young womens' perceptions of how their experiences with and within families influence their understandings of social oppression, their commitments to social change, and their imaginings of liberation. Empirical investigations of the influence of family on sociopolitical understandings has tended to examine family influence in conjunction with other relational contexts (e.g., community, peers). Relatively few empirical investigations exclusively examine how family as a context informs YWOC's social analysis (Diemer et al., 2006; Gordon, 2008; O'Connor, 1997). Furthermore, family context is usually studied in ways that under consider the realities that families and young women of color possess multiple identities (e.g., class, race, immigration status) that have implications for how power is experienced and understood within and outside of the family.

To address my research question, I use a within group (i.e., emic) exploratory qualitative approach to examine how justice-oriented YWOC (N = 7) describe the ways their families inform their understandings and imaginings of oppression and liberation. This study revealed that macro-level sociopolitical dynamics (e.g., oppression, liberation) play out through family relations. When oppression plays out in sites of love/care (e.g., family) we are reminded of the contradictions/dualities of power. Within family, power can be used to both maintain oppression

and foster liberation. The study's sample describes various instances in which they describe the ability of their family members to do both.

Chapter 1: Introduction

My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restriction of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living (Lorde, 1984, pp.120-21)

I write this dissertation with the clear intention of uplifting Young Women of Colors' (YWOC) wisdom. The current study grounds itself in the voices of self-identified, justice-oriented, YWOC who participated in a community leadership program. In concert with their peers, these YWOC received training on how to design and implement a social change project in their communities. I explore these young women's perceptions of how their experiences with and within families influence their understandings of social oppression, their commitments to social change, and their imaginings of liberation.

The examination of how social contexts influence young people's orientations and actions towards justice and social change has largely centered on the role of interventions and settings outside the home and family. While literature on youth civic engagement has paid some attention to the role of families in shaping young peoples' understanding of injustice and their involvement in justice-related activities, the fields' general tendency to focus on the influence of contexts and social actors outside the realm of home and family significantly constrains our understanding of the vital role families, particularly families of color, serve in developing young people's understanding of social justice and injustice and their involvement in justice-oriented activities. Given the centrality of families in the socialization (including the sociopolitical

socialization) of young people, exploring the influence of family and home life on YWOC's justice-oriented involvement promises to be particularly illuminating to broader social change efforts.

In the effort to shed light on YWOC's understandings of the influence of their families on their commitments to understanding social injustice and imaging social justice I utilize a concept uplifted by Sanchez Carmen and colleagues (2015), the concept of 'sociopolitical wisdoms.' Sociopolitical wisdoms refer to the embodied experiences and other forms of knowing young people from historically marginalized communities already possess and have accumulated through their lives. I incorporate the concept of sociopolitical wisdoms to provide a more nuanced examination of how varying experiences within families inform YWOC's understandings of how social injustice is cultivated, maintained, and resisted in daily life. Research has primarily focused on young people's social action/involvement, yet before and along with action comes analysis. There is a lack of in-depth empirical qualitative investigations that examine the roles of families in developing said analysis. The primary focus of this study is to explore how families shape YWOC's commitments to understand and analyze the interplay of economic, social, and political forces that inform and inhibit the experience of justice (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) assert that this depth of analysis is what sets apart citizens who they refer to as "justice-oriented." These authors offer three types of "good" citizens who possess varying capacities for social analysis: personally responsible, participatory, and social justice oriented (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Briefly, the "personally responsible" citizen tends to adhere to the idea that possessing good character and being law-abiding are key components to making a positive contribution to the polity. The "participatory" citizen believes in collective and community-based efforts and tends to be

involved in the civic affairs and social life of a community at the local, state, or national level. The core assumption of the "participatory" citizen is that solving social problems requires one to understand how government agencies work and participate actively in leadership opportunities within established systems. The "justice-oriented" citizen is similar to the "participatory" citizen, in that both emphasize collective work related to the life and issues of a community. Yet, a social "justice-oriented" citizen focuses more on responding to social problems through social critique of social, economic, and political issues, and through addressing root causes of these issues (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). The justice-oriented citizen critically assesses social dynamics to look beyond the surface level causes of social problems and examines how systems inform social inequities. Thus, the justice-oriented citizen has a deeper understanding of social injustice. The current study aims to understand how families influence justice-oriented citizenship, with a specific focus on how family experience develops YWOC's sociopolitical understandings, analysis, and imagination.

Families and Developing Sociopolitical Understandings

As noted earlier, the role of families in contributing to young people's societal involvement is explored in the interdisciplinary field of Youth Civic Engagement (YCE). There are varying definitions and conceptualizations of YCE (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010). I utilize Zaff and Kawashima-Ginsberg's (2011) conceptualization of YCE. That is, YCE is, "the coupling of civic participation with a motivation, duty, and/or commitment to civic participation" (p. 275). YCE is primarily concerned with examining young people's knowledge of larger political systems and forces, an individuals' sense of efficacy and social responsibility, as well as their prosocial behavior, political participation and civic activism. However, despite the inclusivity of the definition in the YCE literature, there is an overemphasis on action.

Within YCE literatures there is a body of work that explores the influence of families— namely parents— as primary socialization agents in young people's civic involvement (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003; McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007; White & Mistry, 2016). Importantly, Watts and Flanagan (2007) observe that the majority of YCE literature focuses on *systems maintenance* (i.e., personally responsible and participatory forms of societal involvement) rather than *social transformations* in the interest of social justice (i.e. justice-oriented societal involvement). The differences in framing of the role of families in systems maintenance versus the social transformation literature warrants attention. Although the principal interest of this work is in expanding knowledge of the role of families in developing awareness of social injustice, because awareness and analysis are so closely tied to societal involvement, I also review the contributions of families to both types of societal involvement.

Family and Societal Involvement as Systems Maintenance

In the initial development of the field, YCE largely drew from classical political socialization theory, resulting in an overemphasis on system's maintenance in YCE. Classical political socialization theory (Easton & Dennis, 1969) is concerned with mechanisms and factors that contribute to political stability across generations. Therefore, central to political socialization theory is the examination of how adult socializing agents' who are most proximal to young people (e.g., family/parents) pass on principles that sustain the system to younger generations.

In line with this focus, there has been a plethora of research investigating how families socialize young people to *maintain* the current political system. The focus on investigating young peoples' involvement in system maintenance increased, in part, due to researcher and practitioners' empirical and programmatic response to a dominant narrative that suggests that young people have succumbed to political apathy and that they show a decreasing interest in

politics (Bennett, 2000; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Putnam, 2000). The supposed crisis of youth civic (dis)engagement is informed by writings that characterize young people as "disenchanted" and "irresponsible" (Henn et al., 2002, p.167) and distrustful of structures of power. A number of researchers have pushed back against the youth apathy literature by demonstrating that within the United States an individual's possession of a historically marginalized social identity (i.e., immigrants, women, racial minorities) how they understand societal conditions and social systems (Cammaerts, Bruter, Banaji, Harrison, & Anstead, 2014; Gordon & Taft, 2011; O'Toole, Marsh, & Jones, 2003). Historically marginalized young people's political disengagement may point more to a disinterest in formal electoral politics; however, disinterest in systems maintenance activities such as electoral politics does not equate to disconnection or disinvestment in critically analyzing social conditions (Cammaerts et al., 2014; Ginwright, 2009; Henn et al., 2002). More empirical work is needed to explore how families are implicated in these processes.

Two broad critiques have been levied at this approach to involvement. First, feminist scholars have critiqued how the emphasis on such standard political science operationalizations of 'politics' as voting, political parties and legislation, point to an ethnoracially biased view of the majority male dominated institution of the state (Bourque & Grossholtz, 1974; Elshtain, 1981; Pateman, 1985). Second, implicit in political socialization is the assumption that within the dynamic of family, the socializing agent (e.g., the parents) and the recipient of said socialization (e.g., the child) both possess a personal investment in the reigning social order and a desire to replicate existing social dynamics. This assumption (i.e., that system maintenance is desirable) which is at the core of political socialization theory renders the theory incompatible with the social realities of marginalized people, particularly marginalized people who are aware that they

are oppressed.

Societal Involvement in a Fuller Developmental Model

Societal involvement inevitably occurs within existing systems, where individuals first gain an awareness of their positionality within these social and sociopolitical systems. Importantly, ecological theories of human development emphasize that development is embedded in social and cultural contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Garcia-Coll et al., 1996). These theories assert that an individual's development is fueled and shaped by relationships within the microsystem (i.e., the individual), the mesosystem (i.e., individuals' immediate family and community environment), and the marcosystem (i.e., the societal landscape). Changes that occur in any system, will ripple throughout the other layers of the ecology. Therefore, in order to effectively study an individual's development, including their sociopolitical development, their immediate environment as well as their larger cultural environment must be examined.

Building on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1977), Garcia-Coll et al. (1996), posited that although developmental processes are similar across different social groups, differences in development may exist as a result of identities and ecological circumstances. For YWOC and their families the developmental task of civic development occurs within a context of historical and contemporary marginalization (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996). As is the case for historically marginalized people, YWOC and their families exist within a recursive relationship in which they must possess a dialectical understanding of how sociopolitical systems function to disenfranchise their communities, and how to engage with their social worlds to transform these systems. The current study, seeks to explore *how* experiences within families contribute to YWOC's dialectical understanding of sociopolitical systems. As they navigate their own emerging awareness, YWOC's social identities (e.g., gender) within systems, and associated

societal dynamics, likely play a role in their understanding of and decision-making about social justice and social transformation.

Gender and Social Awareness

Bronfenbrenner (1977) and Garcia-Coll et al. (1996) explore how differences in developmental outcomes result from the dynamic interplays between individual factors such as social identity, immediate social contexts, and larger societal forces. Variations in these individual factors are likely shaped, in part, by families, and influenced by social contexts and societal forces. As such, the function of gender both within and outside of the family context may inform differences in outcomes related to young women's sociopolitical understandings. Flanagan (2012) found that gender differences in young people's political development were largely dependent on how the political domain is framed. When politics are framed in ways that centralize competition between powers (e.g., armies, leaders) men pay more attention. However, when politics uplift issues such as education, children's nutrition, or access to healthcare, women are more interested. Importantly, although these societal issues are situated across multiple systems, they are strongly tied to care-giving, which women receive more messages about from family than men. In her cross-national comparison work, Flanagan (2012) found that adolescent girls, when compared to their male counterparts, were more likely to express concerns about growing economic disparities in their country and to approve government playing a role in protecting the public. Furthermore, girls tended to demonstrate greater social awareness in that they attributed massive unemployment in marginalized populations to systemic and structural factors, while boys tended to hold individuals accountable (Flanagan, 2012). Similarly, research with adults suggests that on average, women, are more likely than men to endorse values that transcend self-interest such as universalism and benevolence (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). Finally,

in a meta- analysis of reasoning about moral issues, moderate but consistent gender differences were found, with women being more likely than men to use care-oriented, prosocial reasoning to analyze moral issues (Jaffee, Shibley & Hyde, 2000). Families (i.e., parents) play a critical role in gender socialization, yet we know relatively little about the ways that gender socialization in families may inform sociopolitical development (beyond systems maintenance) among young women, particularly YWOC. Relatedly, gender socialization studies have demonstrated that parents are more likely to emphasize values of caring, helping, and attending to others' needs when raising daughters than when raising sons (Eisenberg & Sheffield Morris, 2004). These messages may position young women to develop more nuanced understandings and analyses of relational components of social injustice.

Consistent with research on gender socialization, values, and moral reasoning, gender differences have also been found in young people's political socialization and civic engagement. White and Mistry (2016) found that gender was the strongest and most consistent correlate of children's civic engagement. The investigators found that early adolescent girls (ages 9-13 yrs.) reported having a greater sense of responsibility to the community, responsibility to people, and civic values compared to boys. Young women were also more likely to report having a greater commitment to building tolerance in communities (Flanagan et al., 2007), and to think giving to society is important (Flanagan et al., 1998) than their male counterparts. Research has explored how young women distinguish between politics (i.e., state apparatuses and formal involvement in government policy) and what they refer to as social change or 'helping the community.' Taft (2006) found that U.S. teenage girls purposely distance themselves from politics, instead choosing to conceptualize themselves as agents of social change. Taft (2006) found that for these young women, politics are associated with the state and not with social movements or projects of

resistance. Several studies have explored how patterns of political distancing in the United States, are related to an individuals' varying operationalization of politics depending on the context (Eliasoph, 1998), and their desire for more voice (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2001). These findings support the need to explore how families may expose young women of color to ideas and experiences that develop YWOCs' critical insights about social injustice in ways that inform their desire to be social change agents. Hence, these findings support the need to further complicate our understanding of YWOC's reflections on how their families inform the types of societal involvement in which they partake.

Limitations of Systems Maintenance Research

The systems maintenance scholarship has been useful in illuminating the socialization strategies that parents use to develop their children into active and engaged citizens concerned with the maintenance of the polity (Pancer, 2015; White & Mistry, 2016). For instance, research has found that parents groom young people to maintain and participate in formal political systems via four civic socialization practices: political discussion, civic directives, civic modeling, and emphasizing civic values (Pancer, 2015; Parke & Buriel, 2006; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; White & Mistry, 2016). Empirical studies have found that these socialization practices predict more involvement in political activities (e.g., activities related to electoral politics—rallying, voting) well into adulthood (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Ketters, 2003; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). Although these mechanisms are examined in the interest of systems maintenance, they do provide conceptually useful examples of how families, particularly families of color, influence young peoples' interest in social transformation.

Diemer (2012) examined whether parental political socialization (e.g., discussion) predicted youths' commitment to produce social change, and whether political socialization

longitudinally predicted formal political participation (e.g., voting) among a sample of lower-SES African American, Asian American, and Latino/a across their 10th grade year, 12th grade, and 2 years after high school. Parental political discussion predicted young people's commitments to produce social change across the three subsamples, and was longitudinally predictive of political participation in the Latinx and Asian American subsample, but not for the African American subsample (Diemer, 2012). Further, young people's commitment to social change had a negative longitudinal relationship to traditional political behavior for the Asian American and Latino/a subsamples, but no relationship for the African American subsample (Diemer, 2012). The differences in the findings for the African-American subsample highlights the complexity of the measurement of these constructs, and lends credence to the point that socio-political development is experienced differently in everyday life for different racial and ethnic minority groups. YCE focuses largely on the role of parent-child communication as a mechanism through which parents influence their children's civic engagement. However, the relative absence of youth of color from these studies leaves us with limited knowledge about how communication between parents and children or families and children of color is used to shape YCE. For example, while existing studies operationalize communication as dialogue or conversations, it remains unclear whether families of color use other strategies (e.g., non-verbal strategies) to civically socialize their children. Further, we know little about the content of the communications that occur between families of color and children. We also know little about the ways in which messages communicated to youth of color by different members of the family (e.g., siblings, grandparents, and parents) may influence young women's societal involvement. Finally, although research on YCE recognizes that social identities and social positions including race and gender play powerful roles in the civic socialization process, these aspects of social

identity remain understudied, and research that does attend to race and or gender in YCE tends to examine these identities in isolation (either race or gender).

In sum, YCE literature's current approaches to studying parent civic and political socialization offers little insight into *how* families of color cultivate their children's sociopolitical development in ways that are culturally rooted and reflective of their own understandings of the social positioning of their family. Thus, the fields' over emphasis on systems maintenance both fragments and obscures our understandings of the role of families of color in young people's justice-oriented societal involvement. The current study explores the role of families in informing YWOC's justice-oriented work by uplifting the aspects of their daily experiences often left out of dominant narratives pertaining to women of color and their family.

The Social Location of Families of Color

A central step to identifying the role of families of color in YWOCs' awareness and analysis of social inequities is to socially locate families of color as historically marginalized people. Social location refers to the identity categories and social positions that are created when multiple forms of oppression and subordination occur (Few-Demo, 2014). Social location as experienced at the levels of the individual and family inform their relationships with the social world. These relationships are based on categories such as race, sex, class, sexual orientation and immigrant status. These relationships determine our access to and conceptualizations of power. Power is always present and affects all aspects of our human experience (Foucault, 1997), power is never strictly political or psychological it is always both (Prilleltensky, 2008). The power to resist oppression and foster liberation is grounded in psychological and political dynamics that occur within proximal settings such as family (Prilleltensky, 2008). It follows that for historically

marginalized young women of color who possess multiple historically marginalized identities, family is a critical site to learn about how power—as a social force—shapes their lives.

The influence of how power influences day-to-day life experience is the central focus of liberation psychology. Pioneered in Latin America, liberation psychology closely relates to liberation theology (Martin-Baro, 1986, 1994). Liberation psychology privileges how identifying and addressing social ills, heightens both individual and collective well-being and thus provides a useful lens to explore how these processes manifest in the interplay of dynamics between YWOC and their families and potentially inform their understanding of social inequity. The application of liberation psychology and ecological models of human development (Bronfenbrenner 1977, Garcia-Coll et al., 1996) to traditional models of young people's psychological and social development have significantly contributed to traditional models of youth development. Two central concepts of liberation psychology that are relevant to young women of colors' sociopolitical development within family are Oppression and Liberation.

Oppression

Watts, Griffith, and Abdul-Adil (1999) view social oppression as the unjust use of power by one socially salient group over another in a way that creates and sustains inequity in the distribution of coveted resources. This dissertation privileges the experience of oppression as both a state and a process. As a state, oppression is the result of long-term asymmetrical distribution of resources. As a process, oppression is the unjust exercise of power and the systemic and intentional controlling of ideas and resources in order to produce and sustain social inequality (Watts et al., 1999). Oppression has both political and psychological dimensions that are experienced within family. These dimensions are mutually determined, strategically spread, and intentionally maintained through both explicit and ideological enactments of violence. Social

institutions manifest both forms of violence and reinforce patterns of oppression. One of the most enduring forms of oppression is White supremacy. “At its core, White supremacy is an ideology of superiority in a broad range of areas—cultural, moral, intellectual, genetic and spiritual” (Watts et al., 1999, p. 258). The endurance and manifestations of White Supremacy in everyday social life has received a *great* deal of scholarly attention. However, similar to our tendency to overemphasize systems maintenance in YCE literature, centering the investigation of justice-oriented societal involvement on racism or White supremacy discounts the lived experiences and motivations of people of color. This is particularly the case for YWOC whose lived experiences and multiple identities require that they contend with multiple and interconnected oppressions in and outside of the home, such as racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Further, presenting YWOC’s social justice-oriented involvement in ways that frame their engagement *solely* in response to oppressive conditions—as typically done in justice-oriented research—potentially limits the range of meanings and intentions that inform their involvement. This dissertation takes in open-ended, qualitative approach in order to explore the broad range of factors that families invoke as these families influence YWOC’s sociopolitical understandings.

Liberation

Liberation, like oppression, is both a process and a state. As a process, “Liberation refers to the process of resisting oppressive forces. As a state, liberation is a condition in which oppressive forces no longer exert their dominion over a person or group” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). The process of liberation corresponds with Paulo Freire’s concept of conscientization. According to Freire (1993), through the process of conscientization marginalized people begin to gain awareness of oppressive forces in their lives and their ability

to gain domination. Through various processes and experiences within their family people come to realize that they and their families are the subject of oppressive regulations. Nelson and Prilleltensky's (2010) conceptualization of liberation builds on Fromm's (1965) dual conception of liberation as "freedom from" and "freedom to." In this framing, liberation as a process is concerned with overcoming internal and external sources of oppression (e.g., freedom from—the White gaze, gender domination, class exploitation, and ethnic discrimination). Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) posit that freedom from these oppressive social forces allows for "freedom to" pursue personal, interpersonal, and collective well-being. We can conceptualize liberation as a process of overcoming psychological forces (e.g., obsessions and fears) that may interfere with an individual's subjective experiences of their well-being and reality. Liberation may also be conceptualized as healing from ideological oppression. Importantly, liberation requires vision, moving from critique to creativity. Through critique, we learn the need for new approaches and actions; through creativity we gain access to our capacity to *imagine* and implement a healthier moral and cultural order.

The conceptualization of oppression and liberation as both states and processes, has direct implications for my analytic work. In this work, I seek to examine the variety of ways that every day experiences within family shape YWOC's understandings of oppression and liberation and how these experiences inform their analysis of their sociopolitical context. I attend to the multiple, and simultaneous ways that oppressive and liberatory processes are experienced and expressed for YWOC within family at varying levels of analysis (e.g., personal, relational, and collective).

Research Questions

The current study is guided by the following question: *How do families contribute to*

justice-oriented young women of color's sociopolitical development? I address this question through 2 composite questions:

1. How do self-selecting justice-oriented YWOC (ages 17-23) describe the roles of their families in shaping their understandings, imaginings and experiences of oppression and liberation (i.e., social analysis)?

    1a. What direct strategies and indirect processes do families use to shape these understandings of oppression and liberation?

2. What lessons or messages do YWOC receive about social justice and oppression from their parents and family, and how do these messages inform youths' liberatory imagination?

    2a. What do YWOC imagine is changeable in an unfair world?

    2b. What role do they imagine individuals should play in initiating that change?

    2c. How do they imagine social change occurs?

Conceptual Frameworks

In an effort to explore the role of families in YWOC's sociopolitical development, I situate this work as an integration of 3 conceptual frameworks: Sociopolitical Development (SPD) Theory, Feminist Family Studies (FFS), and Critical Race Feminism (CRF).

Sociopolitical Development (SPD) Theory

Research pertaining to Sociopolitical Development (SPD) is concerned with exploring how young people come to develop a growing critical awareness of social inequity and a sense of duty to address injustice either through the development of commitment and or action. "Sociopolitical Development" is typically defined as "a process of growth in a person's knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social

systems. SPD is not limited to resisting oppression in the interest of justice, however; the capacity to envision and help create a just society is an essential part of the process as well" (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003, p. 185). The theory of SPD was largely developed in response to the crisis of young African American men who face higher rates of incarceration, high rates of homicide, unemployment, and substance abuse (Watts et al., 1998; Watts et al., 1999). Under such social realities, Watts and colleagues (1999) suggested a need for holistic approaches to health that attended to the personal, cultural, sociopolitical, and spiritual domains of human experience. SPD theory was developed as a strategic counterpoint to conventional psychosocial interventions that focused almost exclusively on individual level constructs (e.g., coping, conflict resolution, and personal skill building). SPD researchers believe that to effectively understand and confront the effects of oppression on the experiences of historically marginalized young people, the impacts of oppression, liberation, and human rights must be centralized in our study of their development.

SPD theory explicitly acknowledges and centralizes the influence of oppression on the sociopolitical development of young people. Central to this process is a person's growing understanding of how asymmetrical power relations manifest throughout the varying levels of relationships in their lives. SPD theory cites family as a powerful socializing force in shaping young people's social awareness and commitments to address social injustice (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Some theoretical work on SPD theory points to the crucial role that families of color play in developing young people's ethnoracial worldviews and awareness (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Yet, a limitation of SPD theory is that it does not explicitly examine how family and gender have implications for experience in family. Conceptual frameworks from disciplines such as feminist family studies, provide contexts with which to understand the

centrality of both family and gender and their influence on YWOC's justice-oriented social involvement.

Feminist Family Studies

For YWOC, the social locations of their families within a larger social context of oppression impacts their social positioning and identities within family (Allen, Lloyd, & Few, 2009). YWOC's position in families contribute to their growing awareness of their relationship to power in ways that may not be fully captured in how families are explored in SPD theory. Because earlier models and theorizations of SPD were rooted in the experiences of a community-based sample of African-American men (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998; Watts, Griffith, Abdul-Adil, 1999) the experiences of women within family may not be fully accounted for in the existing models of SPD.

Feminist Family Studies (FFS) as an area of inquiry applies a gendered analysis of how larger systemic and structural forces shape the function, dynamics, and the lives of women in their families. In FFS, families are conceptualized as interdependent systems, where processes are coherent and patterned and constructed through communication and social interaction (Lloyd, Few, & Allen, 2009). FFS conceptualizes gender as a central axis of power (Few, 2007, Lloyd, Few, & Allen, 2009). That is, FFS privileges the critical examination of the roles, functions, and labor of women in families that are often made invisible, and theorizes how these dynamics influence women's engagement in community (Uttal, 2009). FFS has not been used to study SPD in the lives of YWOC and their families. FFS provides opportunities to expand our notions of the ways in which families influence YWOC justice-oriented societal involvement (commitments and behaviors), by rendering visible the variety of dynamics that shape family as a developmental context for women's justice-oriented societal involvement.

FFS allows for a more nuanced examination of the interplay between gender, power and family. However, as an area of inquiry FFS's examinations of women in families of color is limited. Scholars in FFS have identified the need to attend to the reality that WOC navigate multiple identities (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation) both within and outside of family that have implications for their experiences within family (Few, 2007). Applying frameworks that center WOC in the study of YWOC's experiences within family is essential if we are to give YWOC an authoritative voice in describing their experiences possessing multiple and indivisible identities that are linked to their experiencing of family. In order to better capture and analyze the experiences of YWOC in families I apply Critical Race Feminism (CRF) to the current study.

Critical Race Feminism

CRF is a theoretical lens and movement that centers its analysis on privileging the lived experiences and situations of Women of Color (WOC) (Wing, 1997; 2003). The term "Critical Race Feminism" stresses its emphasis on capturing the experiences and perspectives of women of color living in the context of a patriarchal White supremacist society. In order to capture WOC's experiences and perspectives more holistically, CRF examines WOC's multiple consciousness; that is, the intersecting social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, class, and gender, etc.) that women of color possess (Matsuda, 1989; Wing, 1997; 2003). WOCs' multiple consciousness necessitates that in their daily experiences they must hold on to their own beliefs and values, while also having to be aware of the state of mind of their oppressors.

Importantly, Wing (2003) asserts that the multiplicity of identity should not only be viewed through an oppression analysis. She posits that, "[women of color] are more than 'multiply burdened' entities subjected to a multiplicity of oppression, discrimination, pain and

depression. Our essence is also characterized by multiplicity of strength, love, joy…and transcendence despite adversity." (2003, p.7) YWOCs' existence at the margins presents both constraints and limitless possibilities to their societal involvement and overall contributions to societal transformation. Research with and on behalf of YWOC must position scholars to capture the complex manifestations of the location of power, multiple identities, agency and justice-oriented societal involvement in the lives of YWOC. The current study aims to integrate the social location of YWOC and their families in the examination of how families inform YWOC's SPD. incorporating the social location of justice-oriented YWOC and their families allows for an examination of how their relationships to power inform their understanding of oppression and liberation.

This dissertation project contributes to the research literature on YWOC justice-oriented involvement in several significant ways. First, this project will expand our understandings of sociopolitical development by exploring how gender is implicated in how justice-oriented societal involvement is promoted within the context of family and social life. Second, the use of FFS' conceptualization of family broadens our conceptualization of family to include extended family structures including parents, siblings, and extended family members (e.g., aunts and uncles, grandparents, and fictive kin), and community. This more expansive view of family creates opportunities to identify how a variety of social actors within family (e.g., other than parents) may influence YWOC's sociopolitical understandings in distinct and complementary ways. Finally, CRF allows for in depth investigations of how YWOC's experiences within family are nuanced and how families of color make distinct contributions.

Research Approach

The qualitative study takes an emic approach that acknowledges that individuals are the experts in their own lived experiences (Fetterman, 1989; Berry, 1999). Taking an emic approach to qualitative inquiry allows me to investigate how YWOC develop socio-politically within the context of family. In addressing the study's research questions, I pay particular attention to YWOC's "sociopolitical wisdoms." As previously mentioned, sociopolitical wisdoms refer to the experiences and other forms of knowing young people from historically marginalized communities already possess and have accumulated through their lives (Sanchez Carmen et al., 2015). These wisdoms inform their ability to analyze the systems that produce and maintain inequality. These diverse wisdoms are 1) accumulated, enacted in multiple ways; and 2) carried by young people before, during, and after programs or interventions geared towards promoting their justice-oriented involvement. YWOC's sociopolitical wisdoms are central to my work as I am to: a) identify the experiences and knowledge that YWOC acquire through their lives, and in particular through everyday interactions with families; and b) explore what these wisdom's reveal about YWOC's understandings of oppression and liberation.

Significance

The current study builds on Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) conceptualization of the justice-oriented citizen in order to explore how YWOC family socialization experiences contribute to their social-justice oriented societal involvement. I use the term "justice-oriented involvement" instead of citizenship to reflect the lived realities of people who are motivated to do work on behalf of justice. In order for people to intervene on social inequities, they must first recognize and understand how inequities manifest in their lives. Understanding how families

influence YWOCs sociopolitical development, creates opportunities to examine how families shape how they come to understand and experience inequity and resistance to oppression.

Chapter 2: Foundations in the Literature

Family is a primary socializing context in almost everything that humans do. Our daily experiences in family shape what we first come to learn about the world and our perceived place in it (Parke & Buriel, 2002). Importantly, familial socialization processes are implicated in what developmental psychology considers to be a central task of human development, civic and political development (Flanagan, 2004; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Indeed, Flanagan (2012) asserts that families may be conceptualized as "mini-polities" (i.e., spaces where youth develop and simultaneously construct their identities as citizens within larger political systems) that shape younger generations' civic dispositions and identities.

Although families are important to civic and sociopolitical development of people in general, it is important to consider that the social identities that people hold have implications for the dynamics within families and for the beliefs, practices, and roles that people come to embrace. Gender[1], for example, is both a central organizing feature within families and a central social identity that shapes lived realities in and outside of family. Within family, women and men are socialized to adopt family roles that, in turn, inform their beliefs about gender roles (McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003), community connectedness (Uttal, 2009), occupational attainment (Lawson, Crouter, & McHale, 2015), as well as expectations about the maintenance of culture (DeVaus & McAllister, 1987), and care-giving (Stacey & Thorne, 1985). Evidence also suggests that families influence women's and men's beliefs about justice (O'Connor, 1997;

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[1] Gender refers to the meanings given to, "femaleness" and "maleness" in the social world, and how those identities shape belief, identity, perceptions, values, relationships, opportunities, and so on (Deaux & Major, 1990).

Taft, 2006; Taft, 2017; Watts & Guessous, 2006). Further, empirical findings suggest that families may have fears, expectations, and ideologies that influence young women's worldviews and their understanding of (interest in) political engagement (Gordon, 2008).

While, with few notable exceptions (Taft, 2010; Taft, 2017), there is a dearth of research on how YWOC's families help them to understand and respond to social inequity, history demonstrates that young women of color's (YWOC) understandings of societal oppression and deep personal commitments to justice have led them to facilitate social movements that resist oppressive conditions and forces (e.g., #Blacklives matter, #sayhername, second and third wave feminism, the transgender movement, and activism among young undocumented students). Importantly, in research that does examine how YWOC became invested in justice-oriented work, family is often cited as a motivating force (Linder & Rodriguez, Taft, 2010). Emerging findings on the influence of family on the development of YWOC's sociopolitical understandings highlight the need for more nuanced research on the specific ways that families influence YWOC's sociopolitical development. This study endeavors to address this gap in research.

My study uses a within group (i.e., emic) exploratory qualitative approach to examine how justice-oriented YWOC describe the ways their families inform their understandings and imaginings of oppression and liberation. In this chapter I first describe how I situate justice-oriented societal involvement based on current conceptualizations of societal involvement — commitments and or actions (Watts & Guessous, 2006) — in the interest of the public good. Next, given the limited number of studies that explore families' influence on justice-oriented young women's socialization for justice-oriented involvement, I explore findings related to civic socialization and political socialization. "Civic socialization" is the process of developing skills,

attitudes, knowledge, and inclination to participate in political and community life (Malin, Ballard, & Damon, 2015); "political socialization" refers to the mechanisms and factors that contribute to political stability across generations (Easton & Dennis, 1969). The civic and political socialization literatures provide useful insights into the role of family and gender in processes related to societal involvement. Finally, I explore how the theoretical frameworks—Sociopolitical Development Theory, Feminist Family Studies, and Critical Race Feminism—work together to produce my study's conceptual framework.

Towards Justice-Oriented Societal Involvement as a Developmental Process

According to Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, psychological theories of human development were prominent in the youth development field, and emphasized children's natural stages of progression toward adulthood. While this body of theoretical work contributed to our knowledge of young people, it primarily investigated young people as 'problems in need of fixing' (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). This framing was particularly dominant in studies of African American and Latinx youth, where scholars largely focused on explaining behaviors that threaten healthy development including early sexual activity, high drug use, and violence (Ginwright & James, 2002). The prevailing narrative in the research on African American and Latinx youth imagined these youth as "at risk" of maladaptive behaviors and focused on preventing problems among these youth (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002).

In the early 1990s, the field of youth development began to reframe its basic assumptions of young people's agency and self-awareness. This paradigm shift towards Positive Youth Development (PYD) was successful in re-conceptualizing youth from 'problems in need of fixing,' to affirming their ongoing development as agentic and self-aware individuals (Pittman &

Fleming, 1991). Although PYD acknowledged youths' agency, this body of research was limited in capturing the lived experiences of youth of color, the influence of their social contexts on their development, and the deployment of that agency (Clonan-Roy, Jacobs, & Nakkula, 2016; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Sanchez-Carmen et al., 2015). In sum, PYD failed to fully account for the reality that young people from historically marginalized groups develop in and must navigate broad social contexts marked by social forces and barriers (e.g., oppression manifested through racism, sexism, and homophobia) that are toxic to their overall well-being (Ginwright & James, 2002).

Certainly, investigations of the motivations and experiences that shape historically marginalized young people's contributions to societal transformation should not solely be conducted through the lens of oppression. Indeed, Dance (2002) asserts that the "scholarly gaze on Black life" (p.17) unwittingly and myopically tends to suggest that Black and other historically marginalized and racialized people are controlled by these forces, as opposed to being severely constrained by them. Yet, we know relatively little about the factors beyond oppression that may influence their understandings of social justice.

This emic study explores how everyday experiences in families inform conceptualizations of oppression and liberation among justice-oriented young women of color. I apply Watts and Guessous' (2006) Sociopolitical Development Theory (SPDT; Figure 1) as the current study's guiding theoretical framework. SPDT recognizes the unique contributions that early socialization experiences (e.g., within families) play in shaping individuals' awareness and overall sociopolitical development. The model facilitates the investigation of experiences that individuals view as making a meaningful contribution to their sociopolitical development. I utilize this framing to explore justice-oriented YWOC's understanding of how their families

contribute to their conceptualization of liberation and justice. I then highlight gaps in the SPDT framework that provide the impetus for augmenting SPDT with family-focused, feminist, and critical race frameworks.

Sociopolitical Development as a Guiding Theoretical Framework

Propositions of SPDT

SPDT is informed by the work of scholars of activism and activists. The genesis of SPDT is rooted in addressing how oppressive forces and social experiences negatively impact and threaten African American men's livelihood. The SPD model asserts that 'Worldview and Social Analysis' inform 'Societal Involvement' (commitments and actions). 'Early Life Experiences Venues & Socialization' captures the influence of roles, settings, and specific experiences within the three developmental contexts of family upbringing, schooling, and community/environment that have shaped an individual's SPD. These experiences are thought to inform one's 'Worldview and Social Analysis,' defined as a politicized analysis of how inequitable contexts and social policies shape day-to-day life. It follows that an individuals' social analysis is bi-directionally related to their 'Societal Involvement,' or their interest and investment in transforming socially oppressive conditions, and envisioning or acting in the interest of liberation. The bi-directional relationship between social analysis and societal involvement is also influenced by an individual's 'Sense of Agency' and the 'Opportunity Structure.' Importantly, the 'Organizational Settings' to which an individual has access have a direct bearing on their 'Worldview and Social Analysis,' 'Sense of Agency,' and 'Opportunity Structure.' Therefore, these factors both directly and indirectly influence the relationship between individuals' social analysis and their societal involvement.

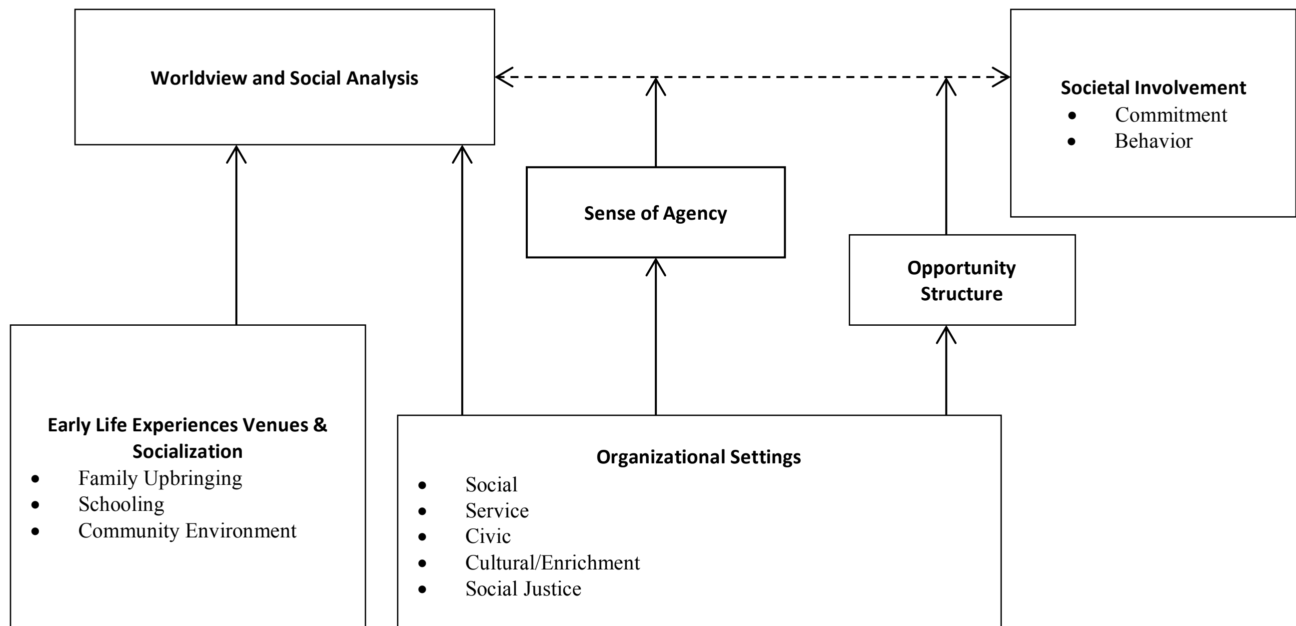

Figure 1. Socio-Political Development Model

Watts and Guessous (2006) based their model of SPD on four interrelated propositions. Proposition 1: An analysis of authority and power is central; Proposition 2: A sense of agency is essential: people take action when they believe they can make an impact; Proposition 3: Action requires opportunity; and Proposition 4: Commitment and action are sociopolitical development outcomes.

Proposition 1: An analysis of authority and power is central. Power is always present and affects our human experience (Foucault, 1997). As a developmental process, sociopolitical development, examines an individual's ongoing process of understanding and examining how unbalanced power dynamics contribute to the creation and maintenance of oppressive societies (Lozada, Jagers, Smith, Bañales & Hope, 2017; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts & Guessous, 2006; Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003). For young people, examples of social power primarily include adult and parental authority and formative institutions such as schools and places of worship (Watts & Guessous, 2006). These settings can be conceptualized as "formative venues"

where young people experience and learn from interactions with adults, and where they experience parental power as a proxy for institutional power. To engage with institutional power, young people learn to tap into their own individual power to act independently from authority figures and make their own choices (i.e., they develop agency).

Propositions 2 and 3. A sense of agency is essential and action requires opportunity. People take action when they believe they can make an impact. In the SPD model, a "sense of agency" is conceptualized as personal, political, and collective efficacy (Bandura, 2001). Specific to the youth organizing literature, agency is framed in terms of collective identity and collective efficacy (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Collective identity refers to emotional, cognitive, and moral connection to a larger community which provides a foundation for collective agency and action (Snow & Mc Adams, 2000). Collective efficacy refers to a belief in the capacity of the group to come together to acknowledge and address shared aspirations and/or problems (Bandura, 2001). Collective efficacy is undergirded by a shared commitment or purpose as well as an individuals' reliance on their faith in others (Bandura, 2001; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Relatedly, a key aspect of societal involvement is the *opportunities* afforded to individuals to act (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002).

Proposition 4: Commitment and action are sociopolitical development outcomes. Although depicted as a linear relationship, in the working model of SPD, societal involvement occurs because of complex reciprocal effects between worldview and social analysis, opportunity and agency, and societal involvement (Watts & Guessous, 2006). Importantly, Watts and Guessous (2006) found that high school freshman and sophomore girls of color expressed higher levels of SPD commitment than their male counterparts (Watts & Guessous, 2006). This finding is consistent with findings from previous systems maintenance research which suggest that at

different points in the life course, girls and young women demonstrate stronger societal commitments than boys and men (Flanagan et al., 1998; Flanagan et al., 2007; White & Mistry, 2015). These 4 propositions have provided a critical frame for understanding youths' experiences of critical reflection and their social analysis.

Critical Reflection and Worldview/Social Analysis

Watts and Guessous (2006) conceptualize justice-oriented societal involvement as "doing something about oppression." Implicit in this conceptualization is the notion that oppressive forces need to be understood in order to be addressed. SPDT examines individuals' ongoing processes of understanding and examining how unbalanced power dynamics contribute to a) the creation and maintenance of oppressive societies and realities, and b) their ability to create and imagine more just realities. More specifically, as a product of liberation and developmental psychology, Sociopolitical Development Theory (SPDT) explores,

> …the evolving, critical understanding of the political, economic, cultural, and other systemic forces that shape society and one's status within it, and the associated process of growth in a person's knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social systems. SPD is not limited to resisting oppression in the interest of justice, however; the capacity to envision and help create a just [liberated] society is an essential part of the process as well (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003, p.185).

Critical reflection/social analysis[2] refers to an individual's analysis of the structural causes of inequitable social political conditions across multiple contexts (e.g., family, school, work, community). Studies have found that socialization experiences within these relational contexts may help to support individuals' analyses of inequality (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig,

[2] Social analysis (SPD Theory) and Critical reflection in (CC theory) are both concerned with an individual's ability to analyze the systems that produce inequality. Both of these constructs are rooted in liberation psychology and describe an individual's ability to analyze and name manifestations of oppression in their lives. In keeping with my guiding theoretical framework, and recognizing the conceptual overlap, I use the terminology of social analysis when referring to both.

Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006; O'Connor, 1997). These socialization experiences may contribute to the development of an understanding of social, economic, and political issues particularly as these issues play out in everyday life.

The role of everyday social life in developing social analysis warrants more scholarly attention. Although families the primary contexts in which young people come to learn and grow, we know little about the ways in which everyday transactions and dynamics in families contribute to young peoples' social analysis. Indeed, community-based organizations (CBOs) (i.e., voluntary organizations, churches, social clubs, and other civic organizations), and both out of school and school-based interventions, have been central settings for the study of historically marginalized youths' social analysis development and its influence on justice-oriented societal involvement (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002; Gordon & Taft, 2011; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998; Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). While CBOs afford young people opportunities to foster critical consciousness, build strong racial/ethnic identities, and develop political optimism (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002; Gordon & Taft, 2011), focusing exclusively on these contexts limits our knowledge of how social analysis develops organically in families where sustained inter- and intragenerational relationships, reciprocal commitments, deeply held beliefs and values, and contextual realities come to bear on youth each day.

Operationalizing Critical Reflection/Social Analysis

Social analysis is often quantitatively operationalized on a continuum from system justification to systems blame attributions (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017; Sanchez et al., 2015; Shin, Ezeofor, Smith, Welch, & Goodrich, 2016; Watts & Guessous, 2006). This continuum captures individuals' awareness and beliefs about how microsystems (e.g., families,

individuals) and macrosystems (e.g., culture, government) influence the life chances of individuals, families, and communities. A person who makes micro-level or individual based attributions ("blaming the victim") is considered to have less developed social analysis (Watts et al., 2011). It follows that a person who makes macro or structurally based attributions—i.e., who conceptualizes these issues as systemic, framing them in both a historical and contemporary context—is presumed to be engaged in a more mature or sophisticated social analysis (Godfrey & Wolf, 2016; Watts, Diemer, & Voight 2011).

Central in SPD theory (see Figure 1) is an assertion that individuals' early socialization experiences play crucial roles in informing their ability to engage in social analysis and thereby recognize the role of structures and systems in shaping their own and other peoples' life chances (Watts & Guessous, 2006). This assertion provides a strong argument for the need to attend to the role of family in the development of social analysis. Below I outline what we know about the role of early socialization experiences in the development of social analysis. In line with the focus of this study I pay particular attention to findings related to the particular roles of family in the development of youth generally, and young women of color in particular.

Early Socialization Experiences

In their work with Black organizers and activists, Watts, Griffith, and Abdul-Adil, (1999) demonstrated that social context and significant life events were essential in shaping Black peoples' distinct understandings of oppression or social analysis. As a result, Watts and colleagues (2003) expanded their initial stage theory of sociopolitical development to encompass ecological and transactional perspectives that stressed the dynamic and contextually grounded effects of "early socialization experiences" (see Figure 1). Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, and Hsieh's (2006) findings support the asserted link between early socialization experiences and

social analysis. In their study of the relationship between perceived support from key social actors (i.e., peers, family, and community) and the development of critical consciousness in a sample of 9th and 10th grade young people of color, Diemer et al. (2006) found that YWOC perceived more support for challenging sexism from the key social actors in their lives than the young men in the sample. Importantly, while peers, teachers and other socializing agents play a role in early development, scholars have noted that for historically marginalized young people, families are often the primary socializing site where they learn and experience the effects of power in a racially stratified patriarchal society (Garcia-Coll et al., 2006).

Taft (2017) found that young women of color cited their parents as early socialization agents for their engagement in activism; these youth indicated they first became aware of gender inequality in their own families. Their early experiences primed their later understandings of gender inequality as a larger, changeable social issue (Taft, 2017). Hope and Bañales (2019) found that Black middle-school aged youth described the influence of microsystems (e.g., parents and families) and the role of parent socialization as solutions and causes of issues in their local community and schools (Hope & Bañales, 2019). Using a continuum of system justification to system blame attributions, these youth described the interplay between parent socialization, local community and schools, and they pointed to parental role modeling and positive engagement as key to understanding and resolving sociopolitical issues (Hope & Bañales, 2019).

Hope and Bañales (2019) suggest that early adolescents vary in the degree to which they imagine family dynamics as being deterministic of young people's outcomes (e.g., violence and criminal activities), and young peoples' ability to situate family dynamics within larger societal dynamics such as oppressive social systems. Further, although the study did not utilize a gender analysis, participants made gendered attributions of how parents contribute to adolescents'

development and experiences of their broader social political context. Youth reported that fathers' lack of involvement is primarily responsible for children's actions that negatively affected the community, while "good mothering" was considered crucial for children's healthy development. These findings demonstrate that early adolescents of color perceive gendered family dynamics as having implications for youths' development and their impact on community well-being. This study seeks to build on Hope and Bañales' (2019) findings by exploring how young adult women of color's perceptions of dynamics in families shape their understandings of the manifestations and processes of oppression, and their understanding and imaginings of solutions for transforming these dynamics of oppression. Addressing this question requires a deeper exploration of findings related to the role of family in social analysis.

Early Socialization Experiences: The Role of Family in Social Analysis

Watts and Flanagan (2007) assert that families of color transmit messages regarding their racial stratification within and across generations which represents an ethnoracial worldview. Ethnoracial worldviews include a shared system of meaning that is transmitted within and across generations. Within the field of psychology, empirical investigations of the transmission of shared meanings regarding race and ethnicity from family occurs in the racial-ethnic socialization literature.

Because race is an undeniable aspect of life in U.S. society, racial-ethnic socialization messages are often interwoven into daily family life through habits, customs, and routines. As a cultural strategy, parental racial-ethnic socialization refers to the series of everyday social transactions that occur between parents and children that teach children about the meaning of being a member of an ethnic minority group (Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown et al., 2006). Racial-ethnic socialization messages can vary based on the content of the message, the

mechanism through which the message is transmitted, and the beliefs and goals underlying the message (Hughes et al., 2008). Ethnic-racial socialization messages in families raise awareness and shape analysis of injustice (Anyiwo & Bañales, 2018; Lozada, Jagers, Smith, Bañales, & Hope, 2017), and provide adolescents with examples of how social agitation can connect with their social awareness (Evans et al., 2012; Hughes et al., 2006).

Importantly, while some studies have found no significant gender differences in racial-ethnic socialization (Caughy et al., 2002; Hughes & Chen, 1997), a substantial body of research has found that race and gender do intersect in family socialization such that parents often transmit racial socialization messages as a function of children's gender. For example, parents' racial-ethnic socialization messages to Black boys are more likely to reflect boys' potential to be viewed by others as a physical threat; whereas socialization messages to Black girls may not reflect such assumptions as strongly (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown, Evans, & DeGannaro, 2009; Sanders, 1994). Some studies have also found that boys are more likely to receive messages concerning racial barriers while girls receive messages related to racial pride (Bowman & Howard, 1985).

Gender differences in familial racial socialization messages may influence the impact of racial socialization on the development of a critical understanding of social inequity. Lozada and colleagues (2017) found that for young Black men familial racial socialization messages that emphasized the importance of feeling good about being part of one's racial group may mitigate some of the negative effects of racialized oppression, and may result in young men placing greater attention on the inequitable treatment they receive on the basis of race and other social markers, such as gender (Lozada, Jagers, Smith, Bañales, & Hope, 2017). Lozada and colleagues (2017) provide important insight into how family influences an awareness and analysis of social

inequity on the basis of gender and race for males, but that work does not address how familial racial socialization messages influence social analysis for young women of color. I seek to address this gap in our knowledge.

While the literature on the role of families in social analysis among young women of color is sparse, the extant research on this topic suggests that families matter for this aspect of YWOC's development. O'Connor (1997), for example, found that low-income African-American girls whose families taught and or modeled strategies to combat classist, racist, and sexist forces were the more resilient and engaged in deeper social analysis than their counterparts. Through the experiences and behaviors of the adult women in their families, these young girls learned about gendered oppression. Their families taught them to identify and challenge how gender was used to marginalize them, and thus limit their social mobility in domains such as the workforce and at home. Families also shaped these young women's understandings of the importance of engaging with oppressive forces to achieve desirable change.

Although families can have a facilitative effect on social analysis, research with justice-oriented young women has demonstrated that family support is gendered and raced in ways that may also limit the justice-oriented societal involvement of YWOC. Gordon's (2000) in a comparative ethnographic study of male and female teenage from two organizations— one comprised of multi-racial/ethnic working male and female teenage activists, and the second White middle-class male and female teenage activists— found that parental worry for physical safety affected young women in both organizations. The young women were required to develop strategies to navigate parent worry in ways that led to their being less visible or active in public forms of activism compared to young men. Gordon (2000) also found that young women in both

organizations experienced higher levels of tensions and stress when attempting to maintain family harmony and engage in public forms of activism compared to young men. Additionally, the young women from the predominantly multiracial organization experienced more restrictions and parental worry that more severely limited their public activism behavior. Young women needed to do more relational care within their families to participate in public forms of activism, while young men were able to employ a higher degree of autonomy from their families, allowing them more opportunities to expand their network and visibility in social movements. Gordon's (2000) work provides important insights into unique ways YWOC's families' social location (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, generation, etc.) shape their justice-oriented involvement. Importantly, Gordon's study focused on more publicly visible forms of justice-oriented involvement (e.g., marching, public protests). My work seeks to explore how YWOC's families inform their analysis of marginalization and their thoughts about liberation. I do not limit the focus of this work to reflections on publicly visible manifestations of social involvement. Importantly, in order to achieve the aim of exploring how families inform YWOC's social analysis, it is important to situate young women as gendered beings in families. I turn to feminist family studies as a way of situating this work.

Socially Locating Women in Families: Feminist Family Studies

Gender plays a major role in how families are structured, how power is distributed in families, and how authority is experienced and understood among family members. "Power refers to the ability and opportunity to fulfill and obstruct personal, relational, or collective needs" (Prilleltensky, 2008, p.121). For true sociopolitical development to occur, individuals must be able to integrate various experiences in different power relationships (e.g., family

relationships) into a multileveled understanding of the manifestations of oppression (e.g., sexism, ableism, homophobia etc.) and liberation (Watts et al., 1999).

Gender experiences within families may position YWOC to develop an understanding of the function of power in their lives and within their families' lives that may shape their social analysis in distinct ways. For example, YWOC may occupy roles in families that require them to contend with parental power and varying cultural expectations regarding their contributions to family (Gordon, 2008; Gordon & Taft, 2011). Indeed, daughters experience more allocation of chores and fewer privileges compared to sons (Raley & Bianchi, 2006; Updegraff, Delgado & Wheeler, 2009). Because women of color are tasked with providing care, despite constant assaults by economic and cultural systems (Dill, 1988; Nakano Glenn, 1985), they often experience their family lives in conjunction with events outside of the home (e.g., at work, in society), and mandate their responsiveness to these external contexts, while also resisting, changing, and challenging those contexts. Thus, within their families, YWOC are uniquely positioned to gain insights and to learn from family life, as their family lives often have potential to parallel both marginalizing and empowering experiences and processes that reflect larger societal dynamics related to oppression and liberation. Examining families as a site for the development of social analysis— an understanding of the manifestations of oppression and liberation in their lives— can provide more insight into how justice-oriented YWOC develop social analysis in everyday life.

Examining families as a context for the development of social analysis requires a conceptualization of families that acknowledges the interplay between gender and power in shaping family and the experiences and processes within family life. SPDT theorizes power and gender but does not examine how power and gender manifests in family life. To critically

examine the influence of families of color on justice-oriented YWOC's sociopolitical development, I apply Feminist Family Studies (FFS), theoretical conceptualization of the relationship between family and gender into my conceptual framework.

Historically and across disciplines, the study of the role and experiences of women in families often focuses on children and marriage, and examines women's roles as a daughter, wife, and mother who nurtures and contributes to the well-being of others (Stacey & Thorne, 1985). Feminist family studies has articulated a different model for connecting women's' micro level experiences within family and macrolevel contexts (e.g. gender oppression) to better account for and articulate agency and social change and its relationship to gender, power, and families (Uttal, 2009). As an area of inquiry, FFS examines how larger systemic and structural forces shape the realities of family life and theorizes gender as a key axis from which power is distributed and experienced in families (Allen, Lloyd, & Few; 2009). FFS recognizes that women, men, and children shape family life through their own actions and behaviors and relationships (Baca Zinn, 2000). This recognition that families are shaped by human agency and are key interactional and institutional locations that systematically reproduce and experience oppression and privilege (Allen, Lloyd, & Few; 2009) offers opportunities to examine how these experiences and relationships within families develop their understanding and awareness of how power functions in sustaining and transforming oppression.

FFS broadens the boundaries of family from the isolated nuclear family to include community ties. In doing so, FFS does not position families and social institutions as separate social domains. Rather, FFS considers social domains as abstractions, and therefore individuals as constantly moving between social domains and family. The broadened definition of family that FFS privileges allows for the examination of how extended families, community

relationships, and institutions such as school and workplace, are implicated in understanding young women's development within families. Further, FFS allows for a more nuanced examination of the interplay between family, gender, and power by privileging the role of history and transmission of family stories as part of the analysis of family life (Uttal, 2009), and how parents raise their children based on their own historical consciousness of past events and family stories (Gould, 1995). Thus, FFS allows the current study to examine how women of color complicate and contextualize gendered traditional family roles, experiences, and behaviors within their own localized family histories.

More empirical investigations are needed to examine how experiences in family inform how YWOC learn to perceive, experience, and respond to multiple oppressions. My work investigates how young women of colors' possession of multiple and intersecting identities (e.g., gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation) and their embeddedness within families are central to how they come to learn and experience the manifestations of oppression and imagine liberation. By integrating FFS as a guiding frame, my work fills the theoretical gap that exists in examining how experiences of gender and family develop YWOC's understanding of social inequity. However, as an area of inquiry, FFS's examinations of women in families of color is limited given its lack of attention to the women of colors' intersectional social identities.

As it relates to the experience of oppression, intersectionality highlights the multitude of ways in which overlapping social identity markers combine to shape different forms of social marginalization or privilege (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Intersectionality attends to the multiple, intersecting identities and social positions (e.g., race, gender, sexual identity) along with associated power dynamics. Intersectionality conceptualizes these power dynamics as *interlocking* systems of oppression, and envisions social change efforts as requiring attention to

multiple layers of social inequality and comprehensive structural changes in order to promote social justice and equity. Women of color live in this intersectional reality, and it is central to how they make-meaning of every day life. Therefore, I employ critical race feminism to capture and conceptualize YWOC's intersectional identities.

Critical Race Feminism

Stories about how young women of colors' identities and experiences are implicated in their activism are an important part of justice-oriented people's collective identity formation within a social movement (Linder & Rodriguez, 2012; Taft, 2016). Linder and Rodriguez (2012) examined how college-aged YWOC activists develop an understanding of the multiple forms of oppression and resistance strategies through their possession of multiple identities within family. Importantly, although the role of family was not the direct focus of the study, Linder and Rodriguez's participants often noted that their awareness of social injustice occurred through family-based experiences and interactions. Nearly half of the sample described mothers as influencing their activism by modeling volunteerism, and having discussions with their daughters about their personal experiences dealing with racism and ethnic discrimination. YWOC also noted that their own reflections on the lived realities of their extended family members who experienced gender-based violence and poverty influenced their understanding of how gender-based injustice was experienced individually and collectively. The investigators also found that participants were motivated to gain more awareness and understanding of social injustices based on having family members discriminate against them because of various aspects of their multiple identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation).

Such work demonstrates that applying an intersectional lens provides key insights into how people develop their understandings and analysis of oppression and liberation. In this study,

I apply an intersectional framing to explore currently under-examined aspects of family life that shape YWOC's social analysis. Intersectionality attends to the multiple identities and social positions (e.g., race, gender, sexual identity) that individuals occupy along with associated power dynamics associated with interlocking systems of oppression that people face as a result of their identities (Crenshaw, 1989, 1990, 1991). Research has explored how activists use intersectionality to contribute to their justice-oriented societal involvement in broader social movements. Terriquez, Brenes, and Lopez (2018) assert that intersectionality can serve as a diagnostic, motivational, and prognostic frame to explore the development of activism. As a diagnostic frame, intersectionality allows for activists to develop a shared understanding of injustice by both exposing the various systems of oppression people face. Intersectionality also recognizes the ways in which activists' complex identities serve as resources for analysis. Intersectionality may also function as a motivational frame that empowers individual around their multiple identities.

The gap in our understanding of the influence of family on YWOC's socio-political development is partially due to the lack of research paradigms that adequately allow for rigorous examination of how YWOC's myriad cultural, familial, and societal factors shape their multiple identities and the spaces they occupy. To address this gap it is crucial to situate scholarship on YWOC in a research paradigm that centers the intersectional lived experiences of women of color broadly rather than in the lived experience of a particular ethnoracial group. Critical Race Feminism achieves that end.

Critical Race Feminism (CRF) is a standpoint theory[3] that centers its analysis on the lived experiences of women of color and not solely on the experiences of African-American or Black women (Wing, 1997, 2003). Importantly, the developers of CRF deliberately chose the term "Critical Race Feminism" to stress the multidisciplinary framework's emphasis on capturing the experiences and perspectives of women of color living in the context of a patriarchal White supremacist society (Wing, 2007).

CRF deconstructs how YWOC come to understand their own development of their female subjectivities— the identities that become salient in different social contexts (hooks, 1984). CRF is used to examine the experiences of marginalized racial or ethnic groups of women (e.g., Black or Asian women) in an effort to refute individualistic examinations of WOC, and can therefore be considered strategically anti-essentialist (Wing, 2003), as it captures the fullness of the individual experiences of women and the collective experiences of women of color.

As both a theoretical lens and movement, CRF sets itself apart as a distinct frame that honors the dynamic experiences of women of color— separate from the experiences of men of color or White women. CRF is comprised of the following grounding tenets (Wing, 2000*)*:

1. CRF holds that racism is inextricably a part of U.S. Society;
2. CRF emphasizes, "not only the experience of discrimination, but also resilience, resistance, and the formation of solutions;"
3. CRF centers the distinct voice and lives of women of color;
4. CRF both emphasizes and examines how women of color experience a "multiple consciousness" given the multiple forms of oppression they experience due to the intersections of their race, gender, and class identities within the system of White male patriarchy and racist oppression; and

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[3] Standpoint theories represent methodological perspectives that explain how multiple systems— racial, historical, political, ideological, and economical— intersect to produce diverse and unique expressions of lived reality and experiences including those that occur within family life (Anzaldu´a, 2002; Collins, 1999; Crenshaw 1991, 1989; hooks, 1981). Standpoint theories represent the various forms of social analysis and meaning making in which all people continuously engage to form and transform their standpoint and experiences. In standpoint theories the intersections of different systems are acknowledged as important social forces, and emphasis is placed on analyzing how the individual gives meaning to these forces, and is thus agentic in the social construction of her own life.

5. CRF promotes Critical Praxis and calls for practices and theories that simultaneously study and combat gender and racial oppression.

Wing (1997) declares the need to consider that "[women of color] are more than 'multiply burdened' entities subject to a multiplicity of oppression, discrimination, pain, and depression. Our essence is also characterized by multiplicity of *strength, love, joy*…and *transcendence* despite adversity" (p.7). In sum, CRF allows for empirical investigations of not only the multiple ways that young women of color are burdened, but also the multiple ways in which women of color may experience aspects of liberation.

Scholars have explored how CRF may be applied to strengthen existing frameworks related to the positive youth development of young Black women (Clonan-Roy, Jacobs, & Nakkula, 2016). I apply CRF to my conceptual framework to contextualize the experiences of YWOC within family. Although no studies to date have applied CRF to exploring the influence of family life on young women of color's justice-oriented involvement, I contend that CRF brings a number of distinct advantages to the study of family. Conceptual papers in the field of inquiry of FFS have asserted the need for and appropriateness of using CRF to study the experiences of women of color within family (Few, 2007; Few-Demo, 2014). Indeed, CRF provides a theoretical lens to critically examine the ways WOC navigate and negotiate how their multiple identities inform their understanding of the interlocking systems of oppression that shape their lives through relational and familial processes (Few, 2007). I endeavor to fill a gap in extant research on sociopolitical development by using CRF to examine how experience within families informs YWOC's social analysis.

The Current Study

Studies that have explored how YWOC develop an awareness of social injustice have tended to focus on relational influences (i.e., peers, mentors, and family) on social analysis. Few studies disentangle the nuanced influence of families on YWOC, and those that do attend to families tend to acknowledge that families matter while providing relatively little information on how families influence YWOC's social analysis. In this work, I integrate SPDT, FFS, and CRF as conceptual frameworks to provide a comprehensive lens for examining how families inform young women's imaginings and understandings of social justice and injustice. Together these framings inform the study's data analysis and interpretation of findings.

The study seeks to examine how YWOC's experiences within family help to develop their understanding and recognition of how social oppression manifests within their mesosystem and macrosystem and informs their imaginings of liberation. SPDT asserts that early socialization experiences within family shapes these understandings. Although SPDT theorizes the influence of power and gender, it does not account for how power and gender manifest in family life, and shape YWOC's experiences within family. Therefore, the study applies FFS's conceptualization of family to explicitly examine how gender and power operate in the family lives of women. Finally, to fully account for the role of YWOC's specific social locations (e.g., possession of multiple oppressed identities and the collective identity of woman of color) in informing their meaning-making processes, I apply Critical Race Feminism (CRF), as it provides a culturally-rooted intersectional analysis of YWOC's individual and collective experiences as women of color in families.

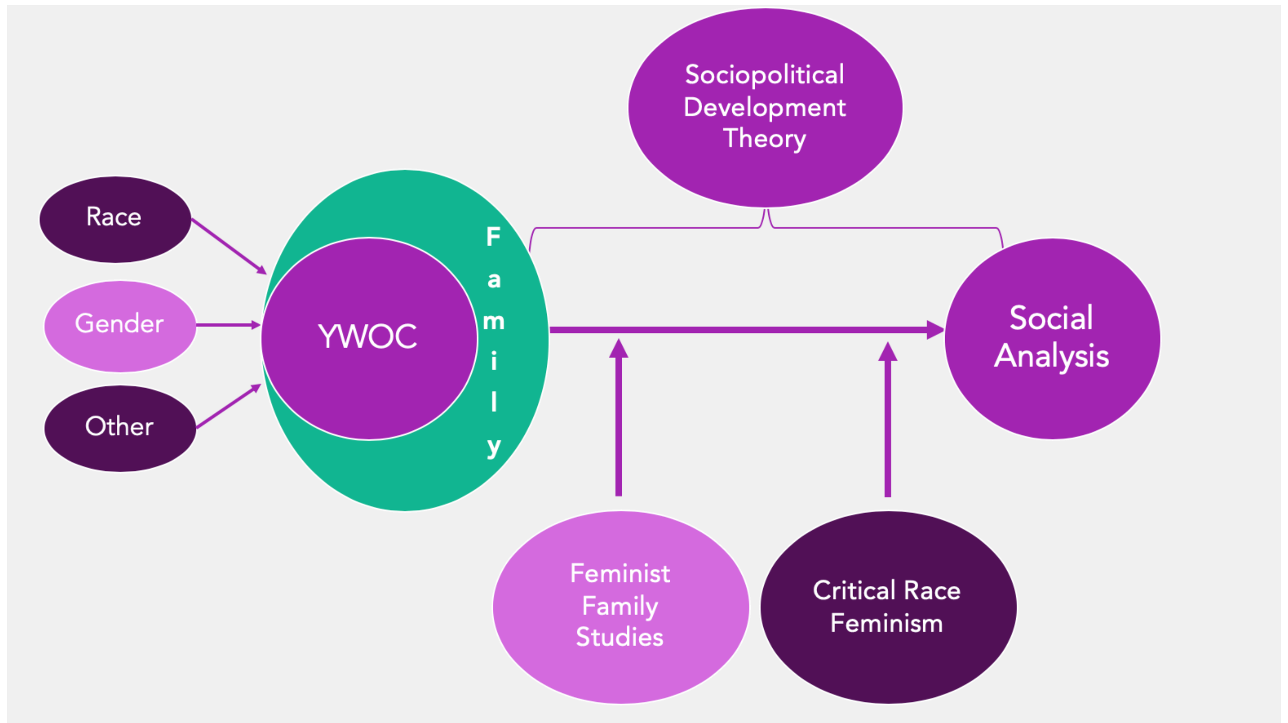

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

I chose to employ a qualitative design for this study to facilitate a nuanced examination of how young people subjectively describe their development of social analysis in relation to family, and how they make meaning of the particular events and family experiences that shape their social analysis (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016; Hope & Bañales, 2019; Hope et al., 2015). The current study is guided by the following research questions.

Guiding Research Questions

1. How do self-selecting justice-oriented YWOC (ages 17-23) describe the roles of their families in shaping their understandings, imaginings and experiences of oppression and liberation (i.e., social analysis)?

   1a. What direct strategies and indirect processes do families use to shape these understandings of oppression and liberation?

2. What lessons or messages do youth receive about social justice and oppression from their parents and family, and how do these messages inform youths' liberatory imagination?

   2a. What do youth imagine is changeable in an unfair world?

   2b. What role do they imagine individuals should play in initiating that change?

   2c. How do they imagine social change occurs?

Chapter 3: Research Methods and Design

Our mothers our great-grandmothers
all the women whose blood we carry.
All of them
and none of them
needed to be saved
by someone who
called them exotic…
or tries to write their guilt away by researching them…
All our mothers have always known the power of sisterhood
you didn't teach them how to use their weapons.
- Ijeoma Umebinyuo

In this work, I analyze the ways family shapes justice-oriented YWOC's understandings and imaginings of oppression and liberation. This study privileges a strengths-based framing of the contributions of families of color and demonstrates the ways that these families position young women to work towards understanding issues of justice. I resist the long and reductive history that positions families of color as perpetuators of their own oppression. Instead, this project uses young women of colors' personal narratives about their families to uplift the reality that families of color contribute in complex ways to YWOC's sociopolitical development.

My goal in this project is not to make a statement about *all* families of color, but to learn from the specific retellings of the young women of color who participated in this study. The data presented in this project speak to study participants' perceptions of how everyday experiences within family inform their sociopolitical wisdoms. This chapter describes the study's research methodology including (a) its theoretical foundations, (b) researcher positionality, (c) overview of the research design, (d) study participants, (e) data sources and collection, (f) data analysis, and (g) ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness.

Theoretical Foundations

Research paradigms are based in ontological and epistemological assumptions. Ontology refers to the study of being (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012). As such, ontological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality— '*what is.*' As a researcher, I am tasked with examining my own perceptions of what is, and how this impacts not only how social phenomena are experienced, but also how phenomena are shared during the research process. Epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012). Epistemological assumptions are based on how knowledge is acquired, created, and communicated. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), epistemology invites questions of what it *means* to be the knower and what can be known. As a researcher I have the opportunity to uplift epistemological and ontological assumptions that challenge paradigms and ideologies that flatten the lived experiences of women of color. I do not take this privilege lightly. To honor this privilege, I utilize qualitative methods to conduct this work.

The research questions that guide this study require a qualitative approach to inquiry which privileges unpacking YWOC's understanding and interpretations of how their experience with family shape their sociopolitical development. In conducting qualitative work, I take a constructivist approach to the study's design and to the analysis of the narrative data. The constructivist paradigm is concerned with both individual meaning-making practices and the plurality of human experiences. Constructivism acknowledges that knowledge is subjective and therefore best obtained through dialectical methods where researchers and informants interact to co-construct knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). This appreciation of the shared work of participants and researchers in the research process 1) reduces distance between the participant and researcher, 2) requires that I acknowledge that individuals are the experts of their own lived

experiences, and 3) necessitates that I constantly engage in a reflexive process. Reflexivity refers to my deliberate contemplations on how my marginalized social identities and beliefs influence the questions that I ask or choose not to ask, and how the stories my participants share are shaped by the dynamic interplay of our social identities (Ahluwalia & Mattis, 2012). Because my participants can have the right to deny or grant access to their experiences, they maintain more power in studies rooted in constructivism than in the exclusively positivist[4] and post-positivist traditions of research.

Locating the Study

Constructivist principles overlap with the methodological tenets of CRF. CRF requires that research be co-created by informants and centered on empowering informants (Few, 2007; 2014). Critical Race Feminists acknowledge each participant's voice as a valuable contribution. Both constructivism and CRF demand research that contribute to *revisionist herstories* where participants' retellings of their individual experience are not only offered to depathologize experience, but rather "offer multiple 'partial truths' from within-group experience with the intent of accurately contextualizing choices and outcomes while balancing the ability of informants to tell their experiences" (Few, p. 247, 2007). Synergistically, CRF's privileging of narrative and story-telling as methodology invites examination of counternarratives in our exploration of the role of families in YWOC SPD.

In applying CRF to the current study's research design, I am able to conduct a nuanced investigation of the influence of YWOC's families on their SPD in ways that survey data may

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[4] Positivism refers to the position that the goal of knowledge is to describe the phenomena which we experience that which can be observed and measured (Lindolf & Taylor, 2011). Post-positivism espouses the belief that absolute truth and value-free inquiry is unattainable, because the physical and social world are comprised of complex phenomena that exist independently of perception (Lindolf & Taylor, 2011).

not fully capture. Theoretical frameworks devoid of cultural nuances may misrepresent participants' lived experiences. Conducting and producing empirical research about women of color that does not explicitly acknowledge and integrate their intersecting subjectivities can result in a researcher uplifting their own storying of participants' lives and rendering participants' diverse experiences invisible or inaccurate.

The choices that I make as a researcher to represent and filter my participants' stories reflect my own personal worldviews and experiences. As such, it is required that I observe how much of myself I wrote into my participants retellings. The tenets of CRF require that I name the culturally relevant concepts, orientations, and assumptions ascribed to and expressed by specific racial and or ethnic groups. In doing so, I can help avoid the tendency for the knowledge and theories generated by marginalized people to be misappropriated or misrepresented.

Constructivism and CRF both require that researchers develop self-awareness throughout the research process. As a qualitative researcher, a process of reflexivity better positions me to acknowledge how my own power and biases manifest in my work, and how I utilize theory to illuminate social action through the interpretation of social life (Madison, 2011).

That is, I must recognize how my own social positioning (e.g., experiences and background) shapes my interpretation of my findings. Here, I engage with how my own social location and personal history influence the current study.

I am required by constructivist theory and CRF to explore what we gain from the research process and more importantly, at what costs. This requires that I think through the ways that this work may be exploitive versus liberatory of and for my informants. The process of self-reflexivity uncovers the theoretical blind spots, such as internalized forms of oppression manifested as sexism, ethnocentrism, ableism, classism, sexism, xenophobism, and homophobia.

In this uncovering, CRF demands I ask myself "how am I, as the 'Other'?" potentially perpetuating racial and ethnic stereotypes in my research. To address this, I tapped into my own multiple identities so that I would be better positioned to identify and depict my participants' experiences and retellings in ways that they would recognize. I address the requirements of constructivist theory and CRF in my statement of positionality.

Researcher Positionality

Reflexivity Statement: Barbershops and Spider Webs

In keeping with the academic adage of "research is me search" here, I attempt to put aspects of my 33-years of embodied experiences in conversation with the current research investigation. I am a 33-year-old Black Haitian-American woman living in the United States. I was born to two Haitian immigrants, who embodied their Haitian pride rather than name it. I recall instances when I mentioned that someone told me that because of my American-ness I was not really Haitian, to which my parents simply reminded me that I was born to two Haitians. I am a woman with a deeply rooted Haitian spirit who grounds her intrigue in the power of families in my wonderings and imaginings about Haiti and Haitians as a people who led the only successful Slave Revol(u)t(ion) in the world. I reflect on the Haitian revolution and how it exemplifies how collective action can achieve transformational change. The intricacies of the spaces in which that collective action and vision were cultivated and supported intrigues me.

I grew up and lived well into my early adulthood in Miami, Florida in a relatively ethnically diverse working-class neighborhood. Until the age of five or six, I was raised with one older brother, this shifted as two additional older brothers who lived in Haiti migrated to the United States to live with us. My family life outside of the home was male dominated. I grew up in a family of men who valued manhood and fatherhood, qualities I see embodied in my own

brothers today. In my "immediate" family I was the only person born in the United States. I was the youngest, the only girl, and the only child living in our household with both of their biological parents. Like many children of immigrants, I grew up very sheltered. This experience is what many growing up in Haitian enclaves would aptly describe as growing up on "lock[down]." Therefore, in childhood most of my engagement with the world was through whatever leisurely activities my brothers participated in. This included such activities as climbing our avocado tree, watching anything related to World Wrestling Federation (WWF) wrestling (*not* World Champion Wrestling WCW), playing Super Nintendo, and joyfully, but selectively listening to 90s hip-hop.

Haitian culture strongly upholds academic success for their children, and lucky for me I fell in love with the experience of schooling because of the opportunities it gave me to have a voice. In my classes and friendship groups, I had a voice that did not require me to be defensive to be heard, as was often the case at home with my brothers, because I was the youngest and the only girl. My voice was a voice that I had to fight for in my father's barbershop as the only child and girl. My mother was my only example of a woman who was listened to in male dominated spaces. Whether at home or in the barbershop I witnessed my mother use her voice to speak her power into and over these spaces. I also learned from her the importance and power of infusing care in the spaces where I, too, may experience marginalization in order to support their transformation.

My most vivid childhood memories are from my parents' barbershop. Growing up traversing the space of boy centric home life to adult male-dominated barbershop life and seeing my mother do the same, shaped my navigation of gender and power. My father was the head barber and my mother was the sole beautician in the shop. Every day after school and on

Saturdays, I would be in the barbershop watching my parents engage with a variety of Black people and their families, while also navigating their own.

My gender socialization within the barbershop was complicated. I was tasked with playing the role of the good Haitian daughter. This meant I was quiet, respectful, studious, and above all else I did not take up much space. To this day, I am amused at how, without fail, any time I encounter any of the shops' former patrons, they share their remembering me as the little girl who would diligently sit down with her homework in her lap every day after school. Because I grew up very sheltered at the barbershop, when I was not doing my homework I would find great joy reading through the magazines and content that were accessible. Most of my understandings of the outside world came from these magazines. The first set of magazines that occupied my elementary school mind, were outdated *Readers Digest* magazines that we acquired at a Goodwill down the block. As a child, I would read the stories and wonder if every day "American" experiences being shared in my favorite sections such as, 'Life in these United States' and 'Laughter, the Best Medicine' mapped on to my White teachers and classmates' home lives—those being the only White people to which I had any established connection. I remember the feeling of pride that would come over me when a weekly vocabulary word actually made it on the list for "Word Power," feeling as though my Gifted teacher in the Gifted program, a White woman named Mrs. Reis, wanted to set me up for success. In middle school, I would read the *TV Guide* cover to cover (a collection I still have to this day), fascinated and aware of the ways that I could be made to invest so deeply in people playing characters whose lives looked so different from my own life. In high school, I remember looking curiously at the African American life being depicted in *Ebony* magazine that seemed different from what I knew the experiences of African Americans to be in Miami.

As a child I grew up watching my parents effortlessly and constantly connecting their patrons with one another based on points of overlap such as a common interest, need, or experience. From the barbershop, I learned many lessons about the way the world does and ought to function according to people who looked like me. They all would use this time in the shop to instill lessons and share laughs, or often to peacefully sit listening to Haitian radio or dozing off. These people made up what I considered part of the barbershop's family. At the barbershop, I would witness the little girls who, for whatever reason, had to cut off all their hair and would weep so deeply during the process because they *knew* what they would have to face looking different from everyone else. As customers would sit in my daddy's barber chair or my mummy's wash bowl or dryer, I heard the way that men and women would drop their voices when talking to my parents about the experiences of discrimination they faced as Haitians in their work place or the frustrations of adapting to family life in the States. I can recall the boastful nature in which family members would speak of a child's academic success. I remember excitedly going with my mother to run errands related to barbershop and or home. Each trip being filled with going to multiple Black, Haitian, Arabic, and Latinx owned business for dry cleaning, to grab lunch, to wash the towels she used to dry her customers' hair, or to buy a phone card for her to call "home." I learned to appreciate the ways adults would take a special interest in keeping up with the news of the day, especially news related to their homeland of Haiti. Essentially, I was allowed the opportunity to experience Black people as multifaceted beings who, in their roles as parents, aunties, uncles, children, cousins and members of the Haitian community, had a vested interest and influence in the lives of the people they were connected to through love and kinship.

In the barbershop I learned how to engage as a participant-observer to multiple confusing, beautiful, and hurtful components that make up Haitians' patriarchal culture. The barbershop taught me that I had the power to adapt and exist in spaces that I knew were not "for me" but yet I could still learn to carve out my own world within them, and engage with people from that positioning. Much of the interior of the barbershop was *covered in mirrors*. I would *delight* in watching the expressiveness of customers whose head movements were constrained while getting their haircuts, but still would participate in heated debates and storytelling with one another through their eye contact in the mirror. As I grew older, and began to command my own space within that space, I reveled in my ability to enter that world with them. I would excitedly share stories with patrons or my father as we all would be connecting with each other through the mirror. I will always remember the shifts in the feeling of stares and glances following me in ways that were no longer nurturing or familiar, but were confusing because it was through those same mirrors which I felt connection and found voice. My father noticed too, and would no longer allow me to sit in the front. I remember feeling like that prohibition blamed me for something which I could not control or even quite understand at the time, and still struggle with to this day as I am constantly reminded of the ways my womanhood is sexualized and misconstrued within a patriarchal society. In sum, as I matured, gender oppression entered my safe "home" space and transformed that space and family dynamics in ways that made injustice personal and clear to me.

Spider Webs

Growing up, I would very often unknowingly walk through spider webs dangling from trees or less obvious places like between the side view mirror of a car and a bush. To say that I found this experience uncomfortable would be an understatement. One moment, I'd be walking peacefully and in the next I'd be flailing my arms, and wiping down my body hoping to simultaneously wipe off the spider and its web, often failing at both tasks.

The process was always the same, but my feelings after the experience largely depended on if I was around anyone else. In instances when I was called melodramatic I would ask how often they had that experience? I would then assert that I likely experience cobwebs more because of my height. Every time I offered this perspective, I felt guilty, wondering whether or not my height actually increased the likelihood or if I was being deceitful. This was the experience of having a growing awareness of the complexities of living my life as a woman. Growing up you hear and feel people telling you what you should and should not be doing, what you can and cannot be, how you should or should not feel about any given experience. Eventually you get so caught up in that which is named that you dismiss that which goes unnamed which cannot be policed or regulated. You were tricked by the spider. You are so focused on the physical entanglement that you lose sight of your embodied experience—how you come to know. How you come to feel what you know. How you come to acknowledge what you feel.

In this dissertation I want to give young women of color the space to name and identify the spider webs that they walk through daily. I want to give them an opportunity to co-create a space where we explore the parts of the web that were unseen. Where we pause, look at a spider, and wonder about it. Not focus on it as an immediate source of danger or discomfort, but wonder

about its movements. Wonder about the function of the web that was constructed to entangle us. To learn about what has been done historically and what can be done in the future.

I recognize that my lived experiences and beliefs shape my investigation of the role of families of color in the lives of justice-oriented young women, although I am not always certain how. This research study was influenced by my own growing understandings and previously unnamed desires to explore what it means to be identified as a woman in this world, what it means to experience and make meaning of oppression and liberation within the context of family, and what it means to translate these experiences into my engagement with the greater world. And, above all else, what does it means to *know* that these processes are inextricably linked, but have gone the majority of one's life not having the space, capacity, tools, and courage to name and explore them?

At multiple points in this dissertation study I found myself wondering what exactly it was that I needed to capture in these young women's stories, their retellings. What was it that I sought to piece together? How could they teach me to listen, to contextualize their retellings in ways that did not stop at their naming the multiple daily manifestations of oppression that they live through, but also pushed our co-constructed recognition of how within the nuanced intricacies and intersections were their experiences and imaginations of liberation— named or not, claimed or not.

My conceptualizations of family and gender are situated and reflective of my lifelong experiences of possessing an insider/outsider status in the spaces where I have been socialized and loved. In conducting this study, I have had to reflect on my own socialization experiences as an insider/outsider. I do not assume insider status with my participants based on my ethnicity or gender. Rather, I engage and write about these young women's experiences while simultaneously

being aware of our points of overlap and difference (e.g., education, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class) throughout this research process. I realized that throughout my engagement with my participants, I felt the most energized in our one-on-one interviews. This was not a huge surprise for me as I recognized that in my day-to-day life I find one-on-one conversations with individuals more energizing than group conversations. However, while reading my field notes from one of my first group sessions, I wrote, "I'm just so amazed to be in a group of so many women and I kinda realized I haven't been in spaces like this…with a group of women of color before." Examining my note through the lens of my own gender socialization experiences, I understand how growing up in male-dominated spaces might inform both my feeling out of place in that context and my hunger and appreciation of woman-dominated spaces. However, with more reflection, I recognized that it was the *collective* experience of different women from different ethnicity groups that I found so energizing. Growing up in Miami, my childhood and young adult friends represented a variety of ethnic groups. Yet, as an adult woman, I realized I am seldom in intentionally created spaces for women from different backgrounds for extended periods of time. The rarity of this experience of being in spaces populated by women of color made me especially attuned to hearing what they had to say, and attuned to learn how they were impacted by their families.

Overview of Research Context

In keeping with the theories that guide this work, in developing my research design, I intended to co-create a space where knowledge generation co-existed with reflection, and potentially, aspects of transformation (Few, 2007, 2014). The data collected for this dissertation project was a result of a collaboration between the community-based organization's the Toni

Morrison Justice Project [5] (TMJP) and myself. The TMJP focuses on the leadership development of young women and gender-expansive young people. My partnership with TMJP was facilitated through an institutionally-based community partnership grant. As per the grant requirements, the TMJP staff and I co-developed the scope of the project's activities. My partnership with the TMJP centered on the organization's national justice-oriented nine-month fellowship training program, *The Nina Program* (NP). Through our collaboration, I created program training for NP by providing technical assistance training (e.g., how to conduct a literature review, how to prepare for initial conversations with community stakeholders) focused on strategies for incorporating community voice into the design, implementation, and evaluation of their leadership projects.

The NP consisted of 14 fellows, three of whom were high school aged (under 18 years old), and the remainder of whom ranged from ages 19-23. According to the organization, these women were selected for the NP fellowship opportunity because they exemplified foundational leadership skills and qualities. Throughout the nine-month duration of the NP fellowship, the Nina fellows attended monthly, day-long, in-person trainings, and bi-weekly video conference calls which served as check-ins and booster sessions as they developed and designed their six-session hour-long community-based workshop series. Some of the topics of the workshops included: building capacity to serve as advocates for un-documented youth, initiatives to disrupt Islamophobia in community contexts, teaching young girls what sexual consent is and is not, Afro-centric self-care workshops, and how to use dance to cope with the experiences of having an incarcerated family member. For the last three months of the fellowship, the Ninas

[5] The pseudonyms, Toni Morrison Justice Project (TMJP) Nina Project (NP) will be used to protect the identities of the sample for the remainder of the study.

implemented their workshop series at local schools, in their homes, in the homes of their participants, and in other community spaces. At the conclusion, the Ninas conducted their own evaluations of their projects and presented their work to their families, staff, one another, and the greater community at a culminating NP event.

Through training workshops facilitated by TMJP staff and myself, these fellows gained and refined their skills in group facilitation, evaluation, and community engaged research design skills. The two in-person trainings I led focused on the fellows' integration of participatory research methods (e.g., community asset mapping and photo voice) which provided the Ninas with practical tools to capture community voices and perspectives in their workshop designs. Over the course of the nine months, I attended their biweekly video conference check-ins, monthly program training sessions (I attended via video conference when I could not attend in person), and the two-day program closing of reflective, facilitated discussions and presentations. During and after the fellowship program, I also supported the Ninas in doing work that fell outside the scope of Nina programming. This has included reading over graduate school and fellowship applications, helping with school research projects by sharing access to research literature, visiting with two of the Ninas who both started their freshmen years of college, and connecting Ninas with members of my network when appropriate to their own work and development.

Core Research Design

Study Participants

Over the course of my nine-month partnership with TMJP, I developed trust and relationships with the majority of the fellows. Due to conflicts in schedules or weather- caused travel delays, I had limited engagement with three of the 14 fellows. Because of emergency

situations (e.g., illness, flight cancellations) only 12 of the 14 fellows were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. Of the fellows interviewed, three were in their senior years of high school, and were transitioning into their freshman year at a four-year university the following semester. The other nine fellows had either completed college, were completing a gap year, or were still currently attending college. The remaining nine college-aged participants all had shared experiences of living away from home for school, or living on their own for extended periods of time (at least four years).

Due to the small number of high school age women in the sample, a comparative analysis (between high school and college aged) could not be conducted. Given the developmental and experiential differences between the high school and college age participants, I excluded the high school age participants and only the 9 college age fellows were included in the analysis. Furthermore, I had comparatively limited engagement with one of the 9 college aged interviewees (we only met briefly during the closing programming and for the interview), I excluded her data from the data analysis as the level of our personal engagement differed quite drastically from the remainder of the sample. As such, the current study's sample was limited to 8 of the fellows.

As shown in Table 1.1, the study participants' parents migrated from Haiti, Dominican Republic, India, Jamaica, Vietnam, Mexico, and Senegal. All of the study's participants were US-born. All of the fellows, except one, identified both parents as immigrants. The exception had one parent who was African American, and another who was a first-generation immigrant from the Caribbean. Given the lack of exposure that this one participant had to her immigrant parents' culture and family, she did not feel comfortable categorizing herself as a second-generation immigrant. Importantly, when naming their varying social identities, the study

participants identified with their varying ethnicities and race. However, when referring to themselves collectively as Nina fellows or broadly as women, they all evoked the term "Women of Color" in their interviews. In keeping with the tenets of constructivism and CRF that privilege participants' meanings and naming, the study utilizes the term "young women of color" to uplift the participants naming of their collective identity. Collective identity refers to emotional, cognitive, and moral connection to a larger community which provides a foundation for collective agency and action (Snow & McAdams, 2000).

Table 1.1. Study Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Parents' Birth Country	Age at Time of Interview
Cecilia	Dominican Republic (Both parents)	21
Racquel	United States (African-American) and Jamaica	23
Nicole	Dominican Republic (Both parents)	23
Cinelia	Philippines and Senegal	19
Rita	Mexico (Both parents)	23
Anna	India (Both parents)	24
Una	Haiti (Both parents)	21

Data Sources and Collection

In conducting the interviews, I adhered to general guidelines outlined by Black women scholars about conducting ethical qualitative research with Black women about family (Few, Stephens & Rouse-Arnett, 2003). Few and colleagues (2003) provided five strategies that I applied to my interviewing of women of color during the research process: 1) contextualizing research, 2) contextualizing self, 3) triangulating multiple sources, 4) monitoring symbolic power, and 5) caring in the research process. Taken together, these suggestions facilitate the ongoing contextualization of research and subjectivity throughout the research project. This required that I educate myself about the culture and history of my participants. This learning

occurred organically throughout my engagement with the fellowship program and intentionally during my interview preparations. I also empowered my participants to speak about and from their own experiences by developing a relationship with them prior to our interview and sharing aspects of my own lived experience during the interview. In order to contextualize the self, I needed to engage in reflexivity throughout the research process, and actively monitor my own positioning during the interview. As such, I designed the research protocol and conducted the interviews in a culturally sensitive manner. For instance, during the interviews I encouraged the interviewees to draw a map of their neighborhoods highlighting the spaces where they would want to have me visit. This allowed the participants to identify aspects of their neighborhood that were central to their culture and identity. Moreover, in order to show respect to participants families, for interviews that took place in participants' homes, I greeted their other family members and spent time after the interview engaging them in conversation.

Individual in-person, in-depth, one-on-one interviews between participant and researcher were conducted using a semi-structured format. A semi-structured interview format allows space for both the interviewer and participant to approach the occasion as an organically flowing conversation. The in-person interviews ranged from one hour to four hours, and averaged 2.5 hours. The interviews occurred in the participants' neighborhoods (e.g., locations ranged from participants' homes, local restaurants, and museums). The interview sites were also selected on the criteria that they were private enough to ensure confidentiality. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a third-party transcription service. To ensure the accuracy of the transcription, I reread all interviews against their original audio recordings and made edits as necessary. Field notes were kept during and after the interviews to capture my initial reactions to the interview process, and were used during the analytic and interpretive processes. Interview

field notes were used to identify potential codes and share with my team my initial impressions of participants' retellings.

Interview Protocol and Development

Many empirical investigations operationalize an awareness of injustice in ways that privilege young people's knowledge of unjust behavior as understood through a systemic understanding of the world (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016; Ginwright et al., 2002; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts & Guessous, 2006). However, more recent work on what influences the sociopolitical development of young people from historically marginalized and racialized backgrounds calls for more focus on how systemic understandings may also be embedded in other culturally-based social analyses rooted in daily civic life as well as everyday social experiences (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Lozada et al., 2017; Sanchez Carmen et al., 2015; Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Qualitative research methods provide an opportunity to uplift and systematically explore the importance of daily civic and social experiences that occur in family life, and youths' perceptions of the influence of those experiences on their own sociopolitical development. The study of urban youth activism has largely examined "spectacular" forms of youth political and social activism occurring in the public sphere. This occurs despite increased research exploring how more mundane less performative experiences in young people's lives influence their sociopolitical development (Harris, et al., 2010; Nolas, et al., 2017). However, this emerging work on the mundane is largely international and thus provides little information on the ways in which every day dynamics support the development of American youth. For example, many quantitative studies of the role of everyday practices on SPD tend to privilege particular types of

parent/child communication about topics that might be addressed indirectly via their home context.

The current study's interview protocol (see Appendix A) explores how young women of color perceive the influence of their families on their own sociopolitical development. The interview protocol clustered around three domains of experience and explored how family was implicated across them: 1) conceptualizations of social (in)justice, 2) experiences implementing their Nina Projects, and 3) morality and community. In keeping with the format of semi-structured interviews, all questions were used flexibly in no predetermined order (Merriam, 1998). Given the participants' exposure to the fellowship programs' training, I assumed that all the young women had working definitions of the terms "social justice" and "social injustice."[6] This assumption was based on the program's training curriculum which operationalized injustice as oppression and justice as liberation. Therefore, when creating the interview protocol, I operationalized oppression and liberation as social injustice and social justice, respectively.

Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic Analysis

All participant data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis (TA). According to Braun and Clark (2006, 2008), TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and providing insight into the various patterns of meaning that exist across data. By focusing on meaning across data, TA allow the researcher to identify and draw meaning from commonalities across participants' collective and shared experiences and meaning-making processes. TA does not

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[6] The concepts of oppression and liberation were first introduced at the first fellowship training session through a structured activity. The fellows were then instructed to apply their understanding of these constructs through various activities. For example, they were asked to choose a social issue/social injustice of concern and examine these issues as "symptoms" of deeply rooted societal issues (e.g., oppressive systems as manifested through oppressive symptoms). The fellows were also introduced to how these symptoms and their root cause could be transformed though processes that foster liberation.

privilege shared meanings or meaningful patterns across data just for the sake of establishing commonality or ascribing importance. Rather, the patterns of meaning (themes) that arise through TA allow the researcher to identify what most meaningfully answers a particular research question. TA is an iterative process. In the remainder of this section, I delineate how these key components manifested in the data analysis. Coding was carried out by four gender-matched coders: two were African-American—one doctoral student, one postdoctoral researcher; one Haitian-American school teacher; and one Honduran- African American high school student). Coders were trained over the course of 2 two-hour training sessions that provided an in-depth overview of the project. The study's development of themes reflected Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps to thematic analysis: 1) familiarizing all coders with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, and 4) developing themes.

Familiarizing ourselves with the data. The first step in immersing ourselves in the data involved checking the accuracy of the transcriptions across the 8 original interviews. The study team kept field notes and annotations to capture any emerging thoughts that might prove relevant to initial coding development. Second, in *generating initial codes*, all four of the coders attended coding training meetings. During these meetings time was allotted to discuss the research questions in more depth, familiarize ourselves with the data, and to process our own experiences engaging with that data. This space was critical to building our capacity to successfully interrogate the latent assumptions, meanings, and ideas that lie behind what the participants explicitly stated during the course of an interview (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To process our experiences with the data, coders were encouraged to revisit and share their written analytical memos that were taken prior to the meeting with the entire team, and to share any thoughts that might have emerged from the meeting. These reflections were recorded via Blue Jeans (a

teleconferencing system); audio recordings, and notations were also captured in a Google document. In keeping with the IRB requirements, the recordings and Google files were encrypted to protect the identities of participants. These reflections were revisited throughout the course of the analyses.

Two members of the coding team worked together to chunk the data prior to coding. Chunking refers to efforts to identify the smallest unit of narrative data that answers a given research question. Chunking narrative data prior to coding allows the coding process to be more streamlined. The two chunkers' lists were reviewed for alignment in group meetings including the chunkers and myself, and any disagreements were reconciled by the primary investigator. To avoid bias, the two coders who participated in initial development of the coding categories did not play a part in chunking the initial transcripts, but were involved in coding the data.

Data Reduction

In order to get a feel for the content and tone of the interviews, each coder independently read through assigned chunked transcripts and conducted "edge-coding" (Strauss, 1990). Edge-coding consisted of maintaining notes of any emerging codes and themes in the margins/edges of the transcript. In vivo coding was applied to the process of edge coding. In vivo means, "that which is alive;" here it refers to utilizing a word or short phrase used by participants that is found in the data record, terms "that are used by [participants] themselves" (Strauss, 1987, p.33). In vivo coding privileges the language participants use in their everyday lives rather than terms that are derived from academic disciplines. Applying in vivo coding as a technique helped to ensure the active preservation of participants' words, meanings, views and actions during all stages and reiterations of the coding.

Generating Initial Codes

Throughout the iterative process of code and theme development, coders were asked to keep analytic memos. In their analytic memos the coders responded to reflective questions (e.g., 'reflect on and write about how you personally relate to the participants and/or the phenomenon;' reflect on and write about the study's research questions;' 'reflect on and write about emergent patterns, categories, themes, and concepts'), and made notes of any questions or concerns that arose for them in the midst of the coding process (e.g., questions or concerns about coding categorization, the makeup of certain codes). The annotated memos and emerging codes and themes were discussed in each analysis meeting and used to guide codebook development and the analysis procedure.

In creating the initial codebook, each coder brought their initial list of coding categories and emerging themes, and their analytic memos to coding team meetings. In team meetings coders discussed the codes they assigned to each chunk. Discrepancies in coding were discussed and resolved using a consensus process (Braun & Clark, 2006, 2008). Discrepancies were defined as instances when chunks were assigned different codes by coders, as well as instances where chunks were not coded by one coder but coded by the other. Rules for each coding category were clarified through the establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria.
A two-phase testing of the coding book was conducted in order to establish the codebook as reliable. A single transcript from the study's (non-high school) sample was selected at random. Using the qualitative data analysis software Dedoose, coders were assigned the same randomly selected chunks and asked to independently code those chunks. Disagreements as well as patterns for agreements were discussed, and amendments were made to the codebook in order to resolve confusions and reflect the teams' coding decisions. In phase 1 of the testing, once the

first 85% agreement was achieved among 2 coders, another passage of text from a second transcript was independently coded. Because the reliability remained at 85% a lead coder was then assigned to independently code the remainder of the text.

In developing the coding procedure, the coding categories needed to capture YWOC's various conceptualizations of family and the diverse ways in which lessons from families are learned and communicated through the interview. In keeping with Sanchez Carmen et al. (2014), a few decisions were made to strengthen the coding procedure. First, to capture the diversity in their lessons and the ways in which those lessons are learned, the coding team determined that a chunk could only be coded if: 1) the participant mentions family, 2) there is evidence that the participant learned a lesson from family, and 3) there is evidence of how the participant learned the lesson or learned how to apply the lesson.

When initially analyzing the narratives, the coding team and I found that the relationships that I built prior to and during the interview allowed us to delve deeper into the participants conceptualizations of family. As evidence of this, in doing the initial analysis, YWOC's discussions of family were multiple and broad. It became clear that there was an implicit research question that needed to be addressed before the main research questions could be answered. The implicit research question, was "How do justice-oriented YWOC understand and define family?" Those findings will be discussed at the beginning of the results chapter.

A comprehensive and concise list of codes was identified, and an "other" category was added to capture unique responses that did not fit within the existing thematic categories. This resulted in the codebook consisting of three main domains: 1) Family Codes, 2) What Codes, and 3) How Codes. 'Family' codes sought to capture direct or indirect references to family, as well as the way in which family was conceptualized (e.g., biological family versus fictive kin). Once a

family code was applied, ‘What’ codes were applied if based on coding criteria it was determined that there was a specific lesson related to social justice and injustice that families instilled in the participant (e.g., self-less giving; internalized oppression). Finally, if a ‘family’ and ‘what’ code were applied, then a ‘how’ code was assigned. How codes described the mechanism through which the participant received the lesson (e.g., modeling, directive). Each chunk had to have at least one code from each of these three categories in order to be included in the analysis. Throughout the data analysis process, the coding also revisited which themes needed to be collapsed and which themes needed to be expanded to better represent independent responses to each of the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers do not seek to make generalizable claims, therefore, the findings from this study are rooted in the constructed truth of the particular participants in the specific context in which the study is situated. While this data might be transferable to other groups of young women of color and their families, this study makes no inferences about perceptions and understandings of all women of color (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Through the course of interviews, follow-ups, and member checks the study participants and I labor together to co-construct meaning.

Chapter 4: Results

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

Maya Angelou

The current study is guided by the following research questions:

Guiding Research Questions

1. How do self-selecting justice-oriented YWOC (ages 17-23) describe the roles of their families in shaping their understandings, imaginings and experiences of oppression and liberation (i.e., social analysis)?

   1a. What direct strategies and indirect processes do families use to shape these understandings of oppression and liberation?

2. What lessons or messages do YWOC receive about social justice and oppression from their parents and family, and how do these messages inform youths' liberatory imagination?

   2a. What do YWOC imagine is changeable in an unfair world?

   2b. What role do they imagine individuals should play in initiating that change?

   2c. How do they imagine social change occurs?

The interviews and data analysis revealed that the current study contained an implicit research question. It became clear that the women spoke of "family" in ways that broadened typical conceptualizations of familial social actors. In order to answer the guiding research questions, it became critical to address the implicit research question of how justice-oriented

YWOC understand and define family. The findings from this implicit research question are presented below.

Implicit Research Question: How do Justice-Oriented YWOC Understand and Define Family?

The "Family" codes derived from the implicit research question reflect the ways that this group of justice-oriented YWOC experience, name, and evoke the power of "family." Five commonalities arose in their descriptions of their experience and conceptualization of family: *1) Traditional Notions of Family; 2) Family as Ancestry and Previous Generations; 3) Family as Future Family and Generations; 4) Family as Diaspora and Community; and 5) Family as a Process of Creation.* See Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. YWOC's Conceptualizations of Family ('Family Codes')

Theme	Definition	Exemplar Quote
Traditional notions of family	Participant refers to family broadly or refers to "traditional" (i.e., biological) notions of family	*"Like my mom, she worked in the blood bank before.... My dad is, he's always trying to make sure that people can get jobs, or something..."*
Family as ancestry and previous generations	Participant refers to people from the past particularly people who are no longer alive as "family"	*"I really just think ancestors are in the room all the time…"*
Family as future family and generations	Participant references their "own" future family (e.g., yet to be born children)	*"…I think about like am I going to have a full family if I marry a woman?"*
Family as diaspora and community	Participant references more abstract or collective systems or patterns of human organization as family	*"…a lot of things in our memories are from the past, in terms of, you know how there's certain things you just know how to do … you think you learned it from your parents… those patterns have been passed down to us through our memories, our subconscious memories.... I look at my African friends whose families were never part of the slave diaspora, at*

		least, and I'm like wow, we act the same way."
Family as a process of creation	Participant describes the process, or degree of agency and choice in their own identification or categorization of someone as family.	*"That was really an eye-opener for me and an opportunity for me to meet other women and just define this whole sisterhood idea for me…I remember my friends would always be like, 'Oh, you with your sisters. Calling your sisters sisters' And I'm like you don't understand…"*

Taken together these expansive conceptualizations of family highlight the point that the narrow conceptualizations of family that prevail in social science research on sociopolitical development are inadequate for capturing young people of color's descriptions of the influence of family on their thoughts about justice.

RQ1: How do Justice-Oriented YWOC (Ages 17-23) Describe the Roles of Their Families in Shaping Their Understandings, Imaginings and Experiences of Oppression and Liberation (i.e., Social Analysis)?

Justice-oriented YWOC say that their families shape their understandings, imaginings, and experiences of oppression and liberation by: 1) *Serving as a context to learn how to privilege self-care and self-respect when addressing oppressive forces*; 2) *Teaching the importance of naming the oppressive realities of gendered labor;* and 3) *Honoring family as an act of liberation.* Each theme is explored below.

Families Serve as a Context to Learn how to Privilege Self-Care and Self-Respect when Addressing Oppressive Forces

The context of family enables justice-oriented YWOC to identify and disrupt marginalizing heteronormative dynamics. These YWOC's challenging of normative behavior in their family demonstrates their ability to reimagine dynamics within families in ways that align with their imagined experience of liberation and deep understandings of the various daily

manifestations of oppression. Cecilia shares how through her growth towards liberation she recognizes that dynamics to which she previously adhered now strike her as problematic. She describes the experience of living with her sister who, in many ways, functioned as a parent or guardian given their 10-year age difference and their parents' limited command of English. She shares how her sister viewed her desire not to wear a bra around the house as disrespectful towards her sister's husband. Cecilia states:

> ***Cecilia:*** *...I've done this all my life and now I think this is problematic and I don't want to do it anymore ... I was trying to not wear a bra in my house or in my sister's house. She ... was like, "Oh, my husband's here. You need to put a bra on. It's disrespectful." I'm like, "Why do I need to put a bra on?... Your husband really shouldn't be looking at his wife's little sister that way, or any teenager for that matter." ...Things like that where ... I'm learning ... about the ways ... I'm looked at as a woman ... that I'm sexualized... I would always try to defy… or… correct my parents…when they say something racist or ... sexist ... There was just a lot of fighting… I ... learned to…choose my sanity… learn when ... I'm talking to a brick wall...it was ... damaging for my mind and damaging to myself because ... you can keep pushing… but they're just not going to receive it at some point…[I]t was ... learning how to take care of myself in those situations… I feel like I made a lot of strides, especially with my sister who…now is someone I can definitely talk to…"*

Cecilia indicates that through this and other daily experiences, she is continuously learning about how she is sexualized as a woman. Eventually, she is able to get her sister to understand her perspective. Cecilia feels that being policed (i.e., being told to put on a bra) positions her as responsible for her brother-in-laws' desires and actions, diverts attention from the role that her brother-in-law potentially plays in sexualizing her, and negates the fact that he should not be looking at her or any teenager in that way.

Cecilia also describes how through these daily life experiences she is learning who she should engage with on topics related to the social injustices she identifies, a process she identifies as learning to "choose her sanity" which equates to her prioritizing her mental wellness. Here, the process of learning to privilege her self-care (i.e., learning to "choose her

sanity") is a crucial part of Cecilia's sociopolitical development within family. Cecilia's self-care within the context of family emerged out of her social analysis of how and with whom it is healthiest for her to engage in conversations and actions related to the oppressive social conditions (e.g., sexualization) that she recognizes manifesting within her family.

Anna explains a similar process of addressing normative oppressive behavior and dynamics in her family. Anna states:

> ***Anna:*** *…I think in the sense of going from work to our family, sometimes there's this weird confusion…even going from college to family, there's this weird dynamic, but I think as long as I'm adjusting myself, but not compromising myself that helps…Now, I'm very sensitive…there's this thing where my dad usually just says… 'Oh, why do you look ugly today?' …I just cried on the phone, and he [said], 'Well, why are you being so sensitive?' …[T]hat was actually important, that sense of vulnerability because he's just like, 'Wow.' Because I told him, '…the people at my work…would never call me that. Why is my own father calling me that?' And you know, he never called me that after…. I was like,' Wow.' …I think that type of reality of, 'I'm now asking for respect from my family. And I'm asking for respect of my workplaces now.' That I think is what I mean by adjustment.*

She speaks of the delicate balance of having to "adjust [herself] but not compromise" herself. This means that Anna recognizes that inevitably in some marginalizing situations, she will need to adjust her behavior, but that in adjusting her behavior she should not compromise her values or self-respect. Anna shares an experience of challenging her father's objectifying language by using her awareness of her own sensitivity and hurt feelings to voice her dissatisfaction and consequently disrupt her father's unjust and harmful behavior. Through her voice and power, she makes herself vulnerable and learns how to share her feelings about unjust situations. She extends these experiences within family to her workplace to create a voice with which she calls for respect based on *her* own imaginings of what respect should feel like.

In order to disrupt the oppressive experiences and processes that occur within their families, justice-oriented YWOC's sociopolitical development requires that they privilege their

voice and vulnerability. These experiences give YWOC opportunities to create protective boundaries rooted in their self-care and self-respect. YWOC thereby learn how to redirect oppressive processes within their families in ways that promote and privilege their own visions of liberation within and outside of family.

Teaching the Importance of Naming the Oppressive Realities of Gendered Labor

The events that YWOC live through heighten their ability to identify manifestations of interlocking systems of oppressions based in the multiple marginalized identities that they possess (e.g., gender, race, ethnic, sexual-orientation, and class). Though intangible, these systems simultaneously function to organize, legitimatize, justify and replicate oppression in women of colors' everyday experiences through surveillance, social institutions and everyday interactions and relationships (Collins, 2009). These experiences inform their awareness of their social location within both family and broader society. In Nicole's narrative, a family trauma (the death of her brother) triggers her reflections on how unjust labor and leave policies affect families and are situated within systems of interlocking oppressions. Nicole states:

> ***Nicole*****:** *And then the systems of working in a non-profit, industrial complex. What does that mean for me? I remember when my brother died, I only had three days of bereavement. I just don't think that's fair. I can just imagine like people who are mothers. Low-income mothers who work there, the paid leave policy is just crazy. So, how do those systems, how is it that me, I'm just thinking about my future like, what if I want to be a mother, you know? What do I have to risk? What is it that I have to, I don't know how to explain this. What is it that I'm gonna have to risk to make this happen? What extra effort am I going to have to put in because the world around me won't accommodate?*

She contextualizes the injustice by placing the unfair leave policy against the backdrop of her work for a sexual reproductive justice non-profit that she names as part of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC). *The Revolution Will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (*INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017) defines the NPIC as,

A system of relationships between the State (or local and federal governments), the

owning classes, foundations, and non-profit/NGO social service and social justice organizations that results in the surveillance, control, derailment, and everyday management of political movements. The state uses non-profits to…redirect activist energies into career-based modes of organizing instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually transforming society; allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through "philanthropic" work; encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them (p. 42).

By situating her justice work within the NPIC, Nicole describes her paradoxical predicament of doing justice-oriented work in spaces that reinforce what she perceives as unjust labor practices. Nicole questions how organizations committed to the well-being of disenfranchised women can harm the very women who carry out justice-oriented labor. Nicole must unpack the experience of losing her brother and only receiving three days off across the multiple intersectional identities that she inhabits in family and work life: a sister, a women's sexual reproductive health advocate, a low-income earning person, a Latina, and potentially a mother. She empathizes with her colleagues who are low-income mothers whose paid leave time is so inadequate that Nicole simply describes this presumed benefit as "crazy." She considers what this inadequate leave policy means for the choices that families will have to make, and that she will potentially be forced to make as a mother.

The participants shared various experiences in their lives whereby the process of learning the names of the multiple social injustices they experience in connection to traditional family structure and dynamics promoted their understandings of injustice and their feelings of healing. These YWOC use naming to facilitate healing and understanding of past events, and they also

integrate their previous knowledge with new ways of knowing. Rita's description of learning what femme labor is offers one such example. Rita states:

> ***Rita:*** *...My mom has also informed social justice because ... she grounds us. It made me really mad that she would do so much work around the house and still do her job, and that that wasn't seen as valuable. Then, when someone said, 'Femme labor,' I was like, 'Femme labor! This makes so much sense.' ...I started to put certain words to it, but I feel like I always knew that it was wrong...for me, femme labor was feminized labor. Labor that is seen as important but not paid, often, not appreciated. If anything, it makes the world go 'round, but it's overlooked. My dad would say stuff like, 'You just clean people's houses all day, that's not hard.' [W]hen I heard someone explain what, to them, femme labor was, I was like, 'I think I know what that is because my mom works in service, cleaning people's houses.' It just made a lot of sense that it was so important to me….*

Here Rita does not cite the learning about "femme labor" as explicitly coming from family; however, she comes to understand the complicated manifestations of femme labor by relating the term to dynamics within her home and family. She describes her father's constant criticism and dismissal of the contributions that her mother makes to society and the household as evidence of male dismissal and disrespect of feminized labor. Rita notes that she always possessed her own knowledge of the injustice of femme labor; "I always knew it was wrong." In giving an experience a name, she could identify an aspect of her reality that is central to her family's everyday life. Femme labor provided Rita with an increased capacity to situate her and her mother's experiences as gendered beings facing a systemic issue of injustice that other women also experience.

Honoring Family as an Act of Liberation

The justice-oriented YWOC in this study reported that families transmit and promote collective-oriented traditions that shape their sociopolitical development. They often take up and privilege these strategies in their social justice work. As part of their sociopolitical development within family, YWOC learn that it is their duty to create opportunities for collective experiences

of joy, and for people to share in one another's accomplishments just at their ancestors did in the midst of oppressive processes.

Una, describes how facilitating celebrating community gatherings is an integral part of her justice work. Una states:

> ***Una:*** *...Thinking about my mother and how…I first learned of Konbit, of people coming together...putting equal effort in…I was talking to my mom…she was like, '…We used to do it [in Haiti] all the time.'…[T]hat really informs the way I do social justice work. Last year, I would do cookouts for Black people…I... situate community building and organizing and social justice in the presence of food and togetherness and fellowship…. That's always how it's been for me…growing up Haitian…. We always gather around food…togetherness…some kind of happiness...which obviously doesn't come out of nowhere…. I think definitely a sense of obligation to your people…not for me…for everyone like me…. I am going to be someone's ancestor sooner than I think…working on their behalf. I constantly think of the Haitian Revolution …My ancestors thought of me…experiencing horrible deaths… in the name of someone that you can't…name…sense of duty and obligation, those are my morals...we're obligated to the people you love and the people who show up for you.*

Una learned of the Haitian cultural tradition of a Konbit—an approach to collective teamwork around community tasks that benefits the entire community, and which often includes the sharing of food and celebration. She recognized traces of Konbit in her own upbringing and justice work. Una describes how her commitments and motivations to her justice work are informed by her sense of connection to the larger historical legacy of the Haitian Revolution. Una speaks to her desire to work on the behalf of her ancestors who gave up their lives during the Haitian Revolution. She names the sacrifices and selflessness of her ancestors and recognizes that, in time, others will draw upon her own sociopolitical work as part of that legacy. In her retelling, Una contextualizes her sociopolitical development (e.g., her motivations and commitments) with regard to maintaining ancestral legacy across past, present, and future.

Cinelia retells how her Cherokee activist grandmother has shaped her understanding of social justice by instilling in her the need to celebrate self, family and community. Cinelia states:

> ***Cinelia**: My dad's mother…whenever I learn about her stories, as an activist, as a Muslim activist ...She's really, really badass, and is always trying to support me, and whenever I'd call her, she just says…things about our ancestors…her grandmother, who's Cherokee, she would… say traditions that she would do for the family, like celebrating the family, and she says, 'We need to keep that alive. We need to make sure we do those things, and celebrate ourselves, and our family, and keep our family in mind.' So yeah, that's just like...when I hear that, I take that and put that out into how I treat my friends, and my family, and the community that I do work with, 'cause everything that we do is eventually going to be stories of ancestors.*

Cinelia's grandmother speaks to her about traditions passed on from her ancestors, and tells Cinelia that she has a duty to transmit them to her descendants. Cinelia describes how she incorporates this into her interactions with her family, friends, and community work. She roots the importance of doing so in the recognition that everything she will do will one day be regarded as a story about the ancestors. Foundational to the ways in which justice-oriented YWOC learn to combat oppression and promote liberation is through their families' transmission and maintenance of cultural traditions that promote celebratory gatherings to commemorate the joyous occasions that occur across their conceptualizations of family.

RQ1a: What direct strategies and indirect processes do families use to shape understandings of oppression and liberation?

Families directly and indirectly shape justice-oriented YWOC's understandings of oppression and liberation through: 1) *Teaching them to acknowledge their innate agency and gifts to address social oppression*, 2) *Modeling family as a process of creation,* and 3) *Indirectly expanding their notions of activism by modeling familial support/advocacy.*

Teaching them to acknowledge their innate agency and gifts to address social oppression

According to the interviewees, family can be experienced through a deliberately maintained connection to one's ancestors and previous generations. Participants describe how, in

everyday life their ancestors communicate guidance that informs their social analysis through mechanisms such as dreams and spirituality. Anna states:

> ***Anna**: I think dreams are super informative to how I see things.... I remember…it was like my elders, but it was weird because it was different demographics. There was White women, there was Black women, there was Brown women, there was people I don't even know, and they were all just wearing [saris] coming in a circle at a table. And I think that was huge in the sense of like ... I think a lot of times, I think with the model minority myth that is common in the US. It has really erased a lot of people…what does culture mean, and assimilation…I think being a South Asian Indian American…I have to be very real with the hypocrisies within my culture, that like anti-black, the colonization…I think my ancestors are really coming to me…like, '**You** could change this, someway, somehow.' …I…think that hope, that dream's…our ancestors are connected to us by that."*

Anna's description of vision/dream of her ancestors as women representing different racial demographics and seemingly shared a common South Asian ancestry. Across their individual identities, her ancestors come together collectively to share one message across their identities: "*You*…" they share, "You could change *this*…" In her retelling Anna recognizes that multiple generations of her family identify her as powerful enough to change these injustices.

Anna juxtaposes the messages she receives from her ancestors with her knowledge of the deleterious effects of the model minority myth in erasing culture. Through her juxtaposition she examines how systems function to flatten and erase the sociocultural histories of marginalized identity groups. We witness a nuanced account of how, as a South Asian Indian American woman, Anna is acutely aware of quotidian, cultural anti-blackness and recognizes its interconnection with the continued effects of colonization. Through the mechanism of dreams, Anna experiences her ancestors communicating clear directives about her justice-oriented involvement. As a result of their messages she reflects on the need to address how the internalized oppression experienced in her culture is fueled by the ongoing active erasure of women's embodied experiences.

Similarly, Una, a self-identified Haitian queer woman, describes how, in the process of doing her art-based justice work, she learns of the power of her gifts through her family, which, in this retelling, manifests as her ancestors. Una states:

> ***Una:*** *I've become…more spiritual through this.... I have a greater discernment for what is and what is not. And so in that, I recognize my gifts…I feel like my ancestors get upset when I act like they're not what they are, and try to make them seem more littler. [I'm like] 'Oh yeah, I just do artwork.' And my ancestors' like, 'Hello bitch. No, no, no, no, no. This is a big deal and I'm not playing with you. This is not no dollar cent gift, bitch. This is a big deal.' …Yeah…I've always had these gifts. I didn't think I had them. And because I didn't feel like I had them in the first place, they were essentially invisible…it just speaks to how much these gifts reveal themselves in ways that you won't understand until years later…Yo, I've always been community-building. Public art has been my shit since I've been 14. I didn't know shit when I was 14, but those gifts still revealed themselves.*

Una attributes her ability to hear their messages and eventually accept her gifts as related to the increased spirituality resulting from her art-based justice work. Her deepened experience of spirituality enables her to connect and receive guidance from her ancestors in moments of self-doubt or self-minimization. Importantly, in her retelling, Una describes her ancestors as sharing their directives with her using situated everyday colloquial speech and phrasing, similar to her own style of speaking. She familiarizes her relationship with her ancestors and demonstrates their accessibility to her in everyday life through conversation and directives. This familiarization is further demonstrated in her describing the emotiveness of her ancestors. In describing her ancestors as being upset that she does not recognize the magnitude of her gifts, she provides further insight into the dynamic ways which her ancestors function like family for her. Her family instills in her the importance of recognizing and naming her gifts and recognizing the intentionality that informs such spiritual gifts whether one claims them or not. Via these mechanisms of dreams and spirituality justice-oriented YWOC position ancestors as having supporting, authoritative, ongoing roles in their decision making, and reflections.

Modeling family as a process of creation. When asked to describe the influence of her culture on her ideas about social justice and injustice, Rita describes the nuanced ways in which she navigates her personal reflection and questioning of her Mexican culture and identity as it relates to social justice and the concept of "chosen family." Rita states:

> ***Rita**: ...[P]eople in my family are Mexican…that's never been something that I was blind to. But…it has changed…. Before…it was very focused on toxic nationalism.... Whenever I talk about culture [and] my family I feel…people have an idea of what that culture is. To me it's things that they brought with them when we got here…things that we do that maybe other people don't do but it's…ingrained in the household…. We're…a different kind of Mexican. [M]y parents were never so tied to the nation because they came here so young…at 17 or 18. They…grew up here…. That's different from other people whose parents migrated maybe later on, or brought more people with them. 'Cause you…create that little community…though we have same elements, the church and certain aspects of home, there is stuff that is very different. I'm Mexican-American, does that make me less Mexican? ...I started…realizing…my family's chosen family was not Mexican…. We…put…so much emphasis on this part of our identity, when our identity been a huge mixture of what other people have done for us and what they have given to us.*

In her exploration of Mexican-American identity she describes how the creation of family is strongly tied to her and her parents' realities as first- and second-generation immigrants. Rita explains that she always knew that others identified her and her family as Mexican, but she speaks of an awareness that this limited categorization flattened how she and her family construct their Mexican cultural identity based on their lived experiences. Yet, she describes instances in which she witnessed her father privileging their Mexicanness in ways that excluded other Latinx peoples in a process she names "toxic nationalism." In her use of the term toxic nationalism, Rita examines and complicates the circumstances in which nationalism is evoked by questioning its costs to collective identity formation across national borders. Rita analyzes the tensions created by her father in prioritizing giving jobs to Mexicans rather than other Latinx people in need of work. Rita reflects on the realities of living in systematically oppressive conditions, where limited material resources and limited opportunity structures inevitably

position marginalized people against one another. She says, “I didn't understand why we were putting so much emphasis on this part of our identity [Mexicanness], when our identity has actually been a huge mixture of what other people have done for us and what they have given to us.” Upon migrating to the United States from Mexico as 17 and 18-year-olds, Rita’s parents created their own “chosen family” which consisted of individuals from various nationalities. Their chosen family arose from the sharing of experiences as well as resources. Her parents’ ability to create and maintain this chosen family indirectly models for Rita the process of individuals giving and supporting one another in navigating oppressive conditions through maintaining collective identity.

These YWOC also describe their own experiences of creating family through collective identity and shared experiences. Cecilia explains that her involvement in the Toni Morrison Project, placed her within a community of women of color, who were learning how their identities shape their lived experiences in the world. Cecilia states:

> **Cecilia*:*** *With the Toni Morrison Project, when I joined…an identity politics class…where we learn about how our identities influence the world, they influence the society that we're in, and how we can interact with those things…I put a name to all the things that I had experienced and all the things that I have seen other people experience and how I can really change that. …Can better things. …Saturday program that I would go to…each session would be knowledge about a different kind of movement…a different kind of social justice…. [A]t the end, we did our own action project…. We were trying to combat sexual harassment, and we went on the street and interviewed men on catcalling and all that stuff. That was…an eye-opener for me and an opportunity for me to meet other women and just define this whole sisterhood idea…. I remember my friends would always be like, ‘Oh, you with your sisters. Calling your sisters sisters.’ And I'm like you don't understand, you don’t get it.*

Being in this community gave her the opportunity to put a name to marginalizing experiences that she and other women experience as women of color. The program also provided the opportunity to situate their experiences within larger historical legacies of social justice

movements. Through these understandings, she comes to conceptualize sisterhood as a collective identity based in shared experience. For Cecilia, learning to name her shared experiences among a group of women she embraces as 'sisters' (i.e., as family) allowed her to see how she was positioned within a long history of social movements. Additionally, she gained a context for her work that linked her to the history and experiences of women who preceded her, as well as the experiences of other women living in the world today.

Indirectly expanding notions of activism by modeling familial support/advocacy. For Racquel, growing up in a woman-dominated family structure shaped her perceptions of social justice and injustice. Raquel states:

> ***Racquel:*** *Growing up with a female dominated family…a lot of the men in my family were incarcerated…. The men who were there…listened to the women. They didn't have a say in much…. Their experiences have informed the way I think about social justice…what it means to treat someone humanely…to give unconditional love…to truly be selfless and help people…. A lot of women in my family had abortions. My…cousin went through one…two or three years ago.... That's when they started to share their stories…. They were trying to help her, give her encouragement, motivating words…. And, to see such strong women who raised us…I had no idea…went through such an emotional trauma alone. It's…made me see them in a different light…. Showed me that social justice is not about protesting, being in the street. That's a major…part of it, but it's about the stories that we have and the things that we hold, and how we react and deal with them. The women in my family…were good at talking with each other and supporting each other. And letting that help them move on and progress, and have us, and do what they needed to do to work, to survive…. That's how I see social justice. I see it as a collaborative effort.*

Across multiple households she witnessed women supporting one another across generations. Yet, it was not until her cousin was dealing with an abortion, that she learned the stories of multiple women in her family who also had abortions alone, that she understood the magnitude of their strength. Racquel explains how this revelation reshaped how she conceptualized social justice. She explains that while public forms of protests are a key part of fighting in the interest of social justice, the women in her family taught her that "[social justice is] about the stories that

we have and the things that we hold and how we react and deal with them." Racquel's retelling demonstrates how the everyday experiences that the women in her family held on to, and supported one another through represent the hidden work that makes up social justice. For these women, the use of their stories as support for one another allowed them to move themselves and their families forward.

In their daily lives, YWOC make meaning of shifts in family (e.g., structure, dynamic, communication, distribution of power, life events) in ways that have implications for their sociopolitical development. Rita states:

> ***Rita*: *...I remember a period where it was just my mom, so I always knew we could handle it. But, I felt like there was always a codependency on…handling our family problems…. It was patriarchy...I'm [now] seeing my mom as a human being who not just supports me…. A full person...whenever we're having family round tables, when my dad is here for a weekend, and he's like, "We need to talk about this." We all sit down and my mom's…an activist because she gets up and she defends this. She's sitting, but she's like, "No, things are really different when...the girls explain it!" You could...see…she doesn't think…the things…we think are…not valuable…. I could tell my dad something a million times…and…feel like he didn't think it was worth anything. I wonder if activists are just people…screaming— hoping…other people will also care about the things that they care about. Now…I understand it. It [activism]…doesn't benefit specific people. It doesn't benefit my dad to think that my opinion is valuable…when it contradicts his…. That's the same with other people. It's not that we don't hear you…people are going to choose to not care when it doesn't make sense for them to care.***

For Rita, when her father left the house, the power dynamics in her home shifted away from a patriarchal model, to a communal structure one where power and decision-making was more evenly distributed across the household. The shift in power allows Rita the opportunity to experience her mother as an activist who extends her support and voice to honoring her daughters' solutions regarding the marginalizing experiences they encounter in the household. This family-level experience broadens Rita's social analysis of how self-interest and power can function together to inspire people to ignore the voices of marginalized people.

RQ2: What Lessons or Messages do Youth Receive About Social Justice and Oppression from Their Parents and Family, and How do These Messages Inform Youths' Liberatory Imagination?

RQ2a: What do Youth Imagine is Changeable in an Unfair World?

YWOC imagine that communities and diaspora's can collectively and effectively act against oppressive systems. In feminist family studies, the intersection of women's positions in community and families is referred to as interfluentiality (Uttal, 2009). Interfluentiality describes how families and communities are interdependent and relational and can be understood through a bidirectional relationship. The boundaries between family and community after often drawn conceptually, as research has demonstrated that a change in one of these systems has implications for changes in the other (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Garcia et al., 1996). This interlinked relationship is referred to as an interfluential dynamic, interfluentiality acknowledges that multiple social systems result in families and communities changing one another and operating together. The study's findings revealed that YWOC are uniquely positioned within this dynamic since consistent with FFS, justice-oriented YWOC identify community and diasporas as family and spoke of how their experiences in both contexts shaped their social analysis. YWOC's expansive notions of family as diaspora and community arise from shared experiences grounded in a myriad of social identities that they individually and collectively possess. Importantly, for YWOC what constitutes connection within these extended familial networks is their shared and accumulated knowledge and experiences— their sociopolitical wisdoms. Una shares learning how capitalism, as a tool of oppression, promotes the isolation of marginalized peoples. Una states:

> ***Una:*** *I think that trust comes from community events where [people] are able to see each other or say you see somebody who you've seen from afar from a while but haven't been*

> *able to actually say hello to them. So, you're in this space where everyone's happy and having a good time so you say hello to them…. You're comfortable enough to connect with them and talk about your experiences and make those connections across difference or across isolation. I think one good thing that capitalism's good for— oppression's good for— is isolating us and making us feel like we're the only ones going through what we're going through…. I think those community get-togethers or coming together is the first, it's literally the first step being in physical proximity with each other…connecting our experiences and taking action from those shared experiences.*

She describes how community events and workshops— similar to the workshops facilitated by the members of the Toni Morrison Project— serve as a first step for people to achieve proximity. In keeping with the other Nina fellows, Una describes them as her sisters given their shared experiences and the strong emotional bonds that leave them feeling deeply committed to each other. Being in these spaces she learns how social isolation as a device and outcome of social oppression can be combated by allowing spaces for people to *see* one another, to interact and engage, in *happiness*. She then names this shared space of happiness as "the first step to connecting our experiences and taking action from those shared experiences." Here, Una describes how her work with communities has taught her to learn the process of creating family and trust within community in order to connect experiences and act from collective accumulated knowledge or consciousness.

According to Cinelia, the processes through which "a group of people com[e] together to create the words to tell the systems why this is messed up [Cinelia]" also give people opportunities to brainstorm solutions for the conditions that marginalize them. Cinelia states:

> ***Cinelia:*** *I feel like social justice is ideally is when a community of people collaborate and brainstorm, and think about solutions— immediate and long-term solutions that will create a bridge over those injustices towards the resources…. A group of people coming together to create the words to tell the systems why this is messed up…. This is what…systems do…. Separate us and make us feel like we can't connect with each other. Then social justice is connecting with one another and learning about the knowledge..., the tools we have. ...It's like a puzzle piece. One person has one part and another person has one part, and then when we all meet…we can create this whole thing that can make us feel better and…powerful or lead us towards a space that will help us…. Our solutions*

are already existing within us,…when we do things together, we are unstoppable…. Systems that oppress us know that, so they work towards making us have this mindset of independence and we need to fight for ourselves and can't really trust people….

Cinelia recognizes that the process of naming these realities within family as community provides opportunities to recognize that the solutions to foster collective uplift depend on the accumulated knowledge, resources, and tools which *we* already possess. As people gain opportunities to build, brainstorm, and imagine solutions from spaces where they may not have had the opportunity to do so, they simultaneously birth a new shared dimension from which to experience their shared humanity. In naming the aspects of their humanity, they recognize how justice-oriented YWOC are positioned to shred capitalism's multiple veils and reveal how it maintains our internalized belief that we are unfit puzzle pieces.

RQ2b. What Role do They Imagine Individuals Should Play in Initiating that Change?

Individuals must work towards liberation by naming, contextualizing and disrupting manifestations of internalized oppression. Through experiences in family and reflections on these experiences, YWOC develop a nuanced understanding of the process of internalized oppression across generations. The messages and lessons that justice-oriented YWOC receive from their family about oppression and liberation shape YWOC's imagining that individuals must recognize and address the role of internalized oppression in their lives and their families. Una shares how her family's experiences as a Black Haitian immigrant family within a predominately White context complicated her home dynamics. Una states:

> ***Una:*** *…My family…we are much more affected by oppression than I think we are, which helps me understand and contextualize why people have hurt me the way they have, in my family…. One of my brothers he went to a White school for high school. He had a really hard time there, because White people were trash to him…he would [be]…so mean to us when he got home…. Now…I understand the internalized oppression— that he couldn't.... Those frustrations that he couldn't express…because they had more privilege…was taken out on us, because we were his younger siblings. He had more power over us, so he could treat us like that…. It reproduces itself. My oldest brother, who got a lot abuse from my*

father also did really terrible things to us as well, so just understanding how I internalize the oppression that reproduces itself if we're not careful…. Social justice work, especially the Nina Project, has…shown [me] that to be more spiritual, has revealed that…we are burdened, but also really strong and abundant at the same time. And these two ideas can exist together.

Una recognizes that her family was much more affected by oppression than she previously realized. In naming the interconnection between internalized oppression and power in her family's dynamics, she shares how what she has learned is implicated in her own process of healing. In her retelling, she speaks of how her eldest brothers' experiences attending a majority White school where "White people treated her brother like trash" manifested at home. Her brother did not have the ability to express or act against either his own marginalization and experience of racialized injustice in his school setting, or the higher degree of abuse that he experienced by his father, given his status as the eldest child. This manifested instead in his own abuse of power over his younger siblings. Una shares that she recognizes her agency to not reproduce the same harmful behaviors. From these family (i.e., sibling) dynamics she learned the variety of ways in which internalized oppression reproduces itself, and the importance of being purposeful in her own efforts to avoid perpetuating similar behaviors.

Una describes how, because of her justice-oriented work, she has become more spiritual and thus able to complicate her families' social location within the context of oppression. As noted earlier in this manuscript, social location refers to the identity categories and social positions that are created when multiple forms of oppression and subordination occur (Few-Demo, 2014). Social location, as experienced at the levels of the individual and family, inform their relationships with the social world. Therefore, here Una is complicating her family's social location by viewing it through a spiritual lens. In doing so, she recognizes the sociopolitical wisdom that marginalized people "are burdened but also really strong and abundant at the same

time and that these two ideas can coexist together." That is, in the same way that she can name the effects of the manifestations of oppression in her family dynamic, she also recognizes the abundance that her family also holds. Una challenges how internalized oppression— a central component of the process of oppression— limits our imaginings and experiencing of our realities. She acknowledges that while marginalized people are burdened they are also strong and abundant, and that these ideas and realities co-exist.

Nicole demonstrates how she uses her imagining of future family to make meaning of how familial socialization is implicated in the internalized oppression she experiences in her self-exploration of a queer identity. Nicole states:

> ***Nicole:*** *...Being trained to want certain things and…having to work through those trainings, and what I've learned in my past....“Whole family,” I don't know if it would fit, that idea, I've always been scared of challenging it… James Baldwin says, 'Until you are your most radical self you're not free.' …That really resonated with me…. I think about the ways that I can just not care about what I've been trained to want. But then at the same time, I want to make my mom happy, you know what I mean? I'm claiming like a queer identity…. One time I brought one of my friends to my house, and she's queer, and my brother told my mom, 'cause we went out after that,....and my mom did not stop calling my phone…. She was…so scared that I was queer too…. That's what I mean in terms of 'full family.' And…just accepting a queer identity…if I do…having a future with my mom, I don't know if that would be even possible. I wouldn't want that sort of energy around the people that I love. ...My mom grew up in rural Dominican Republic…she's…the best person, but the ideas that she grew up with are— this is insulting but…it is antiquated. ...But then I also have to do…internal work to challenge myself from thinking these things. …I grew up understanding that full family…a family that I wanted in the future was where everybody was cis and it was like a heterosexual relationship…I've been trained to want that, do I really want that? Is that gonna bring me the most amount of happiness? ...I continue doing this work, even with myself, because I'm not perfect.*

She recognizes that every day she is in the process of learning the various ways that she has internalized notions of what is means to be a "whole" person, and consequently to have a "whole family." She names her socialization experiences in her Dominican family as a process of "training," and describes this training as antiquated. Her exploration of her most radical self—

which will make her the happiest and free— requires her to contend with how her internalized oppression manifests through and reproduces heteronormative ideologies about family. Thus, through her imaginings of her future family she explores how such ideologies block her awareness of her own ability to create and imagine "wholeness" as an actualization of her own desires. Nicole contextualizes her own social analysis of the socialization messages she has received. This comes alive in her description of her mother as a *person*. She asserts that her mother is "the best person, but the ideas that she grew up with are so…I think this is insulting, but a lot of it is antiquated." Nicole complicates her mother as one of the best people, by acknowledging how her mother is living out the residual effects of colonization. She humanizes her mother by situating her socialization practices within marginalizing systems, systems through which her mother received her early training.

RQ2c. How do they imagine social change occurs?

Generational change through a willingness to question. The messages and lessons that justice-oriented YWOC receive from their families about oppression and liberation inform their imaginings that social change requires questioning as a form of advocacy. Justice-oriented YWOC utilize questioning as a form of advocacy for themselves, those closest to them, and future generations. Racquel speaks of the need to challenge people's mindsets. Raquel states:

> ***Racquel:*** *I think mindsets can be changed. It's hard, but I think it can. Because, like I said, we start off as a blank slate, and we learn a lot of these ideas. I think challenging them at a young age, whether it's in pre-school, and in schools, honestly challenging people's mindsets when the comes to equality, or who is allowed access to resources and who isn't…. I have…confidence in…human beings to be able to question our actions…thoughts and ideas. We just don't have enough people…doing the questioning. And also…willing to continue questioning someone, because it's hard…. I think individuals should start with the ones closest to them. ...It's easier…to engage in this conversation with someone you have a relationship with because you can come from a place of 'I care for you, and I want us to talk about these things because we are a reflection of each other….'*

She believes this process should start as soon as possible, and she implicates schools as a context for this work to be done on a systemic level. Yet, Racquel asserts that questioning the people closest to us might be an easier and more accessible step that she conceptualizes as social change. Racquel explains that proximity and familiarity allow questioning within a context of supportive and reflexive dialogue. In this way, the questioning of an individual's ideologies or values does not center on combativeness, but rather the development of understanding. Racquel's approach to questioning expands our notions of how social analysis is shaped within family, as she acknowledges how awareness of one's social world can be centered in but also expanded by understanding another person's vantage point.

Anna believes generational transformation is crucial to social change, and that advocacy is a key mechanism for its realization. Anna asks herself, "what are the *generational* differences that I can change?" Anna states:

> ***Anna:*** *I think that generational transformation is key, and I'm trying to notice what are the generational differences now that I can change? Because I constantly think about my future child, and…I think that's really key, advocating for each other. It's more nuance…when I came out as bisexual...my sexual liberation, but my family was like, 'that's not going to work' and I was really down by that…. But, I guess I have to go back to the closet, but I guess I'm doing it in a very dignified way in the sense of, I know my children, they can have any sexuality, and it's going to be really awesome. And I'm just really excited about that.*

Like many justice-oriented YWOC, Anna must contend with how generational differences in ideologies and worldviews impact her lived experiences within family, specifically, navigating of her sexuality. She shares that her family does not accept her bisexual identity and that she needed to go "back in the closet." Although this is not her preferred outcome, she finds comfort in knowing that her future family— her own children— will have the freedom to choose their sexuality. Here, we see Anna imagining the type of reality she seeks to create for her future child. Thus, Anna's imagining of the generational shifts she can make, via her own imagined

future family, provides her a context to address and explore the generational changes that will contribute to the process of liberation. This suggests that having the opportunity to explore ones' radical imagination is an act of social justice.

Chapter 5: Discussion & Implications

"Freeing yourself was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another"
- Toni Morrison

This research was conducted in an effort to better understand how everyday experiences within family inform how justice-oriented young women of color conceptualize oppression and liberation. For justice-oriented YWOC, families are often the primary socializing means whereby they learn and experience the effects of power in a racially stratified patriarchal society. Families of color and their members must possess a dialectical understanding of how sociopolitical systems function to disenfranchise their communities and how to engage with their social worlds to transform these systems. The current study examined justice-oriented YWOC's retellings of how their experiences within family life contributed to their understanding and imaginings of sociopolitical systems and contexts.

Empirical investigations of the influence of family on sociopolitical understandings has tended to examine family influence in conjunction with other relational contexts (e.g., community and peers). Relatively few empirical investigations exclusively examine how family as a context informs YWOC's social analysis (Diemer et al., 2006; Gordon, 2008; O'Connor, 1997). The systems maintenance scholarship has been useful in illuminating the socialization strategies that parents use to develop their children into active and engaged citizens concerned with the maintenance of the polity (Pancer, 2015; White & Mistry, 2016). However, YCE literature's current approaches to studying parent civic and political socialization offers little insight into how families of color cultivate their children's socio-political development in ways

that are culturally rooted and reflective of their experiences within family. Further, this body of research does not provide conceptually useful examples of how families, particularly families of color, influence young peoples' interest in social transformation or their analysis of injustice. The fields' over emphasis on systems maintenance both fragments and obscures our understandings of the role of families of color in young people's understanding of social injustice.

Furthermore, family context is usually studied in ways that under consider the realities that families possess identities (e.g., class, race, immigration status, etc.) that have implications for how power is experienced and understood within and outside of the family. In this work, I explored justice-oriented YWOC's retellings of their perceptions of their family's role in contributing to their awareness and understanding of social inequity. In what follows, I reiterate and expand on the main findings of this study, outline its contributions to the field, and explore implications.

Major Findings

Implicit Research Question

This study examined how families influence young women of colors' SPD. In this study, the question 'How do justice-oriented YWOC understand and define family?' was both implicit and central. This question was not formulated as a key research question. However, in the coding of the narrative data it became clear that YWOC were describing family in ways that required explicit attention. The "Family Codes" shed light on the broad and nuanced ways that participants conceive of family.

SPD identifies family as having an influence on young people's development of social analysis. However, the conceptualization of family is often limited to parents and does not fully

recognize the agency that young people have in determining who they deem as family. In contrast to the limited definition of family that dominates SPD literature, for this group of justice-oriented YWOC, five commonalities arose in how they experience, name, and evoke the power of "family." YWOC experienced family through: 1) traditional notions of family, 2) as ancestry and previous generations, 3) as future family and generations, 4) as diaspora and community, and 5) as a process of creation. Thus, consistent with FFS justice-oriented YWOC experience and conceptualize family in ways that resist limits on temporality or biology. As they develop and recognize their abilities to identify, disrupt, and transform marginalizing social dynamics and systems in the interest of their liberation, justice-oriented YWOC's broad conceptualizations of family afford them dynamic contexts (e.g., social experiences with family, their imaginations) and various social actors (e.g., ancestors, community, siblings, future generations) from which to draw support.

YWOC explore family in terms of membership (i.e., who is family), in terms of family dynamics (i.e., how does family function), and in generative terms (i.e., what does it mean to make family). Therefore, for this population, family is flexible and functions as an experience from which they can create and generate both power and wisdom. Importantly, within these expansive and inclusive conceptualizations and experiences of family, and consistent with the current literature, they still identify experiences within traditional notions of family (e.g., nuclear, extended, fictive kin) as influencing their SPD. For instance, within their traditional family system, YWOC witnessed family members challenging marginalizing behavior or unfair power dynamics within family. These experiences inform their ability to reimagine and therefore approach family dynamics in ways that shape their understandings of how inequity and harm are perpetuated and may also be addressed. Taken together, the findings of this study suggest that

expanding our notions of who YWOC identify as family will be critical for future explorations of the role of family in SPD.

Research Question 1: How do justice-oriented YWOC (ages 17-23) describe the roles of their families in shaping their understandings, imaginings and experiences of oppression and liberation (i.e. social analysis)?

Justice-oriented YWOC's descriptions of how their varying conceptualizations of family shape their understanding, imaginings, and experiences of oppression and liberation centered on three themes. In the first theme, they describe families as a context for learning to privilege self-care and self-respect when addressing oppressive processes. Specifically, from interactions with family, justice-oriented YWOC learn to discern how and with whom they should engage as they seek to navigate and address oppressive social conditions (e.g., sexualization, objectification). Disrupting and questioning the oppressive experiences and processes that occur within their families requires that justice-oriented YWOC recognize the power of their voice and vulnerability. Thus, their recognition of their voice and power within the context of family is central to their sociopolitical development. Through this process they recognize their agency to choose who they engage with and to prioritize their self-care. In doing so, YWOC engage with oppressive processes within their families in ways that are aligned with their personal boundaries.

The second theme associated with justice-oriented YWOC's descriptions of the influence of family on their understanding of oppression and liberation concerns how families teach the importance of naming the oppressive realities of gendered labor. Experiences in daily life and justice work reveal to YWOC the various manifestations of intersectional oppressions. During the course of their retellings, participants shared how they learned the names of previously

unnamed social injustices that they experienced within family through family structure and dynamics. The process of naming gendered labor oppression seemed critical to their development of social analysis. For instance, in naming gendered labor oppression (e.g., femme labor), YWOC expressed their increased capacity to situate their family experiences as gendered and systemic issues that other WOC also experience.

The third and final theme related to justice-oriented YWOC's retellings of how family experiences shape their social analysis, concerns how they learn to privilege and integrate honoring family through celebration as an act of liberation. For justice-oriented YWOC, families transmit and promote traditions that shape YWOC's SPD, particularly the strategies they privilege in implementing social justice work. The study found that foundational to the ways in which justice-oriented YWOC learn to combat oppression and promote liberation is their families' transmission and maintenance of cultural traditions that promote celebratory gatherings to commemorate the joyous occasions that occur within traditional notions of family as well as family as community and diaspora. As part of their socio-political development within the family, YWOC learn that it is their duty to create shared joy, just as their ancestors did, in the midst of oppressive processes. Also, central to these celebrations is their connection to larger ancestral legacies and traditions.

RQ1a: What direct strategies and indirect processes do families use to shape understandings of oppression and liberation?

Justice-oriented YWOC described three strategies and processes that their families used to shape understandings of oppression and imaginings of liberation. First, through dreams and spirituality, family enables justice-oriented YWOC to acknowledge their agency and identify the gifts (e.g., skills, competencies, abilities) they possess that can help them to address the social

oppression they experience. These communications validate justice-oriented YWOC's abilities to carry out their justice work and the personal power they possess to address social change. Justice-oriented YWOC apply these supportive messages of encouragement and guidance to their socio-political decision-making and analysis in their day to day lives.

The second way that families inform justice-oriented YWOC's conceptualizations of justice and injustice is through a direct strategy of modeling the process of choosing and creating family. YWOC learn the importance of naming and creating family in the midst of living in systematically oppressive conditions and working to understand and address injustice. These experiences illuminate for YWOC how chosen and created family operates in their lives. YWOC learn their power to identify shared experiences and aims, in order to build from collective identity (e.g., sisterhood). YWOC utilize collective identities to facilitate their navigating the limited material resources and opportunity structures that otherwise tend to position marginalized people against one another.

The third strategy that emerged from the participants' retellings is that families indirectly expand justice-oriented YWOC's imaginations of what constitutes as activism. The Nina fellows interviewed for this study described instances where they witnessed family members extend support to one another through storytelling. Within their families, YWOC witnessed how women offer their personal and painful accounts of going through difficult or marginalizing experiences as mechanism of support when another family member was going through a similar experience (e.g., going through an abortion alone, being abandoned by a mate). This relational work holds the hidden labor of sharing and holding one another's stories and perspectives. Through sharing these stories YWOC make meaning of family (e.g., structure, dynamic, communication,

distribution of power, history) in ways that have implications for how they understand unjust social, political and economic arrangements, and how they approach doing activism.

Research Question 2: What lessons or messages do justice-oriented YWOC receive about social justice and oppression from their parents and family, and how do these messages inform youths' liberatory imagination?

Research question number two consisted of three composite questions. The summary of the findings are discussed below.

RQ2a: What do YWOC imagine is changeable in an unfair world? Justice-oriented YWOC imagine that communities and diasporas can collectively and effectively resist oppressive systems. They assert that to act and build as a collective/family requires reestablishing trust and mutuality. The reestablishment of trust and relationship creates opportunities to identify overlapping experiences across varying identity groups, as well as solutions to addressing marginalizing dynamics. These solutions are rooted in accumulated knowledge, resources, and tools that are developed across the YWOC's experiences and inform their sociopolitical wisdoms.

RQ2b: What role do they imagine individuals should play initiating that change? Justice-oriented YWOC believe that individuals must work towards liberation by naming, contextualizing, and disrupting manifestations of internalized oppression in their families and their own lives. Doing so allows YWOC to learn how internalized oppression reproduces itself through abuses of power. Justice-oriented YWOC imagine that individuals should have a developing social analysis of how systems make them susceptible to reproducing harmful behaviors and ideologies (e.g., becoming abusive towards others because of one's own internalized oppression) and that they have the choice not to. These YWOC in this study also

speak to the reality that although marginalized people are burdened (e.g., experience oppression) they are also strong and abundant (e.g., experience aspects of liberation), and that these ideas, realities, and manifestations of power exist.

RQ2c: How do they imagine social change occurs? The messages and lessons that justice-oriented YWOC receive from their families about oppression and liberation inform their imaginings that social change requires generational change through a willingness to question. Justice-oriented YWOC utilize questions to advocate for themselves, those closest to them, and future generations. Questioning ideologies or values does not center on combativeness, but rather the development of understanding in the interest of developing social analysis. The questioning of oneself during this process is also crucial, as it creates opportunities for justice-oriented YWOC to name the generational changes they can make to contribute to liberation.

Family as a Site of Praxis for the Collective Liberatory Imagination

Across the varying families, YWOC's experiences of the interplay between power and gender in their families shape their understandings and imaginings of liberation and oppression. These experiences constitute justice-oriented YWOC's sociopolitical wisdoms and inform the development of their social analysis. Another key finding of this work is that for justice-oriented YWOC, family functions as a site of *praxis*. Paolo Freire (1993) describes praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." Through praxis, oppressed people critically confront and objectify their reality in order to act upon it. Crucial to this process is a critical intervention after critical reflection. Moreover, Freire asserts, "liberation is as praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1993, p.79). For justice-oriented YWOC, critical intervention is intertwined with their process of liberation and occurs in a variety of ways (e.g., using their voice to question and transform problematic

dynamics, centering their self-care, naming oppressive dynamics). Therefore, at the macro-level, sociopolitical dynamics (e.g., oppression) unfold through family relations, and when oppression manifests in sites of love/care (e.g., family) we recall the contradictions/dualities of power in these spaces.

For these YWOC, family functions as a site from which they can create, experience, and generate power and wisdom. Within the context of family, justice-oriented YWOC gain opportunities to explore and integrate aspects of their multiple identities (e.g., queerness, future roles as mothers, daughters) within the realities of oppression and liberation. Family enables justice-oriented YWOC to identify, name, and resist manifestations of oppression within their daily lives. This process occurs as justice-oriented YWOC simultaneously develop a growing awareness of how to apply their imaginings and understandings of liberation to navigate their identities and consequently their realities.

Justice-oriented YWOC accumulate knowledge, or sociopolitical wisdoms, from their temporally expansive and inclusive notions and experiences of family. They integrate and access these sociopolitical wisdoms into their analysis of their realities and their decisions about how to effectively transform in the context of their realities. In doing so, they collectively create, contribute to, and maintain a space to imagine: what is changeable in an unfair world, what role individuals should play in initiating that change, and how social change occurs. I refer to this space as justice-oriented YWOC's collective liberatory imagination. The major findings of this study reveal that for justice-oriented YWOC, family functions as a site of praxis for the collective liberatory imagination.

Study Contributions

This dissertation project offers a number of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological contributions. This work offers four major contributions to the extant knowledge about the role of families in justice oriented societal involvement. First, because earlier models of SPDT were rooted in experiences of African-American men, this study expands the model by identifying families' unique implications in the SPD of YWOC. Second, by highlighting YWOC's expansive conceptualizations of family, this study points to the need for a broader view of the variety of socializing agents (e.g., biological family, fictive family, ancestors) and variety of socializing mechanisms (e.g., family stories, dreams) associated with YWOC's SPD. Third, YWOC experience specific gendered ethnoracial messages related to anti-blackness that complicate the role of family in the development of an ethnoracial worldview. Fourth, family functions as a site of praxis for YWOC's SPD and their liberatory imagination. That is, family relationships and family dynamics provide a stage on which power relations, biases, gendered and racialized dynamics and other social complexities play out. The direct experience and direct view of these issues provide YWOC an opportunity to reflect on, name, and challenge these manifestations of injustice. I review these findings in more detail below.

Empirical investigations of families of color have a long and well-documented history of centering on a deficits-based analysis, which has resulted in families of color being pathologized (McAdoo, 1991; McLloyd, 1998; Sudarkasa, 1996). This deficits-based framing presents families of color as lacking a significantly positive role in their young people's development, including their developing commitments to social justice and liberation. Moreover, those empirical investigations that do posit family as a central socializing force in young people's

societal involvement, often do so in ways that limit our imaginings of the depth of experiences that occur within those families, and the roles that gender and power play in them.

The study expands SPDT proposition 2 (a sense of agency is essential) and 3 (action requires opportunity). YWOC described setting self-defined protective boundaries, and in voicing these boundaries, and engaging in acts of self-care within the context of family, they gained opportunities to experience themselves as agentic. Family relationships and the dynamics and events that occur within families provide YWOC with the critical opportunities to bear witness to, to name, and respond to -isms (e.g., racism, sexism). The opportunity to see, understand and respond to these dynamics in the context of family life and among people with whom they have life-long, loving, trusting, reciprocal, intertwined, and committed relationships may sharpen the kinds of social analysis in which YWOC engage.

It is noteworthy that a number of studies have noted that racial socialization messages operate as mechanisms through which families transmit racial messages to their children and are related to young people's societal analysis and involvement (Anyiwo & Banales, 2018; Lozada et al., 2017). This study demonstrated that the ethnoracial worldviews that families transmit to YWOC are impacted by and intertwined with gendered experiences. For example, during the course of their sociopolitical development within families, justice-oriented YWOC develop an awareness of how gendered ethnoracial messages (e.g., messages from parental or other family members that privilege Eurocentric standards of beauty) are inextricably linked to manifestations of internalized oppression.

In research related to SPD, the role of parental authority is conceptualized as a proxy for institutional power and authority (Gordon, 2008; Watts & Guessous, 2007). Research examining the role of parental power in justice-oriented YWOC's sociopolitical development has

demonstrated that parents may be a barrier to young women's societal involvement in the public domain (e.g., rallying, protesting) (Gordon, 2008). Gordon's findings might be taken to suggest that families undermine young women's ability to develop critical SPD related skills and capacities. However, by using FFS and CRF to key in to the influence of family on YWOC's SPD, this study revealed that family experiences were formative to shaping YWOC's underlying socio-political understandings and political actions in more intimate domestic sphere of life. YWOC described how experiences in family taught them the complexities of gender, race and power. Family functions as a context where YWOC practiced their sociopolitical voice, where they developed socio political understandings, and where they performed sociopolitical actions in the private/domestic sphere of life. Socio political actions that occur within family may fall beneath the radar of those who are focused only on the public domain of action and imagination. The findings of this study point to the need for future research to pay explicit attention to the ways that social awareness, social analysis and transformative social action may manifest and evolve in the private sphere of life.

The current study contributes to our understanding of how expansive conceptualizations of families are critical to accurately capturing the role of family in YWOC's SPD. This study highlights the need to consider that the experience of power in family goes beyond parents. Indeed, a number of the participants describe contending with power in their sibling relationships and in relationships with the spouses of their siblings. The study also revealed that justice-oriented YWOC's conceptualizations of family were not specific to the social actors in the immediate family. YWOC conceived of family in terms of ancestry, future families and generations, and community diaspora. CRF allows for these conceptualizations of family to be uplifted and built upon. CRF focuses on historical, geographical, psychic, cultural and

imaginative boundaries and axes that shape WOC's self-definition (Few, 2007). However, these broader conceptualizations of family are not investigated in FFS or SPD. The multitude of social actors and the variety of roles that familial social actors play (whether supportive, resistant, validating, oppressive, or liberatory) should be captured and integrated into the study of their SPD.

The current study's findings also demonstrate that expansive conceptualizations of family create opportunities for the investigation of diverse socialization mechanisms not currently explored in the literature, but that need to be uplifted. Families' transmission of political understandings are typically examined through observable and measurable behaviors (e.g., directives, modeling, and teaching) and are strongly rooted in political socialization theory (see Chapter 1). Parents are typically explored as the source of these messages. However, the study's findings demonstrate that by expanding our conceptualization of family to include social actors such as siblings, ancestors, community, and their future family, we are privy to unexplored mechanisms that are not necessarily measurable or observable such as imagination, dreams and spirituality.

To investigate the variety of ways which families contribute to YWOC's socio political knowledge, I applied the concept of sociopolitical wisdoms. Sociopolitical wisdoms (SPW) identifies an individual's development of sociopolitical awareness to be collective, accumulated, social, transgenerational, and expressed, embodied, and held in multiple ways (Sanchez-Carmen et al., 2015). The study revealed that justice-oriented YWOC receive sociopolitical directives identifying them as agentic through mechanisms such as dreams and spirituality. These experiences contribute to YWOC social analysis or their diverse ways of knowing. SPWs are gathered through embodied experiences. To my knowledge, this is the first study—other than the

empirical studies which were presented in the original conceptual paper on sociopolitical wisdoms—to apply Sociopolitical Wisdoms to examining how families inform sociopolitical wisdoms through empirical analysis. SPWs might not always be immediately observable, but they are nonetheless essential to the sociopolitical development of YWOC.

A final theoretical contribution of this study is that it uplifts family as site of praxis. Paolo Freire (1993) describes praxis as, "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." Through praxis oppressed people critically confront their reality and objectify that reality in order to act upon it. Crucial to this process is that critical intervention/action follows critical reflection. Freire also offers that "Liberation is as praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1993, p.79). Thus, the understandings that justice-oriented YWOC develop on how to transform injustice in family contexts may manifest differently (e.g., using their voice to question and transform problematic dynamics, centering their self-care, naming oppressive dynamics) than understandings and practices that we have come to expect in public-facing studies of SPD. However, it is critical to privilege these forms of practice in their own right, and to understand how these forms of praxis might translate into analyses and actions outside of the context of family.

The study also made significant conceptual and methodological contributions. The research questions that guided the dissertation study required a qualitative approach to inquiry that privileged the unpacking of YWOC's understandings and interpretations of how family experiences shape their sociopolitical development. Therefore, I applied a constructivist paradigm to the research study because constructivism acknowledges that knowledge is subjective and best obtained through dialectical methods whereby researchers and informants interact to co-construct knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). A constructivist paradigm aims to:

1) reduce the “distance” between my participants and myself, 2) uphold individuals as the experts of their own lived experiences, and 3) require that I constantly engage in a reflexive process. According to Ahluwalia and Mattis (2012) reflexivity refers to my obligation as a researcher to contemplate how my social identities and beliefs influence the questions that I ask or choose not to ask, and how the stories my participants share are shaped by the dynamic interplay of their social identities and my own.

An important conceptual and methodological contribution of this work is that my participants’ vulnerability and mine were both centered during our co-creation of knowledge and my ongoing process of reflexivity. In order to center vulnerability as a dialectical process during my semi-structured interviews, I applied the methodological tenets of Critical Race Feminism. CRF encourages researchers to develop relationships with, and to explicitly and consciously bring themselves into conversations with participants. This process includes: a) using natural styles of conversation; b) allowing researchers to acknowledge relevant aspects of their own lived experience to the questions guiding empirical inquiry; and c) allowing participants to ask questions of and push back against the perspectives and positions of the researcher. It follows that the methodological tenets of CRF were well-suited to build upon the nine-month established relationship that I built with my participants prior to conducting my interviews.

Across my interviews my process of reflexivity was varied and dependent on the interplay of my participant and my identities. For example, my identity as a Haitian-American woman became particularly salient in interviews with my Dominican-American and Haitian-American participants. This meant that I needed to acknowledge how the political relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic were an important aspect of my experiencing a Haitian-American identity. During those interviews it was important that I create opportunities to

explore how the historical and contemporary social and political tensions between the nation states of Haiti and the Dominican Republican manifested in our everyday family lives. These conversations allowed us to develop a nuanced appreciation of how the longstanding effects of colonization are revealed in these dynamics, and how generational trauma and healing are both implicated in the processes of oppression and liberation. This kind of vulnerability proved valuable to my research process and was made possible by applying the tenets of constructivism, FFS, and CRF. Specifically, FFS' privileging the interplay between gender and power in families and CRF's emphasis on women of color sharing a collective identity emboldened me to share my family experiences with my participants during our interviews. By doing so, I created opportunities for my participants to identify commonalities in our experience of power and gender within family, though inevitably the particularities of those experiences did often vary. This approach to vulnerability-making may be particularly critical in collecting family data from historically marginalized people who possess a growing awareness of the ways in which their family systems are judged and often blamed for the effects of structural racism. Scholars might build on this kind of vulnerability-making in future research to create space for participants to recognize the complex relationships and experiences that most individuals have with family and create opportunities for more candid discussions of experiences within family.

Using a constructivist approach to examine the influence of family on YWOC's SPD was particularly beneficial to the project. In keeping with the tenets of constructivism, during my data collection and analysis I centered participants' perspectives and created opportunities for counternarratives and novel findings to complicate extant ideas. One reflection of this process was the emergence and identification of the family code (RQ0), where I privileged YWOC as experts on their family experiences and centered their power to name and situate *who* they

experienced as family. Through the synthesis of constructivism and CRF, I built from their knowledge and our shared collective identity to examine my own expansive and multiple experiences of family. I recognized how having grown up in a barbershop—which I experienced as family— contributed to my ability to engage with the multitude of ways that family was experienced in my data. This realization informed the project's data analysis process as I drew from my lived and vicarious experiences with family and encouraged my coders to do so as well. The study also found that YWOC rarely used the language of oppression even when speaking about oppressive dynamics. Rather, their narratives privileged joy and their imaginings of liberation. Moreover, across the interviews the participants' understandings of liberation were connected to the types of emotions that they associated with a liberated state of being (i.e., goodness, freedom, love, humor). This finding suggests that YWOC understand oppression as being deeply interconnected experiences, and choose to privilege what liberation does and can feel like. Future work on the sociopolitical development of young people should consider how YWOCs' uplifting of joy, imagination, and other positive emotions may be a form of critical resistance to the oppressive dynamics and structures that they are impacted by and therefore an important aspect of their SPD and process of liberation. Relatedly, YWOC conceptualize liberation in ways that highlight how structures of power keep people from developing connections. This was particularly apparent when YWOC described lessons they learned from family as conceptualized as community or diaspora.

Implications

Towards a Theory of Sociopolitical Development Focused on YWOC and Families

The current study's integration of Feminist Family Studies, Critical Race Feminism, and Sociopolitical development theory created the conceptual space to examine the influence of

family on YWOCs understandings of liberation and oppression in ways that privileged their lived experiences as women of color within family. The study revealed that YWOC were able to explore radical versions of themselves through the temporally expansive conceptualizations of family, and they experienced aspects of their own liberation through their own processes of renegotiating, reimagining, and reintegrating their multiple identities.

Informed by the current study's findings I propose a model of SPD that centers YWOCs intersecting identities, varying conceptualizations of family, and their accumulation of the sociopolitical wisdoms within family. As a reminder, SPD is conceptualized as "a process of growth in a person's knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social systems. SPD is not limited to resisting oppression in the interest of justice, however; the capacity to envision and help create a just society is an essential part of the process as well" (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003, p.185). Centering the role of families in YWOC's sociopolitical development expands opportunities to empirically explore how YWOC develop the capacity to envision and create a just society in more depth. In everyday life, YWOC contend with the multiple power structures that attempt to oppress them. Within the context of family YWOC witness and experience these manifestations at various levels of experience (e.g., personally, relationally). Through family life, YWOC also have opportunities to cultivate power to stand up for themselves and others, and to witness shifts of power and changes in the behavior of loved ones.

The study's findings suggest sociopolitical development theory provides an advantageous developmental framing of the role of family in YWOC's SPD (e.g., the bi-directional relationship between social analysis and societal involvement). Moreover, the study found that YWOC's experience of their womanhood in family and the perceived role of women in family

were central to YWOC's SPD processes, but are not adequately captured in existing SPD theory. Families are the primary socialization contexts in which YWOC learn about the constructs of race, gender, and power in their everyday lives. Thus, a more focused approach to examining YWOCs' experiences in families using SPDT is required. This work would be more effective if it was conceptualized within the context of CRF as it centralizes race, gender, and power. Therefore, I propose an integrative theory of ethno-feminist SPD that centers the interwovenness and bi-directionality of the ethno-gendered realities of young women of color in families and their SPD within and outside of family.

An integrative theory of ethno-feminist SPD would allow for more nuanced examinations of how the intersecting identities of womanhood and a woman's role in family inform processes related to YWOCs' sociopolitical understandings and involvement. This bi-directional process of SPD has implications for their family context and the other social contexts in which they live, learn, grow, and contribute to every day. One approach to building this theory would be reconceptualizing and expanding constructs central to SPDT through the application of CRFs' guiding tenets and integrating the current study's findings. This process would result in a theory that more accurately represents the realities of YWOCs SPD in families. For instance, propositions 2 and 3 of SPDT assert that a sense of agency is essential, and that action requires opportunity. CRF promotes Critical Praxis and calls for practices and theories that simultaneously study and combat gender and racial oppression, relatedly the current study found that YWOC engage with family as a site of praxis for their socio-political understandings. Framing the constructs of agency and the opportunity structure through a CRF lens and through the lens of the current study's findings would allow for investigations of how YWOC utilize their expansive notions of family to create opportunities to learn and practice agency to combat

gender and racial oppression across their developmental contexts. By privileging YWOC's expansive notions of families and the multiple identities and multiple social locations that YWOC possess and occupy within families, an integrative theory of ethno-feminist SPD has the unique opportunity to shift the focus of discourse from one that envisions these young women as 'multiply burdened' or oppressed to one that, as Wing (2003) asserts, includes a recognition of WOC as people who possess a multiplicity of strength, love, joy, and transcendence despite adversity.

Empirical work utilizing an integrative theory of ethno-feminist SPD would position scholars to work with and on behalf of YWOC to capture the complex manifestations of the location of power, multiple identities, agency and justice-oriented societal involvement in the lives of YWOC by examining how their strength, love, joy, and transcendence is linked to their process of liberation as learned and experienced within family. This may occur by incorporating positive psychology and linking those constructs with the process of liberation (Mattis, Grayman-Simpson, Powell, & Anderson, 2016). The study of YWOC's SPD could benefit from privileging how families serve as a site of praxis for the practice and process of liberation so that they may further develop social analysis as it relates to YWOC's ability to identify and understand what is right, supportive, just, beautiful, imaginative and inspiring within family. Such findings would better position investigators to identify, promote and support YWOC's envisioning of liberation and what is needed for those visions to be realized.

The field of SPD could also benefit from an integrative theory of an ethno-feminist SPD as the integration of the tenets of CRF provides an intersectional lens to frame justice-oriented YWOC's experiences within family as experiences of liberation. Fromm's dual conception of liberation (1965) as "freedom from" and "freedom to" frames liberation as a process concerned

with overcoming internal and external sources of oppression (e.g., freedom from—the White gaze, gender domination, class exploitation, and ethnic discrimination). An integrative theory of an ethno-feminist SPD privileges SPD as a process of liberation centers the dimensions of liberation that YWOC experience across their multiple identities—the piecing together, the bridging work.

Limitations

Although the current study deepens our knowledge of the influence of family on YWOC's development of sociopolitical understandings, it is not without limitations. First, due to the emic and exploratory nature of the study, the study has a limited sample size and all the YWOC who participated in the study were involved in a leadership development training program. Exploring how YWOC's retellings and awareness of power operating in their lives might manifest for women without access to a leadership training program is worth exploring. Next, all but one individual in the study's sample self-identified as a second-generation immigrant (one participant did not identify as second-generation, despite having one parent who was an immigrant). The extent to which families' immigrant status influences YWOC's retellings of the influence of family on their understandings of liberation and oppression must be elucidated in future research. Given their immigrant status, YWOC may already have more extended conceptualizations of family as a result of their witnessing the maintenance of family connections or ties within a transnational context. Yet, the majority of the sample coming from immigrant families does not necessarily mean that the results are not applicable to YWOC who do not grow up in immigrant families. Rather, it may point to some distinct features of growing up in an immigrant family that may matter to the study's research questions. When we consider Flanagan's (2008) conceptualization of families as mini-polities, we can imagine how for

children of immigrants, home life reflects a small version of nation from where your parents came, where the rules in the home do not apply outside and vice versa (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, 2009). As they bridge worlds, YWOC may learn early on how to read and interpret multiple social worlds, and these experiences may provide them with different or more nuanced interpretive skills than non- immigrants. Furthermore, second generation immigrants might have a different relationship to the process of choosing one's family through shared experience. Second-generation immigrant identity provides context to recognize how immigration and systems of oppression can fragment the experience of collective identity in ways that complicate the notions of family and obligation. Children of immigrants may, therefore, learn early on that family is not always defined by biology, but is defined by memory and acts of commitment.

Additionally, the age of the sample is another important limitation and shaped the study's findings. All the young women in the sample were between the ages of 19-23. Their ability to reflect on the influence of family on their SPD may be attributed to their having gone through various key developmental milestones (e.g., living away from home for the first time) and having a greater sense of self-awareness. Furthermore, all of the sample except one was in college or had completed college at the time of the study. Many of the young women described how being away at school gave them a different perspective on their family's social location and what they deemed normative behavior. All of the participants attended predominantly white institutions, and they all spoke of the marginalizing experiences they had within those spaces. These kinds of experiences might have also heightened or otherwise changed their level of social analysis in ways that allowed them to translate those experiences back to their family life.

Future Directions

The study's findings reveal that macro-level sociopolitical dynamics (e.g., oppression and liberation) play out through family relations. When oppression plays out in sites of love/care (e.g., family) we are reminded of the contradictions/dualities of power. Within family power can be used to both maintain oppression and foster liberation. The study's sample describes various instances in which they describe the ability of their family members to do both. The study of justice-oriented YWOC's social analysis and societal involvement could benefit from methods (e.g., daily diary, ethnographic family interviews with multiple family members across multiple generations) that allow for more in depth examinations of experiences of families from various social actors. Daily diary studies would allow for opportunities to capture how various aspects of SPD develop over time and in response to particular interactions and circumstances. This would allow opportunities to investigate how shifts in family and greater society are experienced within family life and the implications that has for YWOC's SPD. These methods could be used to conduct comparative ethnographic work examining various perspectives on experiences within family. Findings from such work would allow for more in depth theorizations of how various family members make-meaning of family dynamics and experience. Such work could provide important insight into the role of communication and power within family contexts and how this translates into their engagement with other political systems. Furthermore, as a number of the YWOC in this study describe the impact that cultural traditions have in their lives and justice work, creating community-based research programming/interventions that center and contextualize these strategies might be particularly useful in sustaining these traditions and learning from them. For instance, the importance of celebration as means of honoring ancestry and recognition of such practices as being representative of the process of liberation.

The study also reveals justice-oriented YWOC of colors career trajectories to be a future line of research. In longitudinal studies, when academic achievement is controlled for, CC predicts greater career development and connection to one's future career (Diemer et al., 2010). Exploring how YWOC experiences within family inform their career decisions may also have implications for their academic trajectories (as they relate to prospective career paths) in college. Exploring how families influence SPD has implications for their decision-making in different contexts and warrants more attention. Further, an emerging body of research demonstrates that equity and socioemotional learning have implications for SPD (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Williams, 2019). The current study's findings suggest that YWOC's vulnerability with their emotions with family was an important part of their SPD. Exploring the relationships between YWOC's SEL, family and sociopolitical is well worth further empirical investigation.

The social identities of the study's participants have implications for the study's findings and thus future lines of research. For instance, the age and developmental stage of my participants made it possible to examine the application of family informed sociopolitical understandings in a variety of contexts (e.g., places of employment, other self-selected opportunities where they engage in particular kinds of social justice activities). Future research should examine how early adolescent and adolescent girls of color experience and apply sociopolitical understandings gained from family to their justice-oriented behaviors and commitments. Specifically, empirical investigations could examine developmental contexts that are relevant to girls of color such as K-12 settings, peer interactions in and outside of educational spaces, and extracurricular activities (e.g., sports and volunteer settings). Doing so would provide insight into whether there are developmental differences in how families shape YWOC's versus early adolescent/adolescent girls of colors' experiences and meaning-making processes

related to SPD. Future research should also explore how children of immigrants may be uniquely impacted by cultural socialization messages that emphasize what is acceptable to do and say in families. These expectations may influence the content of their social analysis and how and whether they can move from analysis to action within the family context. For example, cultural restrictions might require children of immigrants to develop innovative methods for their sociopolitical understandings to be manifested within families that may fall outside the current scope of SPD literature. Future research should explore how children of immigrants navigate and develop strategies to such multiple cultural socializing forces that exist in their lives and inform their SPD.

YWOC described how the communities and diasporas of which they are a part possess a cumulative knowledge of how to achieve various aspects of liberation, but systems such as capitalism individualize experience in ways that render individual insights, experiences, and knowledges as competing rather than complementary. In this way, YWOC seemed to conceive the process and outcome of liberation in terms of opportunities for people to come together "like pieces of a puzzle" to solve problems and to actualize their imaginings of liberation. Applying the YWOCs puzzle metaphor to the process of liberation particularly illuminates efforts to reveal the confluence of YWOC's individual and collective understandings of liberation. YWOC assert that individuals possess specific skills, perspectives, and wisdoms necessary to achieve solutions to oppressive conditions and manifest their collective understandings of liberation. YWOC note that for individuals to come together to transform systems on a collective and systematic level requires time, space, and opportunity for individuals to talk, engage, and share their experiences with one another. This coming together to share their experiences and ultimate desire to fully live as human beings provides opportunities to learn that the solutions to the social ills they face exist

within their collective experiences. Future research would benefit from considering how the space of the interview creates an opportunity for young people to discuss and explore how they might envision their worlds or individual circumstances differently. In this way, researchers should conceptualize the interview as an opportunity for young people to share and exercise their ability to envision liberation as opportunities to express these experiences as the study's data suggests that these spaces are not commonplace and are therefore critical to YWOC's SPD.

The framing of the study's research questions focused on the unidirectional impact of families on YWOCs sociopolitical understandings. The study found that families and systems influenced YWOCs actions and commitments with YWOC sharing how their experiences within families directly and indirectly informed their social justice organizing (e.g., applying family-based traditions and rituals, learning the importance of valuing the voice of the community members they served). Importantly, the study also found that YWOCs' experiences doing justice-oriented work influenced their family context by shifting family dynamics (e.g., families shifting to power structures that are less patriarchal). Importantly, the impact that YWOC and other familial actors made on their family expanded their notions of what constitutes as activism. Taken together, these findings suggest that the influence of families on YWOC is more dynamic in nature and that this bi-directional relationship may prove critical to the role of families in YWOC's SPD. In this way, families allow YWOC opportunities to engage and experience their agency to shape their family's sociopolitical conditions (i.e., power dynamics) by influencing family behavior. SPD research could benefit from exploring how the dynamic relationship between YWOC and families changes over time. The dynamic role of families in social justice should be the focus of a space of inquiry that I conceptualize as Critical Family Studies. The

integration of SPDT, FFS, and CRF will likely provide a generative conceptual framing for future work in critical family studies.

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Appendix

Exit Interview Protocol

Social Justice and Family

1) What is social justice and injustice to you?
    a. Probe: We all have multiple social identities (e.g., different racial, religious, gender, sexual identities). How do your identities inform how you think about social justice?
    b. Probe: How do your culture and heritage inform how you think about social justice/injustice?
2) What role has your family/home life played in your ideas about social justice and injustice?
    a. Probe: Are there things that have happened to your family or things that have happened in your family that have influenced the ways that you think about social justice and injustice?
    b. Probe: Are their conversations that happen in your family that have had an effect on the ways that you think about social justice or injustice?
    c. Probe: Are there things that you have seen your family do (e.g., ways that they help others, ways that they struggle, ways they interact with others) that have influenced the way you think about social justice or injustice?
3) How, if at all, has your family directly or indirectly influenced the ways you respond to social injustices you encounter in your daily life?

a. Probe: Are there people in your family who are role models for you of how to respond to injustice? How NOT to respond to injustice?
b. Probe: Are there things that people in your family have said or done that influenced the way you respond to injustice?

ELLA Projects.
Now I want you to think about your experiences with ELLA.
(Show group picture/individual pictures from first session at Nook)

4) Please tell me about the pictures/objects.
   a. *Probe:* What do these pictures and objects say about the person you were before being in ELLA?
   b. *Probe:* What do they say about you during your time in ELLA?
   c. *Probe*: What do they say about you now?
   d. *Probe:* When you look across these pictures/objects what do they reveal about how being an ELLA Fellow affected you personally? Please tell me more.
5) Can you tell me a little about yourself and about what motivated you to apply to the ELLA program?
   a. *Probe*: Are there ways that your family experiences or family members motivated you directly or indirectly to do this work? If so, how?
   b. *Probe:* If you think of yourself as a religious or spiritual person, did your religiosity or spirituality motivating you to do the work that you did in ELLA? If so, how?
6) As a current ELLA fellow how would you describe the ELLA program and its mission to someone who did not know about the program?
7) I'd like you to think about your experience in ELLA and the experience you had with other fellows. How would you describe the impact of being an ELLA Fellow on the individuals who participate?
   a. *Probe:* What were the most important things that you got out of your time as an ELLA?

b. *Probe:* Do you think that being in the program changed Fellows in any way? Please tell me more.

8) Please describe your ELLA project.

9) How, if at all, is your ELLA project related to social justice?

10) What aspects of your identity became most salient for you in implementing your projects?

    a. Probe: Did this surprise you?

Morality and Community.

Goodness Mapping Activity.

11) How do your morals influence your engagement with your community?

    a. Probe: How has your family informed your morality?

    b. Probe: What connections do you draw from your morals and your culture?

    c. Probe: Are there ways that your culture (e.g., the values of the cultural groups you come from, or your religion) have influenced your engagement with your community?

12) What are the things that you see or hear or experience in your everyday life in the community that have affected your thoughts about social justice and injustice?

13) What are the things that you see, hear, or experience that have shaped the way that you respond to injustice?

14) How does your family respond to your community involvement?

    a. Probe: What kinds of things do they say or do that suggests that they support your involvement?

    b. Probe: What kinds of things do they say or do that suggests that they do not support your involvement or that they are concerned about your involvement?

15) What do you learn from doing social justice related activities?

    a. What do you learn about yourself?

    b. What do you learn about your family?

    c. What do you learn about your community?

    d. What do you learn about your culture?

16) What does the word "activist" mean? How would you define it?

    a. Probe: What image comes to mind when you think of an activist?

    b. Probe: When does someone become an activist?

    c. Probe: Do you think of yourself as an activist? Why or why not?

17) How do you define activism?

18)) What does a just world look like for you?

    a. Probe: What do you imagine is changeable in an unfair world?

    b. Probe: What role do you imagine an individual should play initiating that change?