A Feminist Exploration of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Girls' and Gender-expansive Youths' Sociopolitical Development: How Integrating Black and Latina Feminist Epistemologies Expands our Understanding of these Girls' Navigation of Gendered Racism

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A Dissertation Presented to

The Faculty of the Psychology Department and School of Education and Human Development at University of Virginia, Washington University at St Louis, and the University of Illinois, Chicago

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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April 17, 2025

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Dedication

To the Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina foremothers who fought subversively and courageously to lay the groundwork for us

To all the Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls growing up now and using their voices to speak up for our communities

To all the Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls who will change the world long after me

You inspire me. I do this work for us.

Acknowledgements

To my family: To my mother, Jacqueline Quiles- how can I adequately thank the woman who gave me life? Mom, as a kid, I watched you constantly speak up for me, Cristina, and Carlos. This often looked like you showing up to school and giving our teachers a piece of your mind when they discriminated against us, or assumed the worst of us. You always assumed the best and made sure to protect your kids in whatever way you could. As a kid I was embarrassed that everyone knew you as 'that mom', but as an adult, I have learned from you to speak up even if it meant getting in trouble – even if we can't change a situation, we can make ourselves heard. Your unwavering faith has also inspired me. I appreciated knowing you were praying for me throughout this process because I knew that you are such a strong of a prayer warrior God would see it through.

To my dad – David Quiles – I would not be who I am without you. My passion for social justice began in the seeds you planted during your early lessons on colonization, civils rights, resistance, and solidarity. Some of my earliest memories were those history lessons. That knowledge helped me to view the world through a critical lens. Understanding how my experiences were related to larger systemic issues, helped me not to internalize the harmful messages I got in school or the doctor's office, but instead to speak up for myself, my friends, and my community. Whenever I had doubts about my own capabilities, you were there to reassure me. To this day, I hear you in the back of my mind saying, "my Blue is so smart if she wanted to get to the moon, she could build her own rocket ship to get herself there and back" I have appreciated your unwavering faith in me.

To my siblings – Cristina Zaldivar and Carlos Quiles – Thank you both for the ways you encouraged me and celebrated me along the way. From staying up with me for late night projects

when we were in elementary school together, to line editing my dissertation proposal, you both have shown up for me and made me laugh along the way. This year specifically, I appreciated your words of encouragement. Each text felt like a celebration and reminder that the finish line was near.

To my wife: Marlena Quiles-Kwock, I cannot thank you enough for the ways you carried me through this process. You are my piece of sunshine on Earth and my constant source of love and strength. When doing this program was tearing me apart, you reminded me that my worth was far greater than my production. When I felt lost, you helped reorient me to why I did this in the first place. When I did something big, you reminded me to celebrate and not just keep moving. I thank you for every time you cooked when I couldn't, for every time you cleaned when I was too busy, and every time you stayed up late listening to me vent. You kept me human in this process and I am so grateful for the ways you reminded me to take care of my health so we can live our long beautiful lives together.

Ancestors both living and dead: I come from a lineage of strong women healers, leaders, and change-makers. I thank these foremothers for preserving our tradition, passing on their magic, and raising us to pick up their torch by caring for others. Specifically, I elevate the names of my great grandmothers Abuela Maria Landos Campos, Abuela Dolores Moran Aguilar and Abuela Rosa Guzmán, who were warrior women. Their subversive resistance taught me that even in the face of fear and oppression, women consistently develop really smart, creative ways to resist, often going unnoticed. During the civil war of 1970's in El Salvador, funded and instigated by the United States, my Abuela Dolores was a respected business woman who made enough pupusas to feed her community; during el tiempo de parro (curfew) and street warfare, her store became a shelter for those who lived in the neighborhood. My Abuela Rosa and Abuelo

Carlos Guzmán arrived in the New York City from Puerto Rico with their family on a propeller driven airplane and had to navigate a society that did not welcome them. My Abuela Rosa was a survivor of the eugenics violence on the island which was informed by research conducted here at the University of Virginia. She defied the attempts of white supremacy to extinguish us and went on to become the matriarch of her family, teaching her children to stay informed on current events by reading them the newspaper every night. As I get my degree at this same university, I cannot help think about how her resistance lives on through me.

I thank my living grandparents for the courage they had and the sacrifices they made in moving to this country in search of safety and opportunity. They worked hard in ways I will never know. And still, despite the ways this country was unkind to them, they showed up for their families and communities in the best way they knew. Their children have gone on to support their communities often in service-oriented careers like social work or medicine. Now I am the first in my family to get a Ph.D. I can feel their pride in me. As I accept this degree, I hear my Abuela Maria Guzman's voice in my head calling me, "Im so proud of you my little girl" or my Abuela Cecilia Moran and Abuelo Esteban Moran calling me "Good job, mama". As they live on in me, this degree is also theirs.

To the Kauer and Kwock Family – Thank you for your love and support throughout the years. I express special gratitude towards Gwen Kauer and Lily Kwock who constantly provided a listening ear, career advice, and encouragement.

To my scholar sisters: Lamont Stanley Bryant, you are my day 1 scholar bestie. I remember seeing your bio in the incoming students' handbook they sent out the summer before we started and I just knew we would be best friends. Throughout this process, you have been my rock. Our writing marathons, check ins, and brainstorming sessions helped me feel less alone. As

we promised early on, we did this together….and we will continue to do this work, together. I express my deep gratitude for all your love and support.

Dr. Alexandra Onouha – My dear sweet friend, you have become my sister. You and your work embody so much love. Throughout this process you have inspired me and expanded the ways I think about community engaged and public scholarship. Our phone calls and texts messages gave me strength. I have high hopes for the collective we dream of building together.

Dr. Bernardette Pinetta – Thank you for always being there for me – the big moments and the small. I've considered you my academic big sister because of the ways you have guided me and so many other scholars through each milestone with so much care. I've learned so much from you. I appreciate your willingness to always get on a call and dream, troubleshoot, and vent with me. As we begin to work together on projects, I am so grateful for the energy you bring. Even with my wild ideas, your response has always been "Yes, let's do it".

Raven Ross – My academic little sister, I am so grateful for all the ways you showed up for me throughout this journey. Our Monday morning writing sessions always kickstarted my week in the best way. You always had such kind and beautiful words of encouragement. Importantly, thank you for helping me bring the Hope Resilience Action Study to life by conducting the pláticas with me. I can tell your conversations with the girls were so meaningful to them. I'm excited to pass the torch to you.

Drs. Elena Maker-Castro & Sara Wilf – It has been such a joy to grow alongside you too. I was so grateful for you both for bringing me onto the IOY project. You both have taught me so much and I am constantly inspired by innovative ways you think and conduct research. You both have are such amazing friends and co-conspirators in the struggle for racial justice.

To my femtors and mentors: Dr. Lindsay Hoyt – I cannot thank you enough for your mentorship over the years. You may not know, but when we met, it was one of the scariest times in my life; I was going through a period of rebirth and a lot of my big elaborate plan for what I thought my life would look like had just fallen apart. One of those major changes was a transition to studying psychology. For most of my life, I felt like I had to fight my way into opportunities. But sitting at the interview in your office, I knew you valued me, my skills, and my passion. You and Natasha treated me like a researcher, and doing YPAR together opened up a world of possibilities I did not know existed. Being in your lab was one of the most joyful experiences. It opened up what I thought my life could look like, not just as a scholar but also someone capable of social mobility…up until then, it did not seem real. I have appreciated your support now through graduate school. When things got hard, it felt good to go visit you back at Fordham, recharge, and return back to the world. You have become like family to me.

Fordham Collegiate Science Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) – During my undergraduate career, the CSTEP office at Fordham University became my second home. For a lot of the academic year, I spent 6-7 days a week in the office grinding away. Every counselor greeted us with smiles and made us feel like our dreams were achievable. I have immense gratitude for Renaldo Alba who mentored me not only on my academic path, but in my personal struggles too. Every time I had a problem, he helped me think through solutions. Before I could believe it for myself, Renaldo would greet me with "Doctora Taina" and reminded me that as a Boricua from New York City my presence in the academy mattered way beyond myself. I used to respond, "Renaldo I'm not a Doctora, yet", just in case…but Renaldo always had faith that it would happen for me. I also thank Michael Molina for his kind heart and big hugs. Mike worked hard to build the CSTEP office for us.

Dr. Alison Cohen – I thank you for all your care over the past years. I have constantly been inspired the ways you live out your commitment to supporting underrepresent women scholars in academia. I am so grateful and lucky to be one of your mentees because you really go the extra mile for each of us; constantly pushing us to do better. Working with you and Dr. Kathleen Coll in collaboration with Mujeres Unidas y Activas was such a beautiful experience. It fundamentally shifted how I thought about community engaged research.

To my friends: To my dear friends, David Freire, Janelle Billingsley, Ariana Rivens, Samantha Perez, Jenn Beatty, Ariel Lipper, Harshini Sobhan, and Seema Mathura, thank you for your love and kindness. I appreciate every time you spent listening to me, giving me advice, and reminding me to be human throughout this process. You all held me when things felt too hard to handle on my own. I express special gratitude for David, who spent most of the weekends writing with me; and various nights debriefing all things academic. Our coffee dates meant so much to me and helped me re-infuse joy in stressful times. I love you all sooo so much.

To my therapist – Harumi Sanchez – Thank you for holding all my stories – the good, bad, and ugly of graduate school. Your loving support helped me grow and challenged me to think about what it meant to do this work and also keep myself healthy. Working with you has reminded me of the importance one person can make in someone's life. Your work has incredible ripple effects – for me, it has meant helping my find my voice again. I promise to continue lifting that voice in service of our community!

To my co-chairs: Dr. Seanna Leath – my fellow dreamer. I want to thank you for never dimming my big wild ideas. When I first pitched the Hope Resilience Action Study to you, you immediately matched my energy and allowed me to lead this project. Along the way, you have been so instrumental to me learning how to integrate Black and Latina feminist theories. You

challenged me to be intentional about crafting implications that are useful for those who read our work. Watching you dream up and bring your own projects to life has been inspiring and I am in constant awe of how you always keep so many moving piecing going. I am so grateful to have learned from you and appreciate all your support and encouragement along the way.

Dr. Channing Mathews – Channing, I cannot thank you enough for the ways you showed up for me. In lab, you have broken down so many important processes people assume their students just know. Working with you, I have grown so much as a writer and scholar. When I had what felt like a million concurrent tasks, you sat with me and helped me create plans for how to bring projects to completion – together, we have sent off most of the papers on that list and I am glad they will be out there in the world. You lovingly pushed me when I doubted myself, reminded me to take rest when I needed it, and celebrated me when I forgot to do it for myself.

To my committee: I express my deep gratitude for Drs. Josefina Bañales, Nancy Deutsch, and Jazmin Brown-Iannuzzi for your support in my dissertation process. Even beyond that, you have each left your impression on me. Josi – I thank you for your mentorship over the years. You've always felt to me like my academic cousin). You have often been the blueprint I have looked to for how I want to model my career. Your authenticity, care, and work ethnic inspire me. Every meeting with you has been energizing and dreaming with you has always rekindled my hope when it needed some spark. Nancy – I remember you reaching out once just to see how I was doing and to see if I needed support. It meant a lot to me. Like so many other students, you have felt like an important community builder here at UVa. I thank you for the beautiful space you have created in YouthNex. Jazi – Witnessing your kindness during your lab meetings was so powerful to me. You model how mentorship can keep empowering when we

slow down and emphasize our students' strengths. I am so lucky to have such an amazing committee of strong and radical women.

To the girls in my study: Thank you for trusting me with your stories and your wisdoms. Thank you for the ways you are already changing the world. You inspire me.

Lastly, to myself. In many ways this dissertation has been a lifetime in the making. Like many of the girls in my dissertation, little Taina spent so much time dreaming and envisioning how I could advocate for my communities. Along the way I traversed a lot of uncharted territory. I am grateful for all the ways younger versions of myself persisted despite all the barriers and all the people who did not believe in me. Graduate school was so much harder than I expected – and it was almost never the work – although learning R was hard lol. I am grateful to myself for continuously showing up authentically and staying true to my mission. There were so many times, I pushed beyond my capacity, and exceeded my own expectations. I am so blessed to have done this journey with such a beautiful village.

Abstract

To address gaps in psychological literature regarding Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical development, my dissertation integrates Black and Latina feminisms to explore how these girls navigate and resist systemic (gendered) racism. My dissertation is a collection of three studies that explored under-examined and culturally relevant forms of resistance, including Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender expansive youths' solidarity, political imagination, radical hope and community activism. I designed and implemented a multimethod project, the Hope Resilience and Action Study, where I collected cross-sectional survey data from 315 Black and Latina girls and gender-expansive youth in the Southeastern United States. Quantitative data captured their experiences of gendered racism, identity and socialization processes, and critical action. Additionally, I used plática methodology - a culturally relevant, Latina feminist approach to qualitative inquiry – to co-create theory with 25 Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth across the United States. Through informal conversations, youth discussed aspects of their identity, and socialization experiences, as well as their reflections and responses to the sociopolitical events of 2020.

In paper 1, I integrated borderlands and sociopolitical development theory to qualitatively explore Black, Latina, Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' reflections on intra and interracial solidarity during the heightened racial violence of 2020 across different contexts. I employed plática methodology to discuss the factors that promoted and hindered youths' solidarity processes in school based cultural affinity spaces, community organizations, and social media. Using a modified version of RADaR methodology, I found that community organizations were sites for political education that promoted interracial solidarity. School-based cultural affinity groups promoted intraracial solidarity for some girls as friends provided a sounding

board for making meaning of sociopolitical events; other girls felt disconnected from more privileged intraracial peers who perpetuated discrimination. Social media created a context for heightened BLM participation that was not necessarily intentional, causing skepticism about interracial allyship from Black girls. The absence of centralized organizing for immigrant rights hindered girls' and gender-expansive youths' solidarity for Black and Latinx migrants. These findings highlight the need for youth to have opportunities across different contexts for political education and reflexivity to strengthen and sustain their sociopolitical engagement. Considering misalignments between co-creators' critiques of allies and their own allyship, more research is needed that explores what effective allyship looks like in different contexts.

In paper 2, I expand sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003) by exploring the role of political imagination (Scott et al., 2023) and radical hope (Christens et al., 2018; Mosley et al., 2020) in supporting Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' commitment to social change. Using intersectional, reflexive thematic analysis, I found that Black and Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' whose visions for the future incorporated both political imagination and radical hope, more explicitly articulated their commitment to social change. On an individual level, co-creators described future plans to serve their community through their careers, philanthropy, and mutual aid. On a collective level, co-creators described the importance of interracial solidarity and intersectionality as tools for coalition building. Co-creators whose visions for the future did not incorporate radical hopes tended to focus exclusively on their reflections of discriminatory experiences, and anticipated workplace gendered-racism. I discuss specific ways that political imagination can be used to support youths' sociopolitical development and learning in contexts like their school. Further, I describe how policy makers

and activists can incorporate insights from these girls' and gender-expansive youths' political imaginings and radical hopes into their advocacy.

In paper 3, I integrate intersectionality and the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness development (Mathews et al., 2020) to explore how familial racial socialization informed the relationship between gendered racism and community activism among Black and Latina girls and gender-expansive youth. I found that girls who experienced stereotypes of being angry more often and received more familial racial socialization, engaged in more community activism; contrarily, girls who received less racial socialization engaged in less activism. Findings from this study emphasize the importance of intentional gendered-racial socialization that supports Black and Latina girls in understanding the systemic gendered-racism as well as engaging in risk assessments for their critical action. I also emphasize the need for proactively advocating for policy level changes that directly change gendered-racist policies that pose barriers to these girls' healthy development.

My dissertation documents, explores, and amplifies Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' navigation of gendered racism to 1) learn how they may already be resisting gendered-racism, 2) identify barriers to their resistance of gendered-racism, and 3) propose potential supports for navigating gendered racism. Findings from this work will be foundational to the development of interventions that support Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' radical healing from gendered racism, while simultaneously advocating for policy change that addresses the systemic causes of their marginalization.

Linking Document

Black and Latinx communities within the United States have fought to decolonize our minds, bodies, and spirits by drawing on cultural strengths and organizing within our communities to build towards a world liberated from white supremacist patriarchy (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 1990; Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015). Although Black and Latinx youth draw on this legacy to fuel their own resistance – at times it may feel like an uphill battle, as white, heteropatriarchal capitalism is deeply ingrained within our systems and impacts their health, well-being, and opportunities (Jean et al., 2023; Mathews et al., 2020; Neblett Jr., 2019; Rastogi et al., 2024). Critical consciousness theories provide insight into how Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx youth resist systemic inequities (Diemer et al., 2016; Freire, 1973). Specifically, these theories describe how youth develop an awareness of systemic inequities, as well as the tools, attitudes, and beliefs in their ability to take action aimed at dismantling systems of oppression (Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003) and the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness (Mathews et al., 2020) are two culturally-relevant expansions to Freirean conceptualizations of critical consciousness that describe how youths of colors' sociocultural histories and ethnic-racial identity processes inform their resistance to systemic racism. These theories illuminate sociocultural strengths (e.g., political imagination and radical hope), communal factors (e.g., opportunity structures, politicized collective identity) and interconnected processes (e.g., ethnic-racial identity, and socialization) that support Black and Latinx youths' critical consciousness development. However, even these important expansions tend to focus on singular forms of oppression, which limit scholarly understanding of how multiple systems interconnect to shape youths' proximity to privilege or

marginalization (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Hope et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2016). Consequently, there are theoretical gaps to understanding Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina adolescent *girls and gender expansive youth's* sociopolitical and critical consciousness development with regards to how they combat the discrimination at the intersection of their ethnic-racial and gender identities (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016; Hope et al., 2024; Quiles-Kwock & Bañales, under review).

Black and Latina feminists have theorized on the unique ways Black and Latina women and girls develop sociopolitical skills to understand and combat intersectional forms of oppression like gendered racism (Anzaldúa, 1987; Anzaldua, 2015; Azmitia & Mansfield, 2021; Baca Zinn & Zambrana, 2019; Collins, 1990; Collins & Bilge, 2020; Combahee River Collective, 1997; Kelley, 2002; Williams & Lewis, 2024). Therefore, integrating Black and Latina feminisms with sociopolitical development theory may support psychologists in better contextualizing girls' and gender-expansive youths' navigation of gendered racism as well as understanding how these processes may be gendered (Chavez-Dueñas & Adames, 2021; Crenshaw, 1994, 1994; Montoya, 2021; Montoya & Seminario, 2022; Williams & Lewis, 2024). Drawing on Black and Latina feminisms, I have conducted a collection of three studies, that expand and build upon the sociopolitical development theory to illuminate underexplored and culturally relevant factors inform Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' sociopolitical action.

Culturally Relevant Frameworks of Critical Consciousness - Sociopolitical Development and the Integrative Model of Ethnic-Racial Identity and Critical Consciousness

Original conceptualizations of critical consciousness derived from Paulo Freire's theorization on conscientizaçao (translated as consciousness raising) based on his observations from facilitating literacy courses to Brazilian farmworkers experiencing economic oppression in the 1970 (Diemer et al., 2016; Freire, 1973). He found that as farm workers learned more about

the systemic factors that informed their social, political, and economic realities, they were motivated to take action. He referred to the practice of taking action against systemic inequities rooted in their critical social awareness as praxis. Since then, critical consciousness theory has been applied in various fields like psychology, education, and sociology to explore how marginalized people learn to critically analyze and resist oppression individually and collectively (Diemer et al., 2016; Watts et al., 2011).

While critical consciousness is a flexible theory used to study diverse groups' resistance to oppression, there newer and more culturally relevant theories that have expanded our understanding of how youth of color resist racism in the United States (Hope et al., 2024; Mathews et al., 2020). Specifically, the sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003) and the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness (Mathews et al., 2020) contextualize youth of color's resistance to racism within the sociohistorical history of racial oppression and resistance, as well as the important identity processes that inform critical consciousness development. Sociopolitical development and critical consciousness are considered cousin or sibling theories (Hope et al., 2024). At their core, these theories have similar foundations, describing parallel processes for youths' praxis. For the sake of my dissertation, I use the terminology of sociopolitical development theory to discuss sociopolitical and critical consciousness theories broadly; I explicitly use critical consciousness related terminology when discussing the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness.

Sociopolitical development theories describe three core competencies for youth to resist systemic oppression: *critical social analysis* (also referred to as critical reflection; i.e., the ability to identify and critique the structural roots of social inequity), *sense of agency* (also referred to as

critical motivation or political efficacy; i.e., youths' sense of efficacy that they can personally or collectively implement social change), and *sociopolitical engagement* (also referred to as critical action; i.e., actions that challenge the sociopolitical status quo). These three components are viewed as interrelated processes that promote marginalized youths' adaptive coping and resistance to systemic inequities and inform their praxis (Diemer et al., 2016, 2021; Watts et al., 2011; see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Three Foundational Components of Sociopolitical Development and Critical Consciousness Theories

Building upon this foundation, my dissertation expands these culturally relevant theories of sociopolitical development to study Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' navigation of *gendered-racism.* Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender expansive youth have unique

experiences of identity, socialization, and discriminatory experiences that may contribute to distinct ways of knowing that inform their reflections and responses to intersectional forms of oppression (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 1990; Flores, 2018; Quiles-Kwock, Pinetta et al., under review; Stokes et al., 2020; Winchester et al., 2022). I explore sociocultural factors that inform when and how these girls and gender expansive youth take action. Below, I provide overviews of each theory, as well as considerations for studying Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girlhood.

Sociopolitical Development Theory

Sociopolitical development theory was originally conceptualized to describe how Black youth in the United States develop the skills, attitudes, and beliefs to take action against oppressive political and social systems (Hope et al., 2023; Watts et al., 2003; Watts & Halkovic, 2022). The theory underscored Black American youths' systemic vulnerability rooted in the socio-historical legacy of slavery, as well as the culturally rooted resistance strategies they have used to fight for civil rights. Scholars initially described a staged model, proposing that as Black youth learn more about systemic inequities, they are more likely to take action (Figure 2). This theory has since been applied to study other racially marginalized youths' navigation of systemic racism in the United States (Hope et al., 2023).

In addition to a staged model, sociopolitical development theory provides a process model that describes culturally rooted promotive factors, or mechanisms, informing youths' praxis - namely political imagination and opportunity structures (Figure 3; taken from Watts & Halkovic, 2022). Watts and colleagues argue that resistance requires a vision for what a more just world could be (Watts et al., 2003). Since then, scholars have expanded theorization on political imagination by describing it as an important tool that supports youths' (de)construction of their sociopolitical realities and creation of a roadmap for their future action (Scott et al.,

2023). Youths' enactments of their political imaginings may be informed by the community support available to them in opportunity structures – sites that engage youth in critical reflection and leadership development (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts & Halkovic, 2022). These spaces provide scaffolding for youths' sociopolitical development by connecting them with others as well as resources that can make their praxis more feasible.

Figure 2.

The Stage Model for Sociopolitical Development

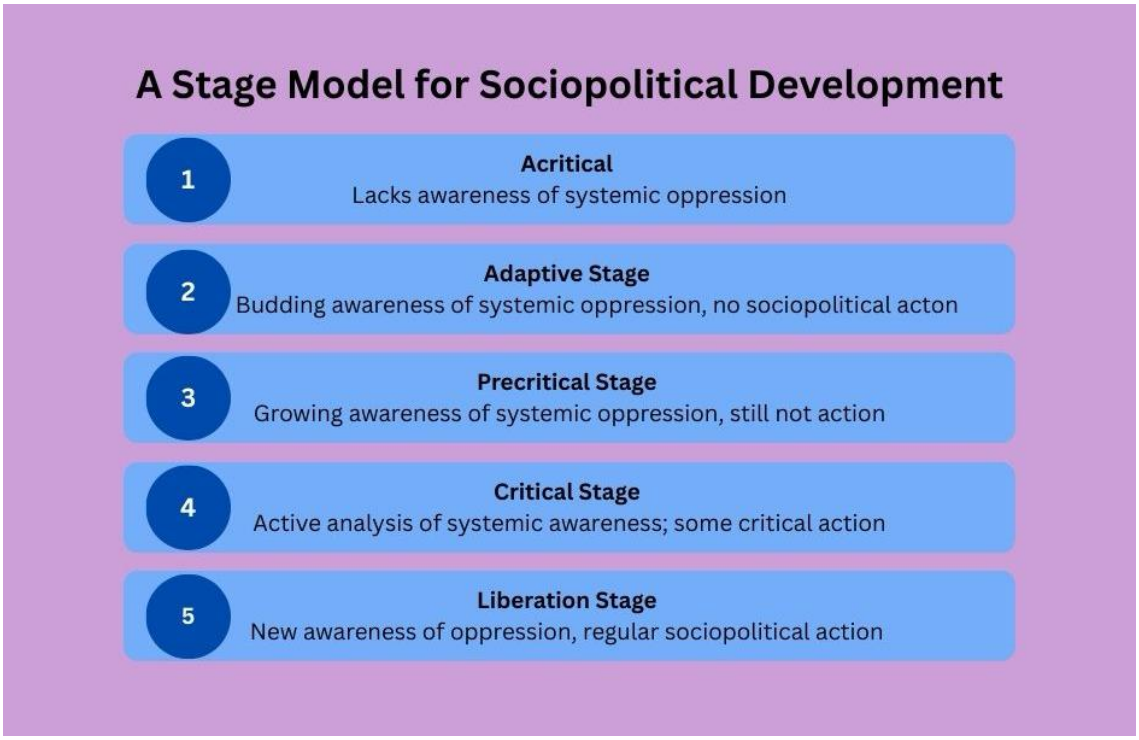
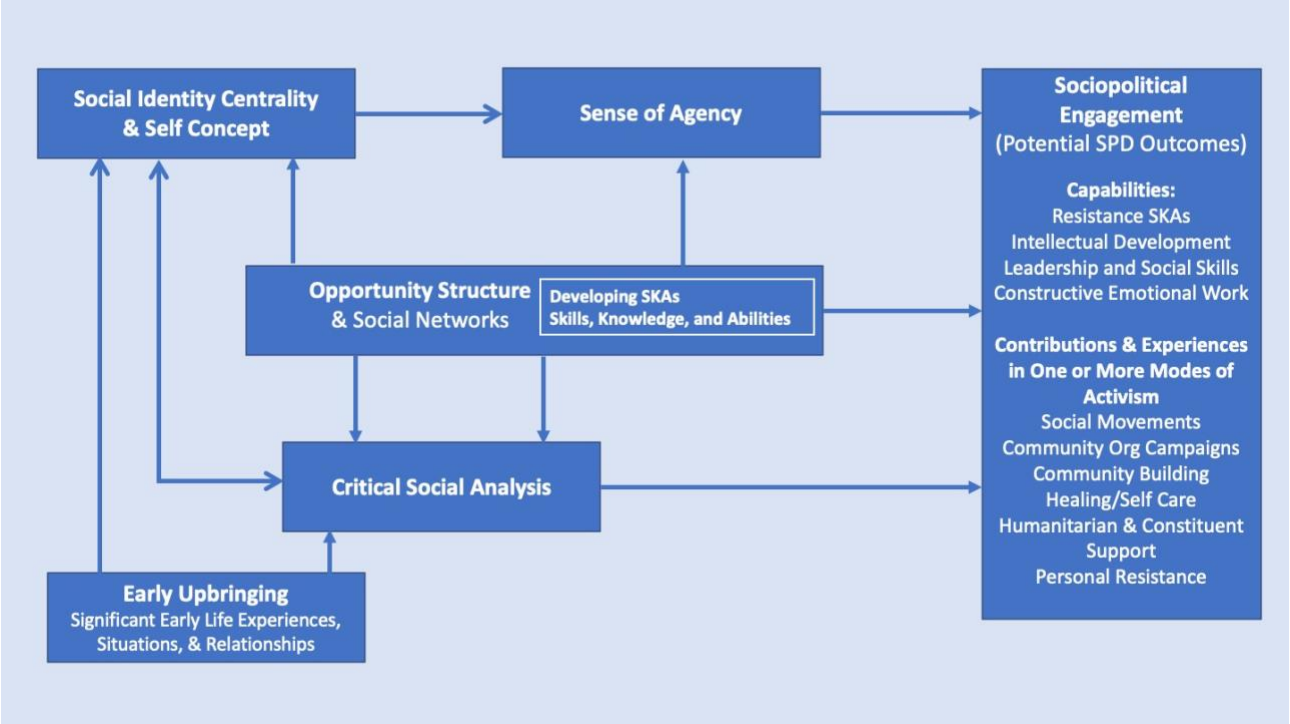


Figure 3.

Reciprocal and Concurrent Process Model of Sociopolitical Development



*From "Sociopolitical development and social identities" by R. J. Watts, A. Halkovic, 2022, Journal of Research on Adolescence, 34(4). Copyright © 2022 by John Wiley & Sons - Books. Reprinted with permission.

Since much of the sociopolitical development theory was developed exploring Black boys' experiences, there are still gaps in the literature pertaining to how these processes manifest for Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls (Hope et al., 2023; Watts & Halkovic, 2022). When exploring Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' resistance, it is important to consider the historical legacy of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women's resistance to gender-racial violence. From finding ways to preserve our culture during colonization, to making bold statements that caught national attention during civil rights movements in the 1960s, to creating innovative digital social movements to advocate against gendered racial violence today, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women and girls have been important leaders of social change (Chavez-Dueñas &

Adames, 2021; Crenshaw & African American Policy Forum, 2023; Vega, 2018; Williams & Lewis, 2024).

Although Black and Latina women activists have often gone unappreciated in larger racial justice movements, their unique sociopolitical skills like building community, providing communal care and mutual aid, and bridging activism across other marginalized communities have been instrumental to maintaining social movements and progress (Combahee River Collective, 1997; Flores, 2018; Kelley, 2002; Milkman & Terriquez, 2012; Neville & Hamer, 2001; Segura & Facio, 2008). Aligned with sociopolitical development theory, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' awareness of the role of *women* in their ethnic-racial communities as matriarchs, advocates, and change-makers is a core part of their identity that informs their sociopolitical action (Flores, 2018; Quiles-Kwock, Pinetta et al., under review; Salas Pujols, 2022). Youths' awareness of the sociohistorical role of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women is likely informed by gendered-racial identity and socialization processes. Although the sociopolitical development theory describes how youth draw on identity to inform their resistance to oppression (Watts et al., 2003; Hope et al. 2023), the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness (Mathew et al., 2020) provides more specificity on how identity and critical consciousness processes overlap.

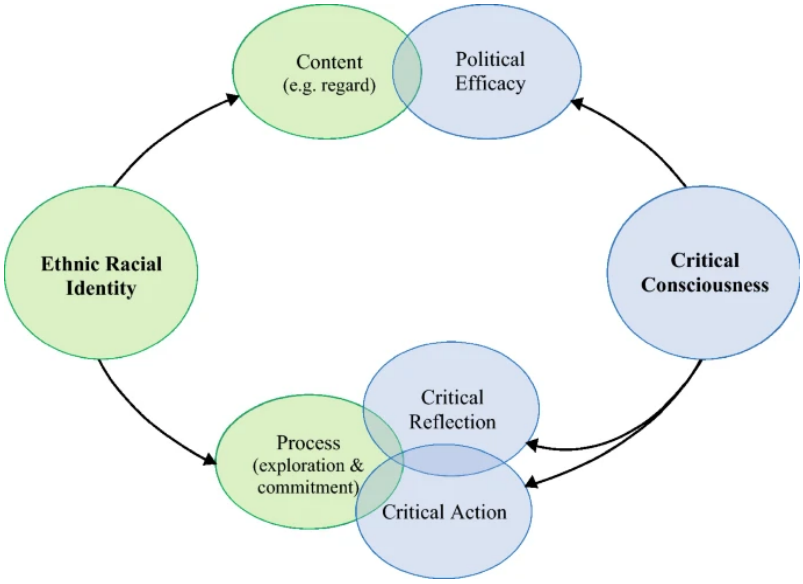
The Integrative Model of Ethnic Racial Identity and Critical Consciousness

The integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness development delineated the interconnectedness between ethnic-racial identity processes and consciousness raising (Mathews et al., 2020; see Figure 3). The relationships between critical consciousness and ethnic-racial identity processes were described in three core postulates. Postulate 1 described how ethnic-racially salient events can incite both ethnic-racial identity exploration as well as

critical reflection, highlighting a potential entry point for critical consciousness. Postulate 2 posited that youth with greater ethnic-racial identity resolution engage in more critical action, because they may draw from an awareness of their ethnic-racial community's sociohistorical legacy of oppression and resistance the United States. Lastly, postulate 3 outlined how youths' critical motivation may be informed by how they and others perceive their ethnic-racial group. Exploring the intersections of ethnic racial identity and critical consciousness development is necessary for helping youth make connections between their experiences of marginalization in order to promote a politicized collective identity with those in their ethnic-racial group. This theory serves as a helpful base for exploring how identity and critical consciousness are interconnected. However, because the theory focuses exclusively on ethnic-racial identity, there are limitations for understanding how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youth navigate *gendered-racial* socialization and discrimination experiences.

Figure 4.

The Integrative Model of Ethnic Racial Identity and Critical Consciousness taken from Mathews et al., 2020



From "Mapping the Intersections of Adolescents' Ethnic-Racial Identity and Critical Consciousness" by C. J. Mathews, M. A. Medina, J. Bañales, B. J. Pinetta, A. D. Marchand, A. C. Agi, S. M. Miller, A. J. Hoffman, M. A. Diemer & D. Rivas-Drake, 2020. *Adolescent Research Review. 5*, Copyright © 2019, Springer Nature Switzerland AG. Reprinted with permission.

Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender expansive youths' identities and experiences of marginalization cannot be disentangled into categories of race and gender, because their identities are deeply intertwined (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 1986, 1990; Quiles-Kwock, Pinetta et al., under review). Therefore, studies exploring ethnic-racial and gender identity processes separately miss important nuances about gendered-racial expectations and discrimination (Piña-Watson et al., 2014; Smith-Bynum et al., 2016; Stokes et al., 2020). Experiences of gendered-racism may be an entry point for critical social analysis and encourage these girls and gender-expansive youth to think about how systems intersect to inform their access to power and privilege (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). Girls and gender-expansive youth who have an intersectional awareness of systemic inequities may be more adept at making connections about their experiences of marginalization with other marginalized people (Conner et al., 2023; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). For instance, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls might recognize how similar stereotypes about their intelligence, appearance, sexuality, and academic potential relate to disparate rates of police violence, school punishment, and negative health outcomes for other girls of color (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Lopez, 2023). This higher order critical social analysis may promote their urgency to take action with intra and interracial peers. Still, more research is needed that explores the factors that moderate Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' intersectional awareness and their sociopolitical action.

Moving Towards Feminist Sociopolitical Development Research

As calls for more feminist approaches to sociopolitical development research are emerging within the field of psychology (Hope et al., 2023; Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015), much can be learned from Black and Latina feminist scholars who have illuminated the unique ways

Black and Latina women have resisted gendered-racism for decades (Anzaldúa, 1987, 2015; Collins et al., 1987; 1990; hooks, 2018; Lorde, 1981; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2021). Black and Latina feminists have developed analytic frameworks like intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2020) and borderlands theories (Anzaldúa, 1987) to contextualize the social conditions that shape Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' experiences and can enhance their activism. Intersectionality theory was coined by Kimberly Crenshaw (1994) who drew upon the work of Patricia Hill Collins (1986) to describe how multiple dimensions of identity and social systems intersect to inform a person or group's privilege or marginalization. For instance, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls all experience gendered-racism, but this may vary based on their skin tone, economic upbringing, immigration status, religion or other identities. Intersectionality also supports scholars and activists and critically analyzing how systems of power are organized to more clearly diagnose social problems, and intentionally target their sociopolitical action (Collins et al., 2021; Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991; Williams & Lewis, 2024).

Similarly, borderlands theory was developed by Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa to describe the complexities of navigating colonized lands, referred to as the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987). As an analytic tool, borderlands theory can be used to explore how marginalized people navigate racial hierarchies and tensions created by white supremacy as a product of colonization (Anzaldua, 2015; Anzaldúa, 1987; Ebner, 2023). While this framework has been applied to study the economic devaluation of Mexican American people at the USA/Mexico border (Ebner, 2023), it can also be used to explore how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina navigate segregated spaces and inequitable distribution of resources. For example, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' resistance in Chicago, New York City, or Los Angeles may look differently than resistance efforts in Lansing, Pittsburgh, Camden, or Denver, depending on the

histories of interracial conflict and collaboration as well as the their sense of competition for resources in their community (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Borderlands theory would call scholars to map out the important stakeholders in their community, their relationships to one another, and the competing resources causing tension so that a plan can be developed to enhance their collaborations.

Analytic frameworks such as intersectionality (Collins et al., 2021; Collins & Bilge, 2020) and borderlands (Anzaldua, 2015, 2015) call scholars to move beyond documenting these girls' experiences of marginalization, to amplifying their voices and proactively advocating for the eradication of the systems that contribute to their marginalization. Black and Latina feminist scholarship has emphasized how marginalized groups develop subversive knowledge, ways of knowing, and facultades (faculties and skills) to navigate systems of oppression, which are often hidden to scholars who are typically further removed from experiences of marginalization (Harding, 2004; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2021). Centering Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' stories of resistance, strengthens scholarly explorations of sociopolitical development by providing critical insights about how well theory reflects their current realities.

Summary of the Dissertation

Drawing on Black and Latina feminist epistemologies, my dissertation amplifies the experiences and subversive knowledge of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth by documenting their meaning-making of and resistance to gendered-racism. Each paper integrates intersectionality or borderlands theories as analytic frameworks by which to contextualize these girls' and gender-expansive youths' resistance. This collection of three studies expands sociopolitical development theories by illuminating sociocultural factors like political imagination, radical hope, and familial socialization as supports for girls' and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical action. Each paper also intentionally explores under-examined,

and gendered forms of sociopolitical action such as inter-and-intra racial solidarity, visioning a more just world, and community activism. Lastly, aligned with Black and Latina feminism, I conclude each paper by providing several recommendations for how scholars, educators, and can proactively advocate for these girls across different fields.

The Hope Resilience Action Study

Beginning in 2021, I conducted a multimethod project, the Hope Resilience and Action Study to explore the sociocultural factors that support Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical development. We collected survey data during August 2021, when youth in the United States were navigating the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, heightened racial violence, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, and a shift in sociopolitical power due to the change in the presidential administration. Survey data included 315 Black (n = 158) and Latina/Afro-Latina (n = 157) girls and gender-expansive youth (age 13-17) from the Southeastern United States. Quantitative data captured their experiences of gendered racism, identity and socialization processes, and critical action. Additionally, from January 2022 to June 2023, I used plática methodology - a culturally relevant, Chicana feminist approach to qualitative inquiry – to co-create theory with 25 Black (n = 8), Latina (n = 7), Afro-Latina (n =3) and Biracial (n =5) girls and gender-expansive youth between the ages of 15-21 (M = 18.2) across the United States (Fierros & Bernal, 2016). These pláticas included discussions of girls' self-definitions, socialization experiences, reflections on the heightened racial violence and activism during 2020 and their own critical action. Along the way, I have developed a beautiful collective of Black and Latina women scholars who have supported data collection, analysis, and dissemination of this research.

Paper 1: "We can build those bridges back up and do so in a loving and equitable way": Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' inter-and-intra racial solidarity across contexts

In Paper 1, I integrated borderlands and sociopolitical development theory to explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' reflections on the factors that promoted and hindered solidarity processes across different contexts. To date, there are significant gaps in the literature regarding how ethnic-racially marginalized groups engage in interracial solidarity and coalition building (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Craig & Richeson, 2016). In collaboration with a Black young woman scholar, I qualitatively explored the pláticas, using a modified version of RADaR (Watkins, 2017), and a hybrid inductive deductive coding approach.

Overall, co-creators described how community organizations, social media, and schools served as salient opportunity structures; their orientation towards interracial and intraracial solidarity varied between contexts. I found that community organizations were important sites for political education and reflexivity that promoted enacted interracial solidarity. Social media was also an important site for interracial solidarity specifically within the BLM movement. However, Black co-creators were skeptical of the heightened participation by interracial peers because of the lack of intentionality and longevity of their activism. While social media promoted Latina girls politicized collective identity via an embodied sense of solidarity, they often did not take action on behalf of Black Americans. Lastly, schools were important sites for intraracial solidarity. Co-creators named important tensions within these groups often relating to how more privileged members marginalized more systemically vulnerable members. These findings highlight the importance of providing youth with opportunities for political education and reflexivity across a variety of contexts to support intentional allyship. Further, more research

is needed to understand how ethnic-racially marginalized groups are defining and conceptualizing allyship from interracial peers.

Paper 2: "You Have to Envision it First": A Qualitative Exploration of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Girls' Political Imagination, Radical Hope, and Commitment to Social Change

In study 2, I expanded the sociopolitical development theory (Hope et al., 2023; Watts et al., 2003) by exploring the role of political imagination (Scott et al., 2023) and radical hope (Christens et al., 2018; Mosley et al., 2020) as culturally relevant sociocultural factors that promote their commitment to social change. Political imagination is a cognitive process where people consciously distance the present moment to engage, explore, examine, and (de)construct sociopolitical worlds or realities (Scott et al., 2023). Likewise, radical hope has been theorized as a cognitive process by which youth draw on the historical legacy of their ethnic-racial communities' resistance to sustain their own commitment to social change (Mosley et al., 2020). I proposed that political imagination and radical hope work in tandem to bridge the relationship between critical social analysis and sociopolitical engagement. Therefore, I qualitatively explored how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth incorporated political imagination and radical hopes into their visions for the future.

Drawing from the pláticas, I worked with a team of Black and Latina young women scholars to engage in intersectional qualitative research using reflexive thematic analysis. I found that Black and Latina girls and gender-expansive youth integrated their political imagination and radical hopes for a more just world in their visions for themselves via elaborate visions of how they can serve as agents of change in their communities through service-oriented careers. Additionally, Black girls, shared (radical) hopes for more radical self-acceptance; they described how gendered racism impacts Black girls' self-perceptions, demonstrating how their visions for

the future are rooted in critical social analysis. In regards to their hopes for activists, co-creators shared political imaginings and radical hopes for how community organizers could galvanize support via interracial solidarity and apply intersectionality to amplify the voices of the most marginalized in their ethnic-racial community. Lastly, co-creators reflected that their hopes for government investment in social justice reform, and reflected that while grass-roots advocacy is important, only policy change would secure long standing social change.

These findings highlight how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' visions for themselves and others incorporate political imagination and radical hope for social change that strengthen their commitment to social change. I recommend educators incorporate political imagination and culturally relevant history lessons of resistance into their class curricula to support Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' adaptive coping from gendered-racism. Additionally, policy makers and activists should actively seek the expertise of these girls and implement their visions for social change into their advocacy.

Paper 3: A quantitative investigation of Black and Latina adolescent girls' experiences of gendered racial microaggressions, familial racial socialization, and critical action

In study 3, I drew upon intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991) and the integrative model of ethnic racial identity and critical consciousness (Mathews et al., 2020) to expand the literature on Black and Latina girls' and gender-expansive youth's experiences of gendered racism, identity socialization, and critical action. As Black and Latina adolescent girls and gender-expansive youth experience gendered racism, they may turn to their families for guidance on how to respond to systemic injustice and oppression. Familial racial socialization is a likely entry point for critical action, linking ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness processes in youth development. Therefore, I sought to explore how familial racial socialization

might moderate the relationship between gendered racism and critical action in the form of community activism.

Drawing on the survey data, I conducted hierarchical linear regressions and found that familial racial socialization moderated the relationship between gendered racism and community activism (e.g., high-risk, and formal political activism). Simple slopes analysis revealed a significant slope for those who received more familial racial socialization messages. Specifically, amongst girls who received more familial racial socialization messages, those who were stereotyped as angry more often engaged in the most high-risk activism, while girls who received less familial racial socialization engaged in the least high-risk activism. These findings may have been particularly salient for Black girls who were stereotyped as angry more often than Latina and Afro-Latina girls in our sample.

With regards to parents and scholars, these findings highlight the pivotal role that Black and Latinx families play in supporting their children's adaptive coping from discrimination. As such, I stress the importance of intentional gendered racial socialization that prepares girls to navigate gendered racism throughout their lifetime. I also call for scholars and educators, to reflect on what it means to promote girls' critical action, knowing that community activism may pose varying levels of risk. Scholars, and educators must also be prepared to support these girls with resources to engage in critical action safely and be ready to serve as co-conspirators alongside them.

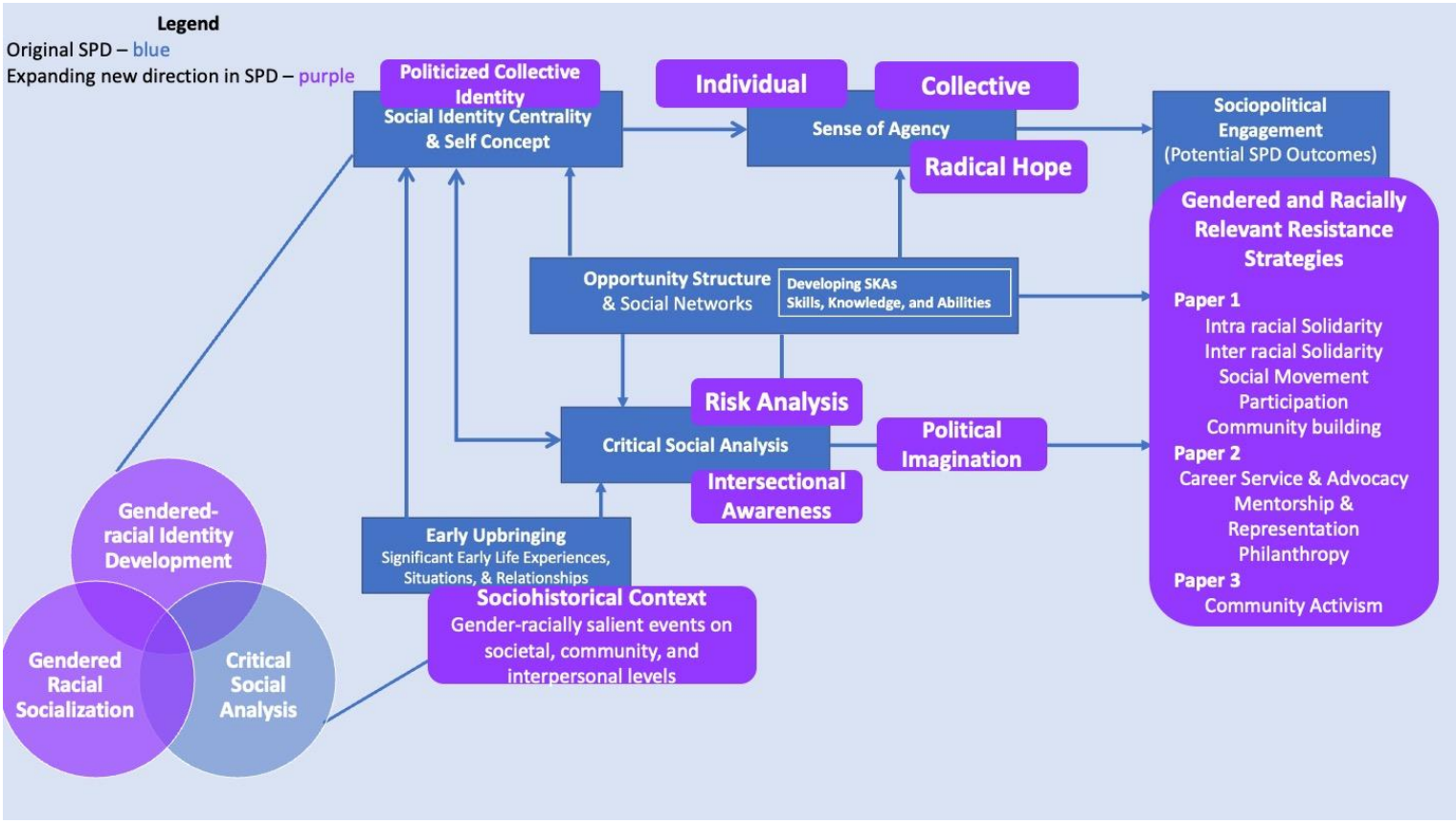
Contributions to Sociopolitical Development Literature

My dissertation illuminates how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youth develop an arsenal of resistance strategies like: inter-and-intra racial solidarity (Paper 1), radical hopefulness and political imagination, community building, pursuing service-

oriented careers (Paper 2) and community activism (Paper 3). I also identified important barriers to their resistance like inter-and-intra group mistrust in social movements (Paper 1); fears and concerns for their safety while engaging in higher risk activism (Paper 1 & 3) and lack of hopefulness (Paper 2). This work expands current theoretical understandings of sociopolitical development by elucidating new gender-racially salient moderatoring factors that promote these girls' sociopolitical action (see Figure 5; adapted from Watts & Halkovic, 2022). I provide implications for scholars, educators, families, grass-roots organizers and policy-makers.

Figure 5.

A Feminist Approach to Sociopolitical Development Theory – Contributions of the Dissertation



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Chapter 1

"We can build those bridges back up and do so in a loving and equitable way": Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' inter-and-intra racial solidarity across contexts

“I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.”

— Audre Lorde

Abstract

To combat the rise of fascism in the United States, inter-and-intra racial solidarity are important tools for coalition building and advocating for social change. This study integrated borderlands and sociopolitical development theory to explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' reflections on the factors that promoted and hindered solidarity processes across different contexts. I used plática methodology and intersectional qualitative methods to explore 25 Black, Latina, Afro-Latina girls and gender expansive youths' (15-21 years, M = 18.32), observations about and participation in intraracial and interracial solidarity at their schools, in community organizations, and on social media. Using a hybrid inductive deductive approach to coding, I found that community organizations were important sites for political education and reflexivity that promoted enacted interracial solidarity. Social media were complicated sites that encouraged politicized collective identity but not necessarily intentional action. Lastly, schools were important sites for intraracial solidarity. Co-creators also named important tensions within these groups often relating to how more privileged members marginalized more systemically vulnerable members. The implications of this study highlight the importance of providing youth with opportunities for political education and reflexivity across a variety of contexts to support intentional allyship. Further, more work is needed to understand how marginalized group would like to receive allyship from interracial peers.

Keywords: Black girls, Latina girls, Afro-Latina girls, interracial solidarity, intraracial solidarity, intergroup mistrust

"We can build those bridges back up and do so in a loving and equitable way": Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' inter-and-intra racial solidarity across contexts

While the racial reckoning of 2020 exposed undeniable truths about modern day racism and anti-Blackness in the United States, resistance efforts led by people of color, signaled a rejection of white supremacy and the hope that collective action would urge long-standing political change (Kelley, 2022; Martin et al., 2023). Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women and girls often emerged as key leaders, building community within and across ethnic-racial groups to raise awareness and galvanize support for racial justice (Brown, 2024; Chavez-Dueñas & Adames, 2021; Robnett, 1996). As scholars, activists, and community members interested in anti-racism consider how we work towards racial justice, supporting inter-and-intra racial solidarity within and between the Black and Latinx communities may be a key component to building collective power that promotes policy level change (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Therefore, more research is needed which examines the mechanisms that promote and hinder inter-and-intra racial solidarity within and between marginalized groups, to more effectively support and engage in anti-racists efforts (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Craig & Richeson, 2016).

Latina and Black feminists scholarship on anti-racism has discussed the importance of inter-and-intra racial solidarities as necessary power building tools that foster collective agency and sustain social movements (Anzaldúa, 1987; Combahee River Collective, 1997; Montoya, 2021; Montoya & Seminario, 2022). Borderlands theory was developed by Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa who theorized on the ways that Chicanas (Mexican American women) developed a political consciousness to resist and radically healed from the gendered-racial trauma of American imperialism (Anzaldúa, 1987). This political consciousness can manifest in a spiritual activism, which emphasizes the importance of interracial solidarity to promote social

justice (Anzaldúa, 1987; Anzaldua, 2015; Fernández et al., 2024). Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls may have drawn on and cultivated such inner wisdom to engage in spiritual activism during 2020, and make decisions about when and how they might work collectively with others. Considering gaps in the psychological literature regarding Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' political development, more research is needed which explores how their political consciousness contributes to their critical analysis and collective action against systemic inequities.

Sociopolitical development theory is another framework which provides insight regarding how and why youth of color may have engaged in anti-racist action and solidarity (Watt et al., 2003). Watts and colleagues posited that opportunity structures support marginalized youth to develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes that encourage and maintain their resistance to systemic oppression (Watts & Halkovic, 2022). Opportunity structures refer not only to the places that support youths' action, but also the people who work alongside them to facilitate opportunities for reflection, agency building, and action (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). During 2020 various social movements like Black Lives Matter may have served as opportunity structures that supported and inspired Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' anti-racism and solidarity. In this study, I use the racial reckoning of 2020 to explore solidarity processes amongst Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls. Specifically, I integrate borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) and sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003; Watts & Halkovic, 2022) to explore their reflection on the factors that promoted and hindered inter-and-intra racial solidarity within opportunity structures like their schools, community organizations, and social movements.

Theoretical Framing: Integrating Sociopolitical Development and Borderlands Theories

Within Borderlands theory, Anzaldúa described how white supremacy, colonization, and patriarchy have constructed racial hierarchies, resulting in intergroup conflicts, exploitation, and

mistrust in the United States. She refers to these colonized lands as borderlands – spaces where racially privileged and marginalized people share space and learn to navigate these racial tensions. To navigate the borderlands, women and girls of color engage in spiritual activism rooted in a relational approach to working with others towards social change. The road to spiritual activism is a transformative process, culminating in collaboratively working with others to negotiate conflict and address differences with interracial community members by finding common ground to form holistic alliances for decolonization (Fernández et al., 2024). While borderlands was conceptualized to understand how Mexican Americans and white allies worked in solidarity to navigate the annexation of Mexican lands, this framework can also been applied to explore how racially marginalized women leverage interracial solidarity to dismantle racial hierarchies across the United States (Perales, 2013).

Like borderlands, sociopolitical development theory emphasizes the importance of youth working collectively with others in opportunity structures to develop the skills, attitudes and beliefs needed to resist systems of oppression (Watts & Halkovic, 2022). Specifically, youths' access to meaningful and desirable opportunities for action in their community informs their critical social analysis, their perceived agency, and their sociopolitical engagement. It is possible that youth may draw on opportunity structures to build power through different forms of solidarity (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts & Halkovic, 2022). For instance, social movements like Black Lives Matter and other forms of collective action during 2020 promoted youths' inter-and-intra racial solidarity (Hope et al., 2016; Quiles-Kwock et al., 2024; Wilf et al., 2023). This study addresses gaps in the literature pertaining to the factors that promote and hinder Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' inter-and-intra racial allyship during 2020. I explore these

processes within schools, community organizations, and social movements during the heightened racial violence of 2020.

Navigating White Supremacy Together - Black and Latinx Solidarities During 2020

Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls across the U.S. have interconnected histories and experiences of racialization in borderlands of containment; in various cities in the U.S. Black and Brown youth are segregated to communities at risk of inequitable policing, surveillance, incarceration, inequitable educational opportunities, displacement and houselessness (Chavez-Dueñas & Adames, 2021; Magaña, 2022). As the racial reckoning of 2020 unfolded, racial tensions in the country felt incredibly tangible as resistance efforts against the heightened racial violence against Black and Latinx people were met by white supremacist actors fighting to maintain the racial hierarchy of the U.S. (Isom et al., 2022; Le-Khac et al., 2022). Recognizing similarities in their experiences of marginalization during this period may have promoted a politicized collective identity with one another both within and between their ethnic-racial communities, spurring them to engage in acts of solidarity (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Mathews et al., 2020; Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

Anzaldúa argued that interracial solidarity is imperative to achieving political change (Anzaldúa, 1987; Barvosa, 2011). Within psychological literature, interracial solidarity is considered more of a psychological state (what I refer to as an embodied sense of solidarity) than a process or action (what I refer to as enacted solidarity). However, borderlands described solidarity as a collaborative action. Specifically, Anzaldúa argued that creating a group identity, rooted in issue-based discourse, was the key to fostering interracial solidarity that led to action (Anzaldúa, 1987; Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Historically, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latinx communities have engaged in interracial solidarity to address issue-based

concerns within their communities. For instance, in the 1960's, the Black Panthers and Young Lords protested police brutality affecting Black and Puerto Ricans Chicago residents (Coffman, 2023), and in the 1970's Black organizations (e.g., SNCC, NAACP, and others) supported the United Farm Workers in demanding change for agricultural workers in California (Araiza, 2014). The ability to mobilize across ethnic-racial communities through interracial solidarity has facilitated critical social changes in the criminal, education, and labor systems in the United States. Following this legacy, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls may have also sought to engage in interracial solidarity to combat white supremacy in 2020 (Chavez-Dueñas & Adames, 2021; Hope et al., 2016; Malone et al., 2023; Walker, 2021). However, given the complexities of the racial reckoning in 2020, there may have also been barriers to their embodied or enacted solidarity.

White supremacists created racial hierarchies not only to elevate whiteness, but also to create tension between other racial groups (Chavez-Dueñas & Adames, 2021; Magaña, 2022). Racial tensions and conflicts between ethnic-racially marginalized communities can be a distraction to actively dismantling the racial hierarchies within the borderlands, as ethnic-racially marginalized people are often competing for resources hoarded by the more racially privileged in the U.S. (Barajas, 2019; Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Magaña, 2022). Historically, even issue-based coalitions – like first wave feminist movements – experienced race related conflicts (Crenshaw, 2010). For example, Combahee River Collective (1997) discussed how white women perpetuated misogynoir (i.e., prejudice against Black women) excluding them from their advocacy of women's rights. Within intraracial coalitions against anti-Blackness, Black women also found themselves neglected within civil rights by advocacy efforts that did not amplify their experiences of sexism and misogynoir (Combahee River Collective, 1997). Solidarity work can

also be complicated for Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx gender expansive people who find themselves pushed out of trans-exclusionary feminist and racial justice movements (Boe et al., 2024; Sostre et al., 2024).

To date, there are gaps in the literature pertaining to how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls are conceptualizing and engaging in inter-and-intra racial solidarity. These girls' and gender-expansive youths' perceptions of solidarity may also be dependent upon the context of the opportunity structures they engage in (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Craig & Richeson, 2016). Specifically, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls may face different types of barriers to their participation in solidarity depending on where and with whom they are taking action. Therefore, I explore how these girls and gender-expansive youth are discussing solidarity within different opportunity structures to better understand the factors that promote and hinder their allyship with other Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx people.

Opportunity Structures as Contexts for Solidarity Building

Across social science fields, scholars have emphasized how youths' sociopolitical development is heavily influenced by contextual factors such as access to opportunities to take action in their community (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Opportunity structures are important spaces for youth to foster critical social analysis and action alongside their peers. Traditionally research on opportunities structures in adolescence have focused on structures that support youth adult partnerships like schools and after-school programming (Hope et al., 2023). Community organizations and places of worship may also serve as important structures for youth to engage with diverse peers and adults (Fernández et al., 2024; Malone et al., 2023). Further, researchers have worked in solidarity with youth to create youth-led spaces that serve as important opportunity structures through participatory action research (Cammarota & Ginwright, 2008;

Goessling, 2020; Kornbluh et al., 2015; Malorni et al., 2022). Youth also create, lead, and maintain opportunity structures that facilitate consciousness raising within their communities by establishing youth-led organizations or leading social movements (Fernández et al., 2024; Hope et al., 2016; Keller, 2012). Altogether, opportunity structures provide important contexts for youths' political education, reflexivity, and collaboration that might inform how they think about and take action with ethnic-racially diverse peers. While it is clear peers play an important role in youths' critical action, there is little exploration of how gender might inform Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' orientation towards interracial solidarity, or how they enact solidarity.

Given the historical legacy of Black and Latina feminists collaboration for gender-racial equity, it is important to explore how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth today create, engage, or seek interracial solidarity spaces. Research has documented how Black and Latina girls create opportunity structures like homeplaces or sanctuary spaces - (i.e., physical and metaphorical spaces of support and resistance) in community with peers who share similar ethnic-racial and gendered identities to support their navigating of (gendered)racial discrimination and trauma (García, 2017; Inniss-Thompson et al., 2022). It is also possible that these youth are creating similar spaces for solidarity between Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx girls/youth, especially when they are navigating oppressive spaces together. As such, this study explores both intraracial and interracial solidarity amongst Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls in different contexts, namely: schools, community organizations, and social media. I summarize the research on how solidarity may manifest within different opportunity structures below.

Opportunity Structures Promoting Intraracial Solidarity

Cultural affinity spaces like Black Student Unions or Latinx Student Alliances can be invaluable spaces for supporting Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' critical social analysis and sociopolitical action. A qualitative study of Black college women's sociopolitical development, highlighted the importance of their sisterhood and solidarity in both formalized opportunity structures (e.g., clubs, organizations, and Greek life) as well as informal friendship groups that promoted sociopolitical engagement (Leath, et al., 2022). For 40% of women in this study, collective organizing with others in Black student-led organizations provided opportunities to make a difference at their school. For a majority of the young women, intraracial support, especially friendships with Black women, helped sustain them at predominantly white institutions as they provided affirmations of their value within the institution and stood up for them when they experienced interpersonal discrimination (Leath, et al., 2022).

Similarly, critical conversation spaces (also known as critical inquiry groups) in high schools have been important contexts for Black girls to develop their sense of agency as changemakers within and outside of their schools. In response to a school's request to create a space for consciousness raising spaces, Kubi (et al., 2025) developed Circle of Sisters – a space for Black girls to critically reflect on their experiences. Aligned with the Combahee River Collective (1997), girls discussed the importance of having spaces that centered Black girls' liberation, because they are often pushed to the margins or ignored within larger racial justice movements. The intraracial solidarity exhibited in Circle of Sisters was an important foundation to creating a safe space for girls to critically reflect on systemic gendered-racism. The care they received and extended to other Black girls allowed them to acknowledge and celebrate the assets they brought to the group, strengthening their sense of agency in their skills and abilities.

Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls may also seek or create community organizations where they can work with same ethnic-racial peers where they could grow and learn together. In another study, critical inquiry groups as a part of the Orgullosas y Poderosas intervention developed by Pinetta et al., (2025) were facilitated in collaboration with a community organization, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality. The group consisted of 14 Latina/Afro-Latina girls from across the U.S. who gathered to discuss topics related to identity and sociopolitical development. Girls educated and encouraged one another to deeply reflect and act on the root of social issues affecting their communities, thereby fostering both critical social analysis and agency. Although there was no formalized femtoring (feminist mentoring from other women/girls) structure, younger youth tended to seek the wisdom of older girls about how they could social justice. Latinas bonded over a shared sense of responsibility to advocate for their communities and shared visions for what a more just world could look like as well cultural strengths they embodied that sustained their action. Like Circle of Sisters, this critical inquiry group leveraged intraracial solidarity as a foundation for further sociopolitical development.

Intraracial community organizations leverage shared cultural assets to tailor their sociopolitical action in ways that are responsive to that ethnic-racial community. For instance, one undocumented Latinx youth-led organization used multiple modalities to serve as grassroots educators to facilitate consciousness raising amongst other Latinx migrants living in Philadelphia (Rusoja et al., 2023). By creating comics, essays, digital art, and community workshops, youth were able to create an inclusive and intergenerational space where they could organize with diverse Latinx immigrants to challenge colonial logics that caused intraracial tensions. Here intraracial solidarity was leveraged by creating culturally and linguistically specific tools to enhance their communities' learning.

Barriers to Intraracial Solidarity. While generally culturally affinity spaces within school and community organizations promote intraracial solidarity, youth may still experience barriers to connections as they meet diverse peers with different social locations, experiences, and critical consciousness. One study highlighted the complexities of Afro-Latinx young women's intraracial solidarity within the BLM movement as they made-meaning of their relationship to their Blackness, and their Latinidad (Hordge-Freeman & Loblack, 2021). Generally, participants expressed solidarity with the movement due to a sense of linked-fate and diasporic consciousness with Black Americans. Most participants directly identified as Black and emphasized the shared history of colonization between Black and Afro-Latinx people, despite geographic differences. Others aligned with the movement because they recognized how others perceived and racialized them to be Black; this included a recognition about how police brutality also directly affected Afro-Latinx people. Overall, youth described how supporting BLM positively impacted them and allowed them to show solidarity in ways that defied conceptualizations of race in the U.S. focused on binaries and boxes. Of the sample, only one Afro-Latinx participant did not acknowledge their Blackness. Afro-Latinx youths' sense of belonging or solidarity within broader racial justice social movements is complicated because they may experience misalignments between their ethnic-racial identity and socialization experiences that shapes their politicized collective identity with other Black and Latinx people.

Another study about Black college students found four types of intraracial tensions at a predominantly white university: (a) sensing academic competition, (b) experiencing intra-cultural betrayal around intersectional identities, (c) navigating social isolation and cliques, and (d) feeling pressure to perform Blackness in a particular way (Leath, et al., 2022). Black students in this study named various ways that intraracial support helped carry them through their

experiences at the predominantly white university they attended. However, Black women discussed how Black men's ill-treatment of them on campus posed a barrier to their sense of racial solidarity. Further, African origin students occasionally felt as though their cultures were not represented within Black student programming on campus, and other Black students felt pressure to conform to specific cultural ways of being. These studies highlight that even within intraracial solidarity spaces, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina youth must still navigate tensions, and make meaning of their comfortability and role within these contexts.

Opportunity Structures Promoting Interracial Solidarity

Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina youth may also engage in interracial solidarity to combat shared experiences of marginalization within their schools, neighborhoods, and social movements. While research has documented Black and Latinx youths' effective anti-racist coalition building, this research often decentralizes gender-based experiences and differences. Within the educational context, Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx youth and their parents form micro-coalitions to combat school-based discrimination (Martinez, 2017; Sampson et al., 2023). For instance, one qualitative study exploring Black, Latinx, and Asian college students' experiences in interracial ethnic student organizations found these opportunity structures to be important for their social, spiritual, and academic opportunities for connection and support (Madsen et al., 2023). The conditions of a predominantly white institution encouraged emerging adults of color to engage in interracial celebrations of their cultures. Further, shared cultural values and perceptions of relational conditions forged strong friendships amongst interracial peers. These friendships often translated to enacted solidarity as interracial peers stood up for each-other when others experienced discrimination (Madsen et al., 2023).

Newer research demonstrates how youth also actively lead and create opportunity structures that support collective sociopolitical action through solidarity building. For example, one study highlighted how seven international youth-led organizations fostered well-being through healing-oriented values that promoted youths' activism and solidarity (Fernández et al., 2024). They identified three core themes: collective care, spiritual activism, and freedom dreaming. Aligned with the Combahee River Collective (1997), youth prioritized collective care by creating a welcoming and affirming space that encouraged their peers' learning and growth as activists. Drawing on borderlands theory, Fernández described how these organizations encouraged spiritual activism by taking action with diverse peers (Anzaldúa, 1987). Youth also engaged in freedom dreaming together - the act of radically imagining what a more just world could look like rooted in Black Radical Traditions (Kelley, 2002). The reciprocity of leading and supporting sociopolitical action inspired by collective freedom dreaming strengthened their commitment to the group. Youth learned important sociopolitical skills they may not have developed on their own as they worked with racially diverse peers.

Studies focused on Black and Latinx youth organizers' interracial solidarity emphasized the importance of political education in fostering politicized collective identity. In one study exploring six BIPOC youth-led organizations, scholars found that conversations related to intersectionality, positionality, and anti-Blackness strengthened members' ability to work together and sense of closeness to one another (Malone et al., 2023). By engaging in communal critical social analysis and positionality, youth identified connections between shared experiences of marginalization and focused on white supremacy and colonialism as the root causes of their discrimination. Conversations about positionality allowed youth to engage more deeply in campaign efforts with others. Having a safe space to learn and take action with others

provided an opportunity to allow members to step up, defend, take action with, and hold space for each other, which sustained their collective healing and liberation (Malone et al., 2023).

Social movements, like BLM, may have also supported Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx youth in drawing connections between their communities' experiences of marginalization, and engaging in interracial solidarity (Quiles-Kwock et al., 2024; Wilf et al., 2023). For instance, one quantitative study highlighted Black and Latinx youths' interracial solidarity for Black Lives Matter (BLM) or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA; Hope et al., 2016). Amongst a sample of 533 Black and Latino college students, most Black and Latinx youth reported more involvement in BLM than DACA related advocacy. Latinx youths' participation in social movements was related to their experiences of discrimination, and perceived agency. Black youths' engagement in previous activism predicted their involvement in BLM, while their immigration status predicted DACA involvement. Scholars argued that differences in youths' BLM participation compared to their DACA advocacy may relate to their critical social awareness of police brutality versus immigrant's rights violations (Hope et al., 2016). However even when engaged in opportunity structures with interracial peers, some youth may not embody or enact interracial solidarity.

Barriers to Interracial Solidarity. While opportunity structures that promote political education strengthen interracial solidarity, tensions may arise that prevent a politicized collective identity, or evoke a feeling of competition between multiple issues of advocacy (Ramirez, 2022). For some youth of color, their ethnic-racial identity centrality may promote a stronger urge to advocate for their ethnic-racial community, especially if they feel that their experiences of discrimination are unique from other groups (Craig & Richeson, 2016). Further, some youth advocates may feel as though engagement in interracial solidarity detracts from their advocating

against issues that personally affects them (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls may also have concerns about engaging in racial justice movements that decentralize their unique experiences of gendered-racism.

Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth may also feel unique tensions in interracial opportunity structures as their gender-based experiences may be decentralized from advocacy efforts. One study identified women's orientation towards gendered racial issues within a sample of predominantly Latinx and African immigrant origin young adults' BLM movement advocates (Quiles-Kwock et al., 2024). Using intersectional and reflexive thematic analysis, the study found that immigrant origin youth of color develop a unique intersectional awareness of systemic racism that informed politicized collective identity with Black Americans experiencing heightened racial violence in 2020. African and Latina origin young women were more likely to share posts which identified and called out gendered-racism especially as it affected Black women; comparatively, young men in the sample did not post in ways that highlighted women's experiences of police brutality or ICE detainment. These gender differences signal that Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth may be processing and responding to discrimination differently when engaging within opportunity structures.

The Current Study

This study integrates borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) and sociopolitical development (Watts et al., 2003; Watts & Flanagan, 2007) theories to explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' reflections on the factors that promote and hinder inter-and-intra racial solidarity processes across different contexts. Specifically, I explore these girls' reflections on the inter-and-intra racial solidarity they engaged in and observed in response to the heightened racial violence

towards Black, Latinx and Afro-Latinx communities during 2020. This study is guided by the following questions:

1. What were the opportunity structures that supported Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' critical action during the heightened racial violence of 2020?
2. What are girls' reflections on the factors that promoted and hindered solidarity processes across the different opportunity structures they engaged in during 2020?

Methodology

This paper draws from the larger Hope Resilience Action (HRA) study, a multimethod project that explores Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender expansive youths' sociopolitical development. The HRA study included cross-sectional survey data and plática-style interview data to explore the sociocultural factors that inform youths' resistance to systemic gendered racism. This study draws from the pláticas to examine co-creators' critical analysis of the factors that promoted and hindered inter-and-intra racial solidarity within opportunity structures (e.g., school-based affinity groups, community organizations, and social movements) in response to the heightened racial violence of 2021.

Sample

The overall sample included 25 Black (n = 8), Latina (n = 5), Afro-Latina (n = 3), and Biracial youth (n = 9) between the ages of 15-21 (M = 18.32) from across the United States. The majority of co-creators identified as girls, and four co-creators identified as gender expansive (i.e., femme, gender queer, gender fluid, or unsure). Gender expansive refers to a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). I sought to honor the fluid and complex nature of gender identity by inviting gender-expansive youth to participate if they felt their gender

identity or expression included experiences of femininity, girlhood, or experiences of cis-patriarchal oppression. For the sake of parsimony in the paper, I use the term girls or co-creators to refer to the overall sample composition. I note gender differences explicitly when appropriate. See Table 1 for additional participant demographics.

Recruitment

I recruited Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender expansive youth in several ways. Based on IRB requirements, we could not recruit adolescents directly, so we solicited support from youth serving organizations (e.g., Creciendo Juntos and Birth Sisters of Charlottesville) and parent groups through the data collection teams' personal and professional networks and through social media. Initial social media campaigns began through our personal accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We sent out electronic flyers with detailed information about the study, and a link to the informed consent and demographic survey. After interested participants and guardians provided informed consent, they received a link to Calendly (online calendar scheduling app), where they could schedule an interview with a member of the research team. We successfully recruited and completed three plática-style interviews this way. However, this strategy had limited success because many non-profits were already working hard on maintaining services in the community during the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic and had less capacity to circulate the flyer. Additionally, we faced several recruitment concerns after circulating our flyer on Twitter, which attracted an international audience, and resulted in a series of fake participants and sign ups. After we received several fraudulent sign ups with international geolocations and duplicate email addresses, we shut down the original survey and began a new survey exclusively recruiting through an Instagram account.

At this point, I significantly changed the recruitment strategy, and developed the @hoperesilienceaction Instagram page. I broadened the age range of the study, and reached out

to affinity groups (e.g., Black Student Alliance, Latin American Identities Coalition), college campus organizations (YouthNex), parenting groups (e.g., #parentingwhileBlack) with information about the study and asked them to circulate it to their communities. I also sent out targeted reels to share our study. We controlled our intended audience by using filters by race, age, and/or gender. Finally, some co-creators referred their friends, which is referred to as snowball sampling. All study procedures were approved by the University of Virginia (Study #4192).

Plática Methodology

As a feminist scholar, I recognize the deep connection between methodology (i.e., how we frame, theorize, and collect our data) and epistemology (i.e., how scholars build a "system of knowing" based on their world views; Fierros & Bernal, 2016). Scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Emma Pérez (1999), and Chela Sandoval (2000) argue that new knowledge is uncovered by looking in liminal spaces and interstitial gaps, borders, and intersections (Fierros & Bernal, 2016). Chinan@/Latina feminist scholars encourage scholars to leverage our cultural intuition to ground our methodologies in decolonial and feminist thoughts so we can create tools that extend from our ways of knowing, and allow us to come to research as our full selves (Calderon et al., 2012; Fierros & Bernal, 2016).

I used plática methodology, "a collaborative process that involved sharing stories, building community, and acknowledging multiple realities and vulnerabilities" (Burciaga & Tavares 2006, p. 805). Plática methodology was developed by Chican@/Latina feminist scholars to engage co-creators in ways that promote connection by bridging the personal and academic (Fierros & Bernal, 2016). Chicana scholars recognized that traditional methods of qualitative inquiry would not work with Hispanic/Latinx populations due to the lack of reciprocity and mutual sharing in structured, or semi-structured interviews. Instead, pláticas are a more culturally

appropriate method that allows scholars to integrate more cultural customs and greetings (Valle et al., 1978). Through informal conversations, scholars and community members can co-create theory within and amongst communities. For this reason, I refer to the girls, young women, and gender expansive youth as co-creators throughout the study.

Pláticas were conducted individually, and began with "la entrada" (the entrance) where co-creators establish a connection with the research team member. This study began with a short introduction where the research team created a short power-point that included a photo of themselves at about age 16 and shared what our understanding of critical action was at that age, as well as how it has changed over time. We also shared the origins of the research project, and defined key terms we would use so we were all on the same page in terms of language. The process continues with "amistad," (friendship) which focuses on developing conversational play before entering into discussion. In our pláticas, this often occurred even before the entrada, when we asked girls and gender expansive youth about how their day was going. During our pláticas, we also engaged in amistad by speaking informally, code switching, and/or occasionally speaking in Spanish or Spanglish. Throughout the interviews, we also shared how our experiences were similar or different to theirs, and demonstrated empathy as they shared their stories. Lastly, "la despedida" (the farewell) concluded with a show of appreciation to both parties. This often occurred naturally at the end of our pláticas. The research team thanked girls for sharing their stories, wisdoms, and knowledge. Often, the girls shared immense gratitude for either including them or for exploring a research topic that they also felt was important.

Interview Protocols

After consenting, girls and gender expansive youth were matched with a research team member who shared their ethnic or racial identity. Raven, Channing, and Saidi interviewed Black girls and gender expansive youth, as well as Afro-Latina girls who identified as Black. I

interviewed all Latina girls and gender expansive youth as well as Afro-Latina girls who did not identify as Black in their initial demographic survey. Before our plática, interviewers emailed a "co-creators guide" to each co-creator which included a list of key terms, their definitions, and key study questions we hoped to discuss. Co-creators were encouraged to review the guide before our plática. To open the plática, we asked co-creators if they had looked at the co-creator guide prior to the interview. If they had reviewed the guide, we asked them where they wanted to start. If co-creators hadn't reviewed the guide, or seemed reserved, we would open the interview with an informal question like "how would you describe yourself in three words?"

Most girls were asked about their reflections on the racial violence during 2020 as well the corresponding activism. Since we used plática methodology, the questions may have been posed differently or at different times within the interview. Generally, towards the middle of the interviews, we discussed what they remember regarding police brutality or ICE raids/detention centers or other forms of violence toward Black and Latinx people during 2020. During most pláticas we also talked about their reflections on how others engaged in sociopolitical action (almost all girls focused on BLM). Girls highlighted the opportunity structures that felt most salient to them; sometimes, researchers did probe for additional contexts, like social media. Many co-creators also discussed their own sociopolitical action. Some of these co-creators initially responded that they had not engaged sociopolitical action during 2020, but later disclosed intraracial community building efforts at another point within the plática. See Appendix A for plática team protocol & Appendix B for co-creator guide.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important opportunity for researchers to think about and disclose how their identities and lived experiences relate to their personal investment in the research questions,

methodological approach, and dissemination strategies (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). I am a second-generation Latina, lesbian, woman scholar who grew up in New York City. The racial socialization I received from my father heavily shaped my awareness of racism as a systemically rooted form of inequality. We discussed racial trauma and violence stemming from colonization and how it impacted our people today. Most importantly we talked about the activism in response. As a child, I was in full admiration of Young Lords like Lolita Lebron who took courageous and at times selfless action to raise awareness about the United States's colonization of Puerto Rico and its lasting impact on its people both on and off the island. Learning about the solidarity between the Young Lords and the Black Panthers was particularly inspiring to me. I loved seeing how the Black Panthers and Young Lords were able to sustain our communities in ways the government had not through mutual aid, while also demanding policy level change together. This powerful interracial solidarity fostered my sense of politicized collective identity with Black Americans, because I could see the interconnections of our different histories as well as the legacy of resistance our ancestors had left us to take up. I remain hopeful in the impact we can have when we work together to address injustices in our communities.

In line with this intention, I have sought to participate in feminist and liberatory research to help amplify the voices of the Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx communities, by highlighting our cultural strengths and documenting our resistance to racism/gendered racism. My research has explored Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' critical consciousness development with a specific focus on the role of identity, hope, and community to foster resistance against oppression. My work integrates Black and Latina feminisms into psychological theories of resistance. For instance, in this study, I draw on plática methodology to practice relational and connection focused research as opposed to traditional forms of hierarchical and structured

research, through plática methodology. Aligned with Black feminist principles, I believe we must expand our conceptualizations of who qualifies as a scholar, and therefore, refer to our "participants" as co-creators of knowledge. However, I recognize that mine is just one out of many experiences, which leaves me with blind spots about others' knowledge, culture, and ways of knowing.

To broaden my own perspective, I developed a team of Black and Latina women scholars to support the recruitment, collection, and analysis of the data. Our collective ways of knowing and lived experiences provided a critical and unique knowledge base beyond our level of academic expertise, shaped the way we asked questions, and engaged with our co-creators during the interview process. Being able to share our experiences as women from the same communities allowed for a level of mutual vulnerability which contributed to deeper and richer conversations. All scholars on the team are invested in studying psychological processes related to resistance through cultural strengths, for example, fostering racial ethnic identity, critical consciousness, and mental health. Our research is part of our scholarly activism aimed at promoting radical healing in our communities. See Table 2 for research team reflexivity.

Data Analysis

This study used a hybrid, inductive deductive approach to analyze the data. For more exploratory aspects of the research question related to the factors that promoted or hindered interracial solidarity, we engaged in inductive coding, a data driven approach that allows scholars to develop theories by learning from participants' narratives (Braun & Clark, 2006; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021). Deductive coding was used to identify when co-creators engaged in critical social analysis and politicized collective identity, two processes documented in the literature (Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 200; Watts et al., 2003).

Alongside an undergraduate research assistant, I implemented a modified version of the Rigorous and Accelerated Data Reduction (RADaR) as a team-based coding technique (Watkins, 2017). Traditionally, RADaR includes four phases to systematically identify relevant excerpts and support organizing, reducing, and analyzing qualitative data in excel, which are conducted in a staged approach over several meetings. Since my research assistant, Sophia, and I had great familiarity with the dataset, I conducted all four stages continuously for each transcript in Dedoose. After uploading formatted transcripts into Dedoose, Sophia and I engaged in Phase 1 and 2: data reduction and familiarization. Together, we read each transcript, line by line, and identified excerpts that addressed our core research questions. Excerpts were eliminated based on: (1) how sufficiently the excerpts remaining in transcript would help address the overarching research question and (2) how ready we felt to decide on which chunks of data and subsequent notes should be included in the final project. If we were unsure about a specific excerpt, we would flag it, and return to the excerpt after having reviewed the full transcript.

During Phase 3, Sophia and I coded the transcripts. Having developed a codebook with deductive codes prior to analysis, we began by applying those codes. We also iteratively added new inductive codes as we progressed through the pláticas. The codebook was finalized around half way through coding the plática transcripts based on saturation. Our final codebook can be found in Table 3. We applied codes based on consensus, and used deliberation as a tool where necessary to resolve disagreements. During the final phase, we developed within-person themes by drafting memos for each co-creator. Specifically, after coding for each participant, we sat and wrote a few sentences summarizing how each co-creator's experiences contributed to our understanding of each research question. We also noted within person themes, and tensions. As a diversion from traditional RADaR, we drafted all within person themes on the same google

document so we could discuss emergent themes as we coded. Once all four phases had been completed for all co-creators, we explored differences between co-creators, which supported data triangulation (Watkins, 2013). We engaged in digital thematic mapping using Lucid Charts, an online program. Within-person themes were first divided by research questions and then reviewed to group similar responses between co-creators. Through splitting and lumping (Saldana, 2016, p. 229) themes, we can identify higher order themes. The final themes are reported below. See Figure 1 for thematic map.

Results

This study drew upon the sociopolitical development theory (Watts & Halkovic, 2022) and borderlands theory (Anzaldúa, 1987) to explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' reflections on the factors that promoted and hindered inter-and-intra racial solidarities within various opportunity structures during the heightened racial violence of 2020. With regards to the factors that promoted solidarity, we identified two major themes: 1) Co-creators discussed social media and community organizations as sites that supported interracial solidarity and 2) Co-creators discussed school-based affinity groups and friendships as important contexts for intraracial solidarity. In terms of the barriers within opportunity structures that hindered solidarity, we identified four overarching themes: 1) Concerns for performativity and lack of sustained BLM activism on social media; 2) Interpersonal discrimination and competition between the Black and Latinx communities within schools and social movements; 3) Lack of a centralized organizing as barriers to advocacy against xenophobia; 4) Intraracial tensions as barriers to interracial social movements & affinity spaces.

Promotive Opportunity Structures for Coalition Building

Sites for Interracial Coalition Building - Social Media and Community Organizations

In response to the heightened racial violence against the Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx communities in the United States during 2020, many co-creators discussed how participation in social media and community organization fostered interracial solidarity. Most of the discussions of interracial solidarity focused on allyship related to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Social media created a space where Latina girls' solidarity manifested in the embodiment of solidarity through empathy for Black Americans. Some Black girls drew strength from seeing how others showed up for BLM and viewed the social movement as a sign of hope and support. Co-creators participating in anti-racist community organizations were more likely to engage in solidarity, like protesting, raising awareness, or other forms of advocacy to change the systems maintaining anti-Blackness.

Social Media and Politicized Collective Identity

During 2020, many co-creators turned to social media to stay informed about sociopolitical events unfolding, learn about resistance efforts like Black Lives Matter and Latinx activism, and consider how they could get involved. When reflecting on the social media posts related to the BLM, many Latina and Afro-Latina girls shared a sense of sympathy for Black Americans who were particularly vulnerable during 2020 on multiple fronts. Viewing themselves as people of color, these Latina and Afro-Latina girls described a politicized collective identity with Black Americans and discussed how their experiences of discrimination were interconnected. Angel, a 21-year-old Latinx non-binary young person, discussed their concerns for "Black and Brown people" and shared,

> It's so saddening because, like, we constantly see it, but nothing's being done. Like, all we, we can like, post and, like, we can march. But, like, these politicians and, like, policymakers, what are they actively doing? Like? Are they putting out, like, gun reform?

> Like, are they actively trying to solve the issues at hand? It's just, like, we continuously see these young, Black and Brown folks being murdered in the streets. But, like, they just get swept under the rug after a new person gets shot and killed. So, like, that's really disparaging to see, especially as a young Black person, it's just, like, will I be the next one to be swept under the rug?

Isabella, an 18-year-old Latina young woman also discussed how her collective identity with people of color informed her belief that Black and Latinx people should advocate for one another when faced with injustice. She said,

> We all have some form of discrimination. But we always have like each other's backs, like, for example, like when George Floyd died, everybody came together and we all protested or when Vanessa Guillen and also when she when that whole situation came down, like there were protests all around the country, there are petitions, but going after the military, calling them out, holding them accountable. The #IamVanessaGuillen hashtag spreading around like, we like although we are different races, we all collectively agree that like, we're in this together, we're here to…to find justice

For Angel and Isabella, social media created a space that fostered their critical social awareness of the interconnectedness of Black and Latinx communities' experiences of racism and xenophobia. Their reflections on the posts they saw elicited a sense of shared identity that manifested in the embodiment of interracial solidarity. However, their feelings of solidarity did not extend to actionable participation in the movement. These co-creators focused on continuing intraracial solidarity efforts they had begun before 2020.

Community Organizations Promoting Enacted Solidarity

Although social media did not necessarily always translate to social movement participation, girls who participated in community organizations tended to engage in more sociopolitical action. Typically, Latina girls taking sociopolitical action to combat anti-Blackness actively sought out anti-racist and political organizations to be involved in prior to the racial reckoning of 2020. Sofia, a 20-year-old Latina young woman, articulated,

> One of the things that was the most impactful to guiding me towards being interested in activism was going to activism efforts for groups unlike my own. So I did go to, like, for example, NAACP meetings….I learned a lot from that in ways that both the Black community and, like, the Latino community can work together to reach these goals.

She described how many activists siloed themselves on issues that impacted their ethnic-racial community. However, she emphasized the importance of reaching out across communities to better understand how their experiences of marginalization are connected to be better positioned to take action together.

Luna, a 21-year-old Latina and Asian femme, described being part of how her participation in interracial solidarity as a part of a community activist organization made her feel like a part of a legacy of changemakers, and she describes herself as "a descendant of this struggle." Her awareness of the interracial coalition building between the Black Panthers and Young Lords in New York City inspired her to "push beyond that observation and understand its historical social contexts, and see how that blossom and so that took me on a whole new path of, like, organizing, meeting people in the community." She sought and found an organization that was inspired by the Young Lords, Jane Collective, Black Panther Party, Audre Lorde, and "all these strong, Black, Indigenous, Latino, queer, Chinese…people who exist on the margins of society." She resonated with and learned from the activist organizations' orientation toward a

transnational struggle. During 2020, she felt a deep sense of empathy with Black Americans and described the “frustration, angry and mourning” she experienced thinking about the murders of Black Americans. Her empathy motivated her to take action, like protesting and she drew on the collective strength from her comrades to make her activism sustainable. Both Sofia’s and Luna’s participation in community activism are examples of how critical social awareness and sociopolitical action are reciprocal processes. Taking action with an organization helped support further critical social awareness, and fostered a collective sense of agency.

Sites for Intraracial Solidarity - Friendships & School Based Organizations

For many girls - particularly Black girls - *intraracial* solidarity via community building and social movement participation encouraged sociopolitical action. For Black girls who attended predominantly white schools or lived in predominantly white neighborhoods, intraracial solidarity felt especially important for them to have a safe space to process the anti-Blackness happening and think about how they would respond; white peers often lacked an awareness of the severity of anti-Blackness in the United States, or could be perpetrators of discrimination themselves. Belle, a 17-year-old Black girl, grew up in a predominantly white neighborhood and felt like her high school’s Black Student Union created a space where she could discuss racially salient current events and find people to take action with. She said,

> I don't see a lot of Black people at my school. So it feels nice to like, meet some of the people and like people I can relate to and like we did like a lot of sit-ins and protests and things like that.

Similarly, Shakiera was very active in her Black Student Union and the local NAACP and worked towards building community and amplifying Black women’s concerns. She described

how “helping Black people has been a joy of [hers]” and she loved advocating within these intraracial collectives.

For other Black girls like Destiny, a 21-year-old Black young woman, her orientation towards intraracial solidarity stemmed from her awareness of how Black women have historically been pushed to the margins even within social movements. She stated, “Black women usually, like, they, not usually come last…despite them often being, like, in the forefront of things.” Destiny went on to discuss how Black women have often been silenced in white feminist movements and said,

> When I was younger…people [Black girls] would, like, equate their experiences more to white women than, like, Black men, which I thought was, which I think is kind of weird, just considering, like, the history of White women, especially in the US, and knowing that they've harmed, like, Black woman and Black men….there's, like, been, like, a rewritten history where, like, oh, like, White women have been oppressed, obviously, within the patriarchy, but, like, it doesn't come clear to me that Black women have been oppressed, and Black men.

Her reflection highlighted the lack of historical allyship from white women and Black women in Western feminist movements. While many white women activists were glorified for their advocacy on behalf of other white women, the racism they perpetuated goes unacknowledged within mainstream, white feminist groups. This historical knowledge inspired Destiny to be an advocate for the Black community and highlight the unique experiences of Black women.

For girls like Jada (20-year-old biracial Black Latina young woman) intraracial solidarity also happened within her friendships. She discussed how developing strong relationships with

the Black community on her college campus supported her in reflecting on and navigating experiences of anti-Blackness. She said,

> I really stick to the Black community at the [university], I really don't venture outside of it. But seeing, my major is environmental science. There's a lot of like white women in that field, so I'm around them regardless. But in terms of my social life, and things like that, I really just immerse myself in the Black culture at [College in Virginia]. So I haven't run into too many difficulties, but it makes me feel like they're just ignorant.

Jada later recounted how she and her friend (a Black woman) discussed their strategies to navigate discriminatory experiences of anti-Blackness; this nuanced conversation involved being empathetic towards each-other for their individual decisions and while considering the context behind their response. She valued being able to have a deep connection with a Black woman that allowed for non-judgmental and supportive conversations.

While intraracial solidarity directly related to the racial violence of 2020 was less salient amongst Latina girls, several girls continued investing in intraracial community building efforts that supported Latinx peers' sociopolitical conversations or wellbeing. Some Latina girls' sociopolitical action during 2020 was a continuation of fostering created affinity groups or clubs meant to address the needs of Latinx students prior to 2020. Enacted intraracial solidarity for Latina girls tended to focus on women's rights for Latinas. For example, girls like Ana (17-year-old Latina immigrant girl) and Yasmin (15-year-old Latina immigrant girl) sought to raise awareness about violence against women in Latin America. Both girls were concerned about the machismo culture and femicides happening in their country of origin. As such, these girls were committed to spreading awareness about machismo, especially within the context of romantic relationships, to promote a sense of agency amongst other Latina girls they knew. This often

looked like having intentional conversations with other immigrant peers and women about how to protect themselves.

Barriers within Opportunity Structures for Coalition Building

Barriers to Interracial Trust and Allyship

Although social media, social movements, schools and friendships can be important opportunity structures, co-creators described both inter-and-intra racial tensions within these spaces that hindered their trust or engagement with one another. Specifically, co-creators' critiques of performative and lack of sustained activism amongst interracial peers on social media made them hesitant to trust interracial allies. Specifically, Black and Afro-Latina girls questioned so-called allies' intentionality behind their actions and called others to be more intentional about how they engaged with Black people beyond the context of BLM. Co-creators also described how the lack of centralized organizing pertaining to xenophobia towards Black and Latinx migrants left them feeling confused about how to engage and led to inaction and lack of enacted solidarity. For many Latina girls, this left them feeling as though no one cared about what was happening at the U.S. Mexico border. Experiences of interpersonal discrimination perpetuated by Black or Latinx people within their schools or community caused some co-creators to feel a sense of intergroup mistrust; this translated to a lack of perceived intergroup allyship within social movements like BLM.

Performativity and Lack of Sustained BLM Activism on Social Media

Having witnessed performative and short-lived BLM participation on social media, some co-creators were hesitant to trust interracial allies because they questioned their motives. Zenobia, a 21-year-old Afro-Latina young woman noticed,

> Some people were going to protest and didn't even know what was going on. And that's a big issue. I feel like it's important for you to have the information and be able to put the action rather than taking the action without the information because then you're like, you're like pretty much just following the leader, and you don't even know who the leader is what they know.

Similarly, Shakiera a 17-year-old-Black girl said,

> Some people would stand there with their phone in hand the whole entire time. And it's like, are you listening to what this person wants to say? Or are you trying to show the fact that you went to a protest? Again, to check the box.

A recurrent sentiment amongst these responses was a sense of mistrust for the large number of people who showed up to in-person or online events and took actions that girls critiqued as being unintentional or unhelpful. For example, some girls called out how social media campaigns actually detracted from the overall movement. Shakiera commented on Black Out Tuesday (i.e., a day of action against racism and police brutality, where people posted black squares to their social media accounts) saying,

> Blackout Tuesday, amazing example, one of the worst protest, online protests they'd ever seen. Amazing idea, like, genuinely, that was such a great idea in...it was a very innocent idea. But it ended up becoming something that was so counterproductive. So that was something that I definitely think could be done better is like, maybe doing an educational post instead of just a black screen.

She reflected that during the summer of 2020, many people were posting online to signal their liberal ideologies and were issuing challenges to “fight them” if others disagreed with their

beliefs. She believed that approach was divisive and diminished opportunities for meaningful education and raising awareness about anti-Blackness within the carceral system.

Sofia, a 20- year-old Latina young woman, shared concerns that some so-called allies were actually using the BLM movement to advance their own platform. She said,

> I feel as though there were a lot of those community organizers that were kind of more interested in building their platform than kind of amplifying the voices of others, which I think is more important. I think it's more important to be, like, listen to these other voices that are also concerned about it, rather than being, like, if you're mad about this, follow me, I'm almost at 1 million followers, or things of that sort. I felt like a lot of people were kind of just, like, trying to use it as something for their personal benefit when it should really be about, like, community benefit.

Co-creators' reflections on the performative allyship came from a place of concern that the vast number of social movement participants was not reflective of the number of people who cared about combating anti-Blackness.

Other girls discussed concerns that the performative nature of allyship would stunt the longevity of the movement. Saida a 19-year-old Black young woman observed that her peers at school engaged in performative activism, and said,

> My timeline really turned into performative activism, I felt like from my peers…. after, like, I would say, maybe a month, a month and a half, things just died down and people started to get quiet. And it's like, this, or like, it'll be where they'll share like, the actual lynchings or in cages and it's like, I don't want to see that. You know, it's like, I really don't want to see that.

In response, Saida worked on community outreach events to help her peers at school think more about the type of activists they could be. Like other girls, Saida raised concerns for the circulations of modern-day lynching of Black Americans at the hands of police that caused people to feel desensitized and therefore emotionally removed from witnessing violence.

Belle, a 17-year-old Black girl, reflected on how true allyship did not require large stunts, and commented on how some of her peers engaging in performative activism had perpetuated anti-Blackness in their personal lives. She stated, "You don't have to be like, the whole shebang, like going to protest…But like learning, respecting, and things like that. Not gaslighting people like all those certain things. And like, continue supporting your Black friends." Belle's commentary called BLM participants to think about how they were treating Black people outside of the movement and align their everyday actions with anti-racism. It is important to note that girls who shared these criticisms often held the belief that true allyship manifested not just in a feeling, but was lived out in continued, intentional, anti-racism on the interpersonal as well as systemic levels. Overall, girls' mistrust of interracial allies' intentions resulted in a hesitancy or objection to allyship with interracial peers in larger social movements.

Interpersonal Discrimination and Competition Between the Black and Latinx Communities

Some girls described interracial tensions between the Black and Latinx communities which prevented perceived allyship and enacted solidarity during 2020. For some girls, interpersonal discrimination at their schools resulted in intergroup mistrust. This was particularly salient for Latina girls attending predominantly Black schools and Black girls attending predominantly Latinx schools. Black girls who experienced discrimination from Latinx peers tended to focus on engaging in intraracial solidarity. Few girls, particularly Latinas, felt that BLM participation detracted from advocacy against the heightened Latinx violence; they

unconsciously viewed BLM participation as competition because they felt most people only focused on advocating for a single issue. Co-creators who felt intergroup mistrust between the Black and Latinx communities did not make systemic level attributions or connections about how white supremacy intentionally created the conditions that led to division between them.

Interpersonal Discrimination at School

For some girls, experiences of personal or vicarious discrimination resulted in a general mistrust of other ethnic-racial-groups' ability to serve as allies. For instance, Ameena, a 15-year-old African American girl described her mistrust for "Hispanics" after attending a predominantly Hispanic school and facing interpersonal discrimination from her peers there. She recounted a "verbal altercation" with a Hispanic boy who called her the n-word multiple times and said,

> And so like, I told him, like, you can't say the word because, um, Hispanics also have a slur. And I don't say that slur like, even if my friends like, even if somebody tells me to, I won't say it. They're like, "oh, it's just a word." And I was like," it's just a word to you. But to me, and my ancestors it isn't just a word."

As a product of Ameena being targeted by other Latinx students at her school, she felt like she was constantly needing to speak up for herself and teach them about anti-blackness. This translated into a general mistrust of Latinx people as potential allies outside of her school.

Albeit less salient, some Latina girls also discussed how interpersonal discrimination from Black Americans contributed to mistrust and lack of investment in the BLM movement. After witnessing vicarious violence in a video where Black men assaulted Latinx migrants selling elotes from a street cart, Selena a 17-year-old Latina girl felt furious and shared,

> I understand they have this stress about their own community, their Black community, but also Latinos they have done nothing to do, to be throwing [their street carts]. Those

> poor men…that's their job, selling elotes and stuff, and it was not only once…we also live, also Latinos live in frustration of how we can't just be seen as people and not as immigrants or drug dealers.

In response to these posts, Selena posted "All Lives Matter" related content to emphasize that "not only one community" matters. Selena's response highlighted her frustration with the lack of advocacy for Latinx people and hinted at some resentment that BLM had received more attention. Her lack of awareness regarding the systemic forces that may have contributed to this type of violence, or how cultural narratives of Black men as violent may have made these videos feel more salient, resulted in individual attributions of Black men. These posts may have also felt particularly salient as Selena faced discrimination from Black peers and attended a predominantly Black high school. Selena and Ameena's individual attributions of discrimination caused them to focus on the ethnic-racial tensions that hindered trust in interracial allyship.

Single-Issue Oriented Social Movement Participation

A few Latina girls described feeling tension with Black Americans due to the stark difference between BLM and immigrants' rights advocacy during 2020. Some girls felt that the attention given to BLM detracted from advocacy towards the heightened xenophobia towards Latinx people. Others, like Sophia (20-year-old Latina woman) critiqued the misconception that advocacy across multiple issues detracted from others, and said,

> I did notice that a lot of, like, my Latino friends weren't necessarily posting about police brutality, or the issues concerning African Americans as much as they were about ICE….And it kind of seemed, like, I don't know, at times, it seemed like a bit of, like, a struggle for attention, where both of them were like, this should be issue number one….when it's, like, both of them are really bad things that are happening.

Sophia described how her friend's adoption of this fallacy resulted in some of her peers' lack of solidarity for Black Americans trying to advocate for racial justice. While some girls attributed the lack of advocacy for heightened violence against Latinx people to the focus on BLM, other girls critiqued intraracial barriers to effective solidarity needed to create a centralized Latinx-led movement for immigrants' rights.

Lack of a Centralized Organizing and Intraracial Tensions as Barriers to Advocacy against Xenophobia

Although almost all girls were asked about their recollections on immigrants' rights advocacy during 2020, their reflections were quite spare. Instead, did not most co-creators either discussed the lack of awareness they had about what was happening, or re-focused on critical action related to BLM. Ariana, a 17-year-old Afro-Latina gender-questioning youth, said she felt like, "BLM was like a burst, and then it was there, and then it was posted, and then it kind of cut off, but that ICE was just like a building fear." She elaborated that there was not enough awareness about the vast impact of ICE and said,

> There was a lot of Haitians and Africans in these ICE detention centers. And whenever you would see footage of the ICE detention centers, I remember it when they would maybe say it was just Hondurans, people from Honduras, and Mexico. But then there was a good chunk of those people who are Haitian, and I never saw Black people in those footages…. I feel, like, that certain type of look it's also, like, detrimental to certain, like, Mexican and, like, Central American communities, because then they're the ones associated, oh, that's your thing. One collective thing. And a lot of Haitians don't even know that ICE is looking for them too.

Ariana's reflection highlighted how the lack of media coverage on the migrant detention centers was detrimental for multiple reasons. Media representation of ICE detention centers stoked fear and anxiety because there was not a centralized resistance effort that signaled an end to family separation, inequitable ICE surveillance, and mass deportations. Additionally, the lack of media coverage reporting how Black migrants were impacted meant their experiences of abuse were often untold and lost within broader advocacy efforts for Latinx migrants.

Other girl co-creators like Angel, a 21-year-old non-binary youth, saw media coverage, but did not know which sites could be trusted, or what to do with that information. They said,

> So I really resonated with what you said before with activism, and some of it being messy at times. Because when you're thrown into these situations, it's like, okay, what do I do? How do I help? And then there's this moment of like, okay, I can do this and this, but then intentions can be lost, or like, you lose time for them in terms of like, school, family life, like, etc. But yeah, definitely a mix of, I think, for me confusion at the time, and not knowing what to do with all of this information.

In our plática Angel and I discussed what I refer to as "messy activism" - when people take actions that are well-meaning but may lack the intentionality or awareness of what would actually be most useful to the movement or activist group. Like other co-creators, Angel felt compelled to do something but was not really sure what to do leading to inaction around the heightened racial violence of 2020. However, like Angel, most of these girls did engage in action that was less specific to the sociopolitical moment, but rather a continuation of the community building work they were already doing.

When asked about what she remembered seeing about the heightened ICE violence at the U.S., Mexico border, Karina a 21-year-old Latina and white young woman theorized that the

lack of advocacy came from cultural and fear-based messaging that Latinx immigrants should remain quiet to ensure their family's safety. She said,

> I think that a lot of the reason that there weren't as many protests for, like undocumented immigrants was because a lot of us have been taught like just to mind your own business, don't, don't really do anything that's going to make someone else uncomfortable, things like that. So like, as much as it is upsetting that undocumented immigrants don't have as much as of a voice. It's like, I see why there wasn't as much of a voice and it's partly our communities.

Similarly, Reina, an 18-year-old Latina young woman, recounted conversations with her parents where they discouraged her from getting involved when she wanted to call for help after seeing violence in her neighborhood. Although Reina wanted to call 911 for help, her parents encouraged her to lay low. These messages translated into confusion about when or how to get involved with BLM or immigrants' rights advocacy. She said,

> There's still got judgment of, like, how you're going to make the change, right? You don't want to be, like, loud, because that proves to them that you are loud. And you are, they don't want you here, like, for the same reason, you're loud, and you're impulsive. And you, you're proving their point, right? And then there's the other side….I'm here to make the change, and I will make the change, and I do whatever it takes, right?

In addition to her parents' messaging, Reina was also cognizant of societal stereotypes about her as a Latina girl. Reina did not engage in protests because she was concerned about perpetuating stereotypes of Latina people as dangerous or loud by others. Both girls theorized that other Latinx people may acknowledge that something is wrong but not take action because they do not want to take on the risk of speaking up. Specifically, taking highly visible sociopolitical action

makes someone more visible to the criminal and immigration systems, putting themselves, their families, and their local community at risk of being singled out and potentially harmed.

Intraracial Tensions as Barriers to Interracial Social Movements & Affinity Spaces

Co-creators highlighted intraracial tensions within their community which often focused on how more privileged members discriminate against intraracial community members with other marginalized identities. Specifically, Black girls and gender-expansive youth highlighted how patriarchy existed within racial justice movements pushing Black women's and gender-expansive people's experiences even further into the margins. Latina and Afro-Latina co-creators discussed how intraracial xenophobia against undocumented immigrants often stems from wanting to distinguish themselves as the "good kind" of Latinx people, weakening enacted intraracial advocacy. Afro-Latina girls also specifically discuss how anti-Blackness hinders intraracial allyship as some non-Black Latinx people may not be inclusive in affinity spaces or social movements.

Patriarchy within Racial Justice Movements

While generally Black girls found spaces for intraracial solidarity that strengthened their sociopolitical development, a few also noted ways some Black Americans with greater privilege (i.e., cisgendered men and heterosexual) perpetuated sexism or homophobia in larger social movements. For example, Shakiera a 17-year-old Black girl said,

> I don't know how to say this without saying it…at the end of the day, we still have the patriarchy which upholds racism at a high level. And I have been in settings where I am around predominantly Black people, however, it's like Black men degrading me as a Black woman or Black women around me. Or if it is a white school, then it's like, white people. It's not only white people, it's the white women….It's kind of like, even if we do

> have things in common…it's the fact that I'm still seen as lesser and it's literally because of the fact that I'm a Black woman.

Aligned with Black feminist texts like the Combahee River Collective Statement in 1977, some Black girls highlighted a lack of support from Black men. While Shakiera focused on her experiences of interpersonal discrimination from Black men, most often Black girls emphasized feeling a lack of support from Black men's amplification of Black women's experiences of gendered racism within social movements.

Intraracial Xenophobia and Anti-blackness at Home, School, and Social Movements

Intraracial tensions were also salient amongst Latina and Afro-Latina girls who described difficulties connecting with other Latinx students within affinity groups at their high school or college campuses. Since the pan-ethnic label - Latinx - encompasses so many different ethnicities and cultures, some Latina girls felt that school-based affinity spaces sometimes flattened their ability to talk about their own ethnic-racial group. Additionally, some Latinas were concerned that other students viewed Latinx students all being the same. Selena, a 17-year-old Latina girl, felt like her classmates often lumped Latinx students together, even in the Latinx student group she founded. She recounted an experience where another Latina student erased part of her unique culture,

> To me it is really disrespectful, because it's just culture or something from your country….the club is supposed to inform…even though you're not trying to hurt anyone, they're still gunna be trying to hurt you, even though you're not [from] the same country as them…It's different for African Americans or Black people, they do unite. They do know how to get around. And there's no internal racism as we Latinos are going through all of that, because we're from many countries and many differences.

Selena felt like lumping people together under the pan-ethnic label, Latinx, led to an erasure of their culture; this caused tensions in her ability to enjoy the group because she did not feel respected, or trust her peers. Based on her observations of her school, she argued that Black students were more cohesive in their creation of school based cultural affinity spaces. It is possible she looked to Black student organizations as a model for how to create a Latinx centered space at her school.

Other girls discussed the lack of support from more privileged Latinx people for those who were most vulnerable Latinx people (e.g., undocumented or Afro-Latinx/Black) within larger social movements. Karina a 21-year-old Latina and young woman said,

> I think that points more towards the responsibility of other Latinos who don't have to worry about that, who aren't undocumented, actually speaking out, because like you said, we're also different, but we get treated so similarly. But also, like, I feel like we don't stick up for one another during that circumstance where we all get treated the same. I don't think there's enough support, like, because I've even noticed that, you know, especially at [university in Florida], or they're like, “Oh, I'm not, I'm not like those people, like I actually have money like my family's been here for so long”... they want to be so close to White proximity, that they will treat other people like dirt.

In a few pláticas, Latina girls discussed how Latinx immigrants who became citizens sometimes look down upon other migrants entering the country, even if they themselves first arrived without documentation. They discussed how Latinx people may choose to align themselves with more privileged racial groups in order to distance themselves from their own traumatic experiences of xenophobic discrimination. This appeared in Genesis’ (19-year-old white Latina young woman) plática where she discussed her beliefs about immigration,

> My dad, his siblings, their cousins, all of them came to America legally. And I'm sure not everyone has the opportunity for that. But that's just another thing. Like, my dad, like, grew like came here with nothing like not even a backpack. And he was able to, like, find a job, he was able to get clothes for himself, provide for himself, get a debit card, get a bank account. And I think people sometimes like, don't realize that like, like, like, you it's obviously hard, but you could you could do it…. And like, obviously, it's so sad and like to see like children, like ripped from their parents and stuff. But I feel like if they really want to be a citizen, they want to be in this great country like they can they just need to do it like the right way.

Like many Latinx families, Genesis described the 'bootstrap' mentality where immigrants should work hard to earn their version of the American dream. However, her beliefs did not incorporate an understanding of the current immigration policies that made it exceptionally hard for asylum seekers from Latin America to gain entry into the United States. These beliefs often dichotomize Latinx migrant families as "good" and "bad," and focus on individual attributions to xenophobia as opposed to structural attributions.

Afro-Latina and biracial Black Latina girls described experiencing anti-Blackness within their families, and in Latinx affinity groups. Julissa, a 16-year-old Afro-Latina girl, described how some of her Latinx peers at her school rejected her because of their anti-Black conceptualizations of Latinidad. She shared,

> I haven't really felt accepted, um, being, like, Latina because I'm Black… I guess it would be like, connecting with being Haitian because I mean, that's where I get it from, like, the country is literally in Latin America…. And, you know, still trying to have to believe yourself when you have to explain it to so many people who fit into, like, what being

> Latina looks like, or, like, what being Latina is? I mean, we don't speak Spanish. We are very dark…when it's a majority Black country, it's, like, further pushed away. But you know, the island is called the island of Hispaniola, like, why is there so much pushback?

The murders of George Floyd and the media coverage of the immigration detention center were critical moments that caused her to reflect on her own Blackness, Latinidad, and marginalization. Not having a safe space to reflect on the sociopolitical events unfolding, Julissa had difficulty learning more about the systemic and interconnected nature of anti-Blackness and xenophobia. Since she was still in a place of learning, she did not feel equipped to take action. Ariana, Karina and Julissa highlighted how a lack of cohesion, inclusion, and support extended and expanded beyond affinity groups to barriers that prevented the Latinx community from galvanizing support Latinx and other migrants at being detained by ICE at the border.

Discussion

Overall, this study documents how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender expansive youth reflected on and engaged in inter-and-intra solidarity in various opportunity structures during the heightened racial violence of 2020. Co-creators demonstrated varied levels of solidarity from embodied solidarity (a feeling of solidarity) to enacted solidarity (taking action on behalf of interracial peers) which varied based on the type of opportunity structure. As seen in previous research, interracial solidarity often occurred on social media via online BLM participation, and in community organizations (Fernández et al., 2024; Malone et al., 2023; Quiles-Kwock et al., 2024; Terriquez & Milkman, 2021). Social media supported co-creators' awareness of intersectional awareness of their shared experiences of marginalization and fostered a sense of politicized collective identity. Interracial solidarity on social media corresponded with embodied solidarity, in that girls described feelings of empathy for with interracial peers that did

not necessarily correspond with a sociopolitical action. Those who participated in political community organizations were the most likely to enact their solidarity. When discussing intraracial solidarity, Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth often reflected on cultural affinity spaces at their school (Kubi et al., 2025; Leath, et al., 2022). Specifically, the intraracial friends they made at school served as soundboards to reflect on and decide on how to respond to experiences of discrimination.

Co-creators also discussed barriers to solidarity at school and on social media. At school, experiences of interpersonal interracial discrimination at school from Black and Latinx peers at school sometimes caused Black and Latina girls not to trust each-other as potential allies (Ramirez, 2022). The performative allyship on social media caused Black girls to be hesitant for interracial allyship during the BLM resurgence because they did not feel others would maintain their investment in resisting anti-Blackness. Further, some Latina co-creators described a sense of competition with Black Americans because they felt that online advocacy for BLM would detract from immigrants' rights advocacy, illustrating the fallacy advocating across multiple issues dilutes the impact (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Although most co-creators' reflections focused on BLM, co-creators discussed how the lack of centralized organizing around heightened xenophobia and immigrants' rights left them feeling confused about how to demonstrate their solidarity. Relatedly, Latina girls described intraracial tensions that prevented cohesive advocacy for Latinx and Black migrants experiencing heightened violence in the U.S. Mexico border, which were reflected in their school-based affinity groups (Castellanos, 2016). Co-creators described how barriers like intergroup discrimination, competition, lack of centralized organizing, and intraracial tensions stunted theirs or others enacted solidarity.

BLM on Social Media - Differentiating Embodied versus Enacted Solidarity

When reflecting on the social media coverage of the heightened racial violence in 2020, the vast majority expressed interracial empathy and embodied solidarity for one another. Many girls demonstrated the first stages of politicized collective identity: 1) identifying shared experiences of marginalization between the Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx communities; and 2) identified systems of oppression as a common enemy (Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). However, fewer girls took the next step of taking action in solidarity with or on behalf of interracial peers. Black co-creators shared concerns about the interracial peer's performative online activism during the BLM resurgence. Social media created a context where people engaged more freely but not necessarily intentionally resulting in performative allyship (McCalla, 2021; Wellman, 2022). Having witnessed insensitive or uncritical posts or in-person action online, Black girls described skepticism about interracial allies. At times, this included Latinx people who critiqued some of BLM's approach to protesting as being violent. Black girls identified how these posts fed into stereotypes about Black people as aggressive and perpetuated respectability politics about how to protest while also lacking an acknowledgement of how the police escalated violence (Chaudhary & Richardson, 2022; Tuzo, 2024). These observations reflected findings from other studies which demonstrate how well-meaning BLM participants were sometimes engaged in ways that focused on trendy activism, within-system change or inadvertently reinforced white supremacy (Dixson, 2017; Cabrera et al., 2017).

While research has documented the great potential of social media as a context for interracial coalition building, specifically for BLM (Quiles-Kwock et al., 2024; Wilf et al., 2023), other research has shown that not all digital activism is effective, intentional, or impactful (Maker Castro et al., 2022; Quiles et al., 2023). Scholars have termed the coin slacktivism to describe online political activities that have no impact on real-life political outcomes, other than

making the participants feel good about themselves - may actually give youth a false sense of sociopolitical growth as it is not grounded in critical social awareness (Cabrera et al., 2017). Co-creators in this study call out this behavior and did not consider slacktivism as allyship. More research is needed to understand how youth are making decisions about how to take action online. Additionally, more research is needed which examines how marginalized groups are conceptualizing understand what effective digital allyship looks like.

Black girls' criticisms of allies who just started sharing their commitment to BLM after the heightened racial violence of 2020 was also reflected in how Latina girls described their interracial solidarity. Although social media was an important context for Latina girls to learn more about anti-Blackness, and feel a sense of politicized collective identity with Black Americans, some Latina and Afro-Latina co-creators' sociopolitical action was limited to posting online and did not translate to changed behavior or advocacy in person. This was an important tension in that some Latina girls felt a stronger sense of politicized collective identity as people of color, resulting in their self-perception as an ally; however, some Black girls were not perceiving the level of support they hoped for from interracial allies and emphasized their politicized collective identity with other Black people.

The co-creators' conceptualizations of interracial solidarity slightly diverge operationalizations in psychology that focus on allyship as a psychological state (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Similarly, to Ibrahim X Kendi (2019), Black co-creators emphasized the importance of sustained and intentional action needed to be considered true allyship, emphasizing their orientation towards enacted solidarity. That is not to say that girls who focus on digital activism are not strong advocates, but rather that our co-creators view critical social awareness and motivation as a key component of determining allyship. Co-creators believed

allyship begins with everyday small-scale actions like how others treated their Black friends, supported Black businesses, and educated themselves year-round. They also urged social media users to take action in person and to stay engaged beyond immediate sociopolitical threats like heightened police brutality and ICE violence (Quiles et al., 2023).

A void of social media coverage on resistance efforts related to racially charged sociopolitical events can negatively impact Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' perceived agency. Co-creators also discussed how they witnessed posts related to inequitable ICE detention, family separation, and deportation of Latinx and Black migrants at the U.S. Mexico border on social media. However, most choose not to discuss these posts, and almost none remembered seeing corresponding posts about activism to support Latinx and Black migrants. Some co-creators theorized how the lack of a centralized movement, like BLM, on behalf of migrants may have played a role in the lack of advocacy for migrants. A few Latina girls even made comparisons between their perception of Black activists' resistance to anti-Blackness as being more cohesive and organized than Latinx activists. The lack of posts related to ICE resistance left girls and gender expansive youth feeling confused about where to look for information, or how to engage.

The lack of a formalized movement for immigrants' rights advocacy hindered girls' and gender-expansive youths' agency to combat systemic racism and xenophobia. These findings are similar to earlier explorations of BLM and DACA related advocacy prior to the racial reckoning of 2020 (Hope et al., 2016); which found that Black and Latinx youth engaged in more BLM activism compared to DACA activism because they had a greater critical social awareness of anti-Blackness in the U.S. The fact that these patterns continue to appear years later signals gaps

in youths' education around Latinx and Black migrants' experiences as well as how to combat xenophobic systems.

Community Organizations - Sites for Political Education and Enacted Solidarity

The clear distinction between girls and gender-expansive youth who exclusively exhibited the psychological state of interracial solidarity and took action on behalf of interracial peers was their belonging to an anti-racist community organization. This was especially true of youth who participated in in-person protesting or highly visible forms of activism like speaking out in public, which are inherently riskier. Importantly, Latina girls who engaged in in-person action to support BLM had proactively sought out anti-racist organizations prior to the racial reckoning that supported their confidence to support Black Americans during a time where they faced even greater systemic vulnerability. Co-creators described learning about the systemic nature of inequities, identifying interconnections in their experiences of marginalization, and feeling called to find a community where they could learn more and take action alongside others. These girls detailed how they learned new skills in these opportunity structures by taking action with others that they may not have on their own. These findings highlight the reciprocal nature of critical social analysis and sociopolitical action (Hope et al., 2023; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Their allyship was fostered through deep political education they received within these opportunity structures (Fernández et al., 2024; Malone et al., 2023). As theorized in borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987), Latina girls' commitment to anti-racism was maintained through opportunities for leadership and feeling like a part of the legacy of something greater than themselves.

These findings highlight how youth actively seek opportunity structures like community organizations proactively, taking leadership over their own sociopolitical development. Newer research related to coalition building emphasizes the importance of interpersonal and

community-based relationships in fostering youths' critical social analysis and sociopolitical action (Christens, 2010, 2012; Christens et al., 2023). As suggested by sociopolitical development theory, when youth work with others, they might feel a greater sense of both individual and collective agency to take action (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Additionally, youth engaging in community organizations may have greater opportunities to engage in reflexivity to understand their relationship to the issues (Fernández et al., 2024; Malone et al., 2023). This may be especially important to supporting interracial solidarity as youth who are not directly impacted by social issues might be concerned that they are not informed enough to take action on behalf of others (Maker Castro et al., in press).

School-based Cultural Affinity Spaces - Learning by Navigating Intraracial Relationships

Almost all co-creators in our study described a politicized collective identity with others in their ethnic-racial group. Black girls and gender-expansive youth often discussed how school-based cultural affinity spaces like Black Student Unions in high school and college campuses were important settings to make-meaning of the heightened anti-Blackness during 2020. As seen in other studies, cultural affinity spaces provided a safe space that fostered collective agency and girls often discussed how these conversations involved brainstorming or sharing opportunities to take sociopolitical action (Leath et al., 2022a; Leath et al., 2022b). Cultural affinity spaces were also restorative spaces for them to recuperate when the weight of anti-Blackness became too heavy (Kubi et al., 2024). While Latina girls described creating clubs at school for Latinx students, they did not describe how these spaces were responsive to the heightened racial violence in 2020; instead, they focused on maintaining ongoing events for connection and education about Latinx culture. Embodied solidarity within school clubs did not always move towards enacted intraracial solidarity in other contexts.

While generally school-based cultural affinity organizations were important contexts for critical social analysis and collective agency, some co-creators described intraracial tensions posing barriers to their solidarity. Amongst Black girls, these tensions focused on sexism and homophobia within the Black community often perpetuated by boys or men (Combahee River Collective, 1997; Leath et al., 2022a, 2022b). Latina and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth described how xenophobia, and anti-Blackness posed significant barriers to their ability to effectively connect with other Latinx students at their school (Bondy, 2016). In reflecting on why this may be, co-creators emphasized the diversity and range of power and privilege in their ethnic-racial group and theorized that more privileged members of their ethnic-racial group may perpetuate harm in order to feel a greater sense of power themselves.

Engagement with intraracial peers in school clubs were important sites for youth to think intersectionally about how systems of power and privilege can impact those within the same group differently and engage in reflexivity about their positionality (Malone et al., 2023). This also informed their awareness of their own social location and how the intersections of their identity as girls or gender-expansive youth in their ethnic racial community experience unique forms of gendered-racism even within social movements; immigration status was also salient for girls with recent personal or familial histories of migration to the U.S. This study expands current conceptualizations of sociopolitical development theory by demonstrating how girls' and gender-racial identity development informs their higher order thinking, and prioritization of the most marginalized in their communities (Hope et al., 2023; Watts et al., 2003). Notably, co-creators observed that more privileged members of their ethnic-racial community often prioritized their own maintenance of privilege. As theorized by Anzaldúa (1975), co-creators demonstrated a political consciousness to understand which community members may serve as

collaborative allies versus those who maintained racial and/or gender hierarchies in their community.

Among the few girls who did not express or engage in interracial solidarity, a sense of competition at their schools between the Black and Latinx communities created intergroup mistrust. One commonality amongst these youth was being one of the few students of their ethnic-racial identity attending a predominantly Black/Latinx school. Specifically, Latina girls attending predominantly Black schools expressed jealousy over the galvanization and support for the Black Lives Matter movement they did not see reflected in advocacy against anti-Latinx xenophobia. These girls emphasized times they witnessed violence perpetrated by Black people against Latinx migrants. Black girls attending predominantly Latinx schools, described experiencing discrimination from Latinx peers at their school resulting in a feeling of mistrust and opposition. In these cases, girls focused on individual level attributions by applying their perception of individual experiences to the broader ethnic-racial group. Conversely, girls who were aware of how racial hierarchies intentionally caused a sense of competition amongst ethnic-racially marginalized people, were more likely to express strong feelings of politicized collective identity. As Anzaldúa theorized, colonization as a product of white supremacy has created conditions where racial groups must fight for resources which can result in racial tensions, violence, and mistrust. Our findings mirror previous studies which highlight how political education can promote stronger solidarity as youth make connections across experiences of marginalization (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Fernández et al., 2024; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Malone et al., 2023).

Afro-Latina co-creators expressed feelings of unbelonging in school-based cultural affinity spaces that limited their opportunity to have conversations about identity and

sociopolitical events. The inability to critically reflect with others, contributed to their confusion about whether they should participate in BLM. While generally Afro-Latina co-creators proudly claimed their Black or Afro-Latinx identity in other contexts in the plática, they sometimes decentralized or questioned their Blackness when talking about BLM. They expressed not wanting to take up too much space or minimize advocacy for non-Latinx Black Americans. Afro-Latina youth engage in BLM differently depending on their socialization experiences and their sense of collective identity to Black Americans (Hordge-Freeman & Loblack, 2021).

These findings align with borderlands theory by highlighting the complexities and overlap in Afro-Latina youths' identity and sociopolitical development (Hope et al., 2023; Mathews et al., 2020). We expand borderlands by demonstrating the unique challenges Afro-Latina youth face in navigating anti-Blackness from the Latinx community. Specifically, one valid critique of borderlands theory is the way that mestijaze can obscure Afro and Black Latinx people's experiences of racism. Mestijaze refers to the belief that Latinx people's ethnic-racial backgrounds transcend racial categories because they embody Indigenous, African, and European roots tracing back to the mixing of cultures during the colonial times (Crooks-Allen, 2022). Endorsements of mestijaze can sometimes look like color-blind ideology if they encourage Afro and Black Latinx peoples from decentralizing their Blackness to fit into the larger collective or do not acknowledge their experiences of anti-Blackness. Considering the complexities of Afro-Latina girls' racialization in the U.S., more work is needed to explore the interconnections of their identity, socialization, and solidarity processes. Further, more work is needed which addresses the unique anti-Blackness Afro-Latina youth face in activist spaces so that we can educate allies on how to support them.

Limitations, Considerations and Future Research

Employing plática methodology is a feminist approach to data collection, interpretation, and dissemination that has important implications for the interpretation of these findings (Fierros & Bernal, 2016). Although not a limitation, plática methodology introduces variability within the data because each interview is unique and questions are asked and answered organically. While generally all girls discussed the sociopolitical events of 2020, some may not have discussed their personal sociopolitical action or all of the contexts by which they engaged. In fact, some co-creators initially stated that they did not take sociopolitical action, but then later described their participation BLM or immigrants' rights related advocacy. We may have also missed certain types of enacted interracial solidarity because the majority of co-creators focused on reflecting on BLM related advocacy. As researchers, we tried to probe for various contexts, but allowed co-creators to guide our conversations. These findings highlight the opportunity structures which felt most salient for co-creators within the context of the pláticas.

Another important consideration for thinking about Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx youths inter-and-intra racial solidarity is recognizing the complexities and nuances of their ethnic-racial identities and perceived relationships to these issues. There is such vast diversity in the ways that Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina youth define their ethnic-racial identity. Other identities like multiraciality, immigration status, or skin tone may inform how youth perceive their social location or connection to their ethnic-racial group (Azmitia et al., 2023; Pinetta et al., 2025). Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' socialization and racialization also inform their politicized collective identity with their ethnic-racial group (Mathews et al., 2020).

Blackness and Latinidad are not binary identity categories, and some girls may identify as both even if their parents share the same nationality (i.e., one co-creator had white Dominican

and Black Dominican parent). Other girls who are bi-racial white, or have lighter skin, may feel more connected to their white identity, especially if they are white passing or raised by a white parent. For instance, the only co-creator who did not exhibit politicized collective identity with Black or Latinx people was a white passing, and economically privileged white Latina who did not feel personally impacted by police brutality or anti-Latinx xenophobia. Therefore, even girls with the same ethnicity may perceive their relationship to police brutality or immigrants' rights activism differently depending on whether they feel they are personally impacted by these social issues. In sum, inter-and-intra racial solidarities can be hard to generalize and measure amongst Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls because each girls politicized collective identity with their ethnic-racial group varies based on their perceived relationship to marginalization.

Implications

This study has various implications for scholars, educators, and community activists who aim to support Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical development. More research is needed that explores how marginalized youth are making decisions about how to take action on behalf of other marginalized groups (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Craig & Richeson, 2016). Black and Latina feminist texts provide insights for how activists across civil rights movements navigated the challenges of large- and small-scale coalition building which has applicability for modern day interracial coalition building. Integrating feminist theories like borderlands supports scholarly explorations of the unique, context specific, racial hierarchies Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls navigate within different opportunity structures (Chavez-Dueñas & Adames, 2021; Malone et al., 2023; Montoya, 2021). Contextualizing youths' engagement in solidarity also provides insight as to what kinds of systemic barriers girls are facing - like feelings of competition with other marginalized

intergroup peers due to lack of community resources. By acknowledging the systemic nature of these barriers, scholars can address the root causes of intergroup tensions and support youth in negotiating their relationships with other marginalized people in the borderlands.

Additionally, more research is needed that explores how marginalized groups are defining and conceptualizing effective allyship - especially on social media. One important tension from this study was the misalignment between how girls critiqued allyship from others, and how they engaged in allyship for interracial peers in response to the heightened racial violence of 2020. While social media often promoted politicized collective identity (Quiles-Kwock et al., 2024; Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001), this study demonstrated that youths' feelings of connection with interracial peers may not be enough to support their enacted solidarities. Increasingly, research has shown that social media is an important opportunity structure for youths' sociopolitical development (Diemer et al., 2021; Wilf & Wray-Lake, 2024). As scholars and activists learn more about how and why youth engage in digital activism, it will be important to better understand and support others in engaging in intentional and critically motivated online solidarities that move beyond the digital space to enacted solidarity in person.

Scholars and community activists organizing with youth should provide various opportunities for them to engage in reflexivity about their access to power and privilege (Fernández et al., 2024; Malone et al., 2023). Co-creators in our study identified important barriers to effective allyship, including how more privileged members, like: cisgendered, heterosexual, men, and citizens can perpetuate harm towards more marginalized members of their ethnic-racial groups. These observations mirror critiques in the Combahee River Collective statement (1997) about the civil rights movement. That includes conversations about the

relationship they have to the issue, as well as how they can leverage their privilege to amplify the voices of more marginalized members of the group. Black and Latina feminist texts can also be used to guide conversations about how civil rights activists navigated barriers to intra and interracial coalition building and the approaches they used to strengthen their comrades (Montoya, 2021; Montoya & Seminario, 2022).

Educators and administrators of formal academic spaces can replicate and implement the political education and reflexivity supported by community organizations to support Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' sociopolitical development. The need for culturally relevant civics courses feels especially important as there has been a political movement across the country to ban discussions of systemic oppression and culturally relevant histories within schools (Schwartz, 2021). Anti-CRT policies do not stop youth from having conversations about sociopolitical events, but definitely impede their ability to have scaffolded conversations with adult facilitators that may support their structural attributions about the heightened racial violence they are witnessing (Morgan, 2022). School-based programs, like intergroup dialogues have been demonstrated to reduce tension between interracial groups, and promote skills for meaningful relationship building (Aldana et al., 2012; Griffin et al., 2012; Malaney-Brown, 2020; Tauriac et al., 2013). The intergroup dialogue curriculum involves guided discussions through experiential activities or readings that support youths' sociopolitical development by providing skills for meaningful relationship building, and taking action against racial inequities. Critical conversations about identity, discrimination, and resistance can also be introduced informally like assigning texts or articles that highlight Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx leaders and pioneers across various subject matters. In sum, educators should consider formal and informal ways they can integrate culturally relevant histories and political education within their

curricula to support students' intersectional awareness of systemic inequities, and collective agency with others.

Conclusion

This study integrated borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) with sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003; Watts & Flanagan, 2007) to explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' reflections on the barriers that promote and hinder inter-and-intra racial solidarity in different contexts during 2020. Social media was a complicated space that promoted interracial BLM participation but co-creators, especially Black girls, noted fears of performativity as the heightened activism did not seem intentional or long lived. Community organizations were important sites for political education that empowered co-creators to take sociopolitical action on behalf of interracial peers. School based cultural affinity groups created a safe space to reflect on sociopolitical events and consider how to respond. However, feelings of unbelonging and marginalization perpetuated by more privileged group members posed barriers to solidarity.

Lastly, most co-creators' reflections focused on BLM participation, and they theorized that theirs and others' lack of activism for immigrants' rights was related to the lack of a centralized organizational entity raising awareness or providing leadership on how to engage in allyship. These findings offer important implications for how scholars, educators, and community activists could work in partnership with youth to support their inter-and-intra racial coalition building. Specifically, youth need more opportunities across different contexts to engage in intersectional political education that helps them make connections about experiences within and across ethnic-racial groups. Further, scaffolded opportunities for reflexivity are important for youth to understand their relationship to different social issues and are important to considering their own individual and collective agency to take action.

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Table 1.
Co-creator Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Racial-Ethnic Identity	Ethnicity	Gender	Migration Status	State
Ameena	15	Black	Liberian	Girl	Second generation	Illinois
Ana	17	Latina	Peruvian	Girl	Immigrant	Virginia
Angel	21	Latina	Puerto Rican	Gender fluid		New York
Ariana	17	Afro-Latina	Dominican Republic	Unsure		California
Audre	17	Black/African American	Tanzanian	Girl	Immigrant	Texas
Belle	17	Black		Girl		Michigan
Destiny	21	Black	Nigerian	Girl	Immigrant	Texas
Genesis	19	Biracial Latina and white	Salvadorian	Girl		New York & Virginia
Gina	20	Biracial Latina and white	Brazilian	Girl	Second generation	Virginia
Isabella	18	Latina	Salvadorian	Girl	Second generation	Washington D.C.
Jada	20	Biracial Black and Latina		Girl		New York
Janelle	20	Black/African American		Girl		Virginia
Julissa	16	Biracial Latina and Black	Haitian	Girl	Second generation	Illinois
Karina	21	Biracial Latina and white	Venezuelan	Girl	Second generation	Florida
Luna	21	Biracial Latina and Asian	Cuban & Chinese	Femme	Second generation	New York
Reina	18	Latina		Girl	Second generation	California
Rihanna	21	Biracial Black and Asian		Girl	Second generation	New York
Ryan	15	Biracial Black and white	Black and Irish	Non-binary		Ohio
Saida	19	Black		Girl		New Jersey
Selena	17	Latina	Mexican	Girl	Second generation	Maryland
Shakiera	17	Black/African American		Girl		Ohio
Sofia	20	Latina/Latinx/Hispanic	Salvadorian	Girl		Virginia
Yasmin	15	Latina	Mexican	Girl	Immigrant	Oklahoma
Zenobia	21	Afro-Latina	Haitian	Girl	Second generation	Florida
Zuri	15	Black		Girl		North Carolina

Table 2.
Data Collection & Coding Team Reflexivity

Name	Role in Paper	Salient Identities	Investment in Research
Taina Quiles-Kwock	Doctoral candidate; conceptualized study, formulated plan for analysis, managed data cleaning, oversaw coding and analysis, drafted the manuscript	Second generation Latina, lesbian woman, wife, and community psychologist from New York City	I am deeply invested in research that promotes Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women and girls' healing and thriving. For this project I was specifically interested in amplifying these girls' stories of discrimination as well as document the ways they may already be actively engaged in resistance. I believe research can be used as a powerful tool to educate others and advocate for more equitable social conditions for these girls, and the next generation of girls to come. I hope to use these findings to highlight ways we can support these girls on an interpersonal, communal, and policy level.
Dr. Seanna Leath	Assistant professor in psychology. Supported grant writing, and acquisition for the HRA study. Assisted with coding analysis. Provided support with the theoretical framing, and feedback on the manuscript.	Black cisgender woman; first-generation college student; mother to four children; from working class Southern community	At the core, my program of research focuses on how families and educators can support Black women and girls in living deeply meaningful and healthy lives. This means that my work is constantly toeing the lines of examining and identifying oppression, while also encouraging radical shifts in how we think about, connect to, and care for Black women and girls in society.
Dr. Channing Mathews	Assistant professor in psychology; supported data collection and analysis. Provided support with the theoretical framing, and feedback on the manuscript.	Black queer cisgender woman; 2nd generation college student; from middle class Southeastern community	I always seek to center the success and thriving of Black and Brown youth, and to use my skills to invest in the generations that come after me. As a former Black girl who felt the absence of Black women in the spaces I wanted to take up, I seek to be that Black woman to others.
Raven Ross	Graduate student in psychology; supported with data collection	Biracial cisgender woman; first-generation college student; from working class and middle-class backgrounds	I hope the work I contribute to will show how we can support and uplift Black and Latina girls. By listening to their ideas, experiences, and stories, we can learn how to support girls in ways that are meaningful to them.
Sophia Black	Undergraduate research assistant; supported coding and analysis	Black cisgender woman; undergraduate student at a PWI	As I continue my journey in undergraduate research, I aim to continuously focus the narratives of Black and Latinx folks (and other marginalized identities) to better understand the intersections between different identities (i.e., race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.) and how they interact with the environment around us. I aim to take this background and apply it to better the everyday lives of the people in these communities.

Table 3.
Codebook

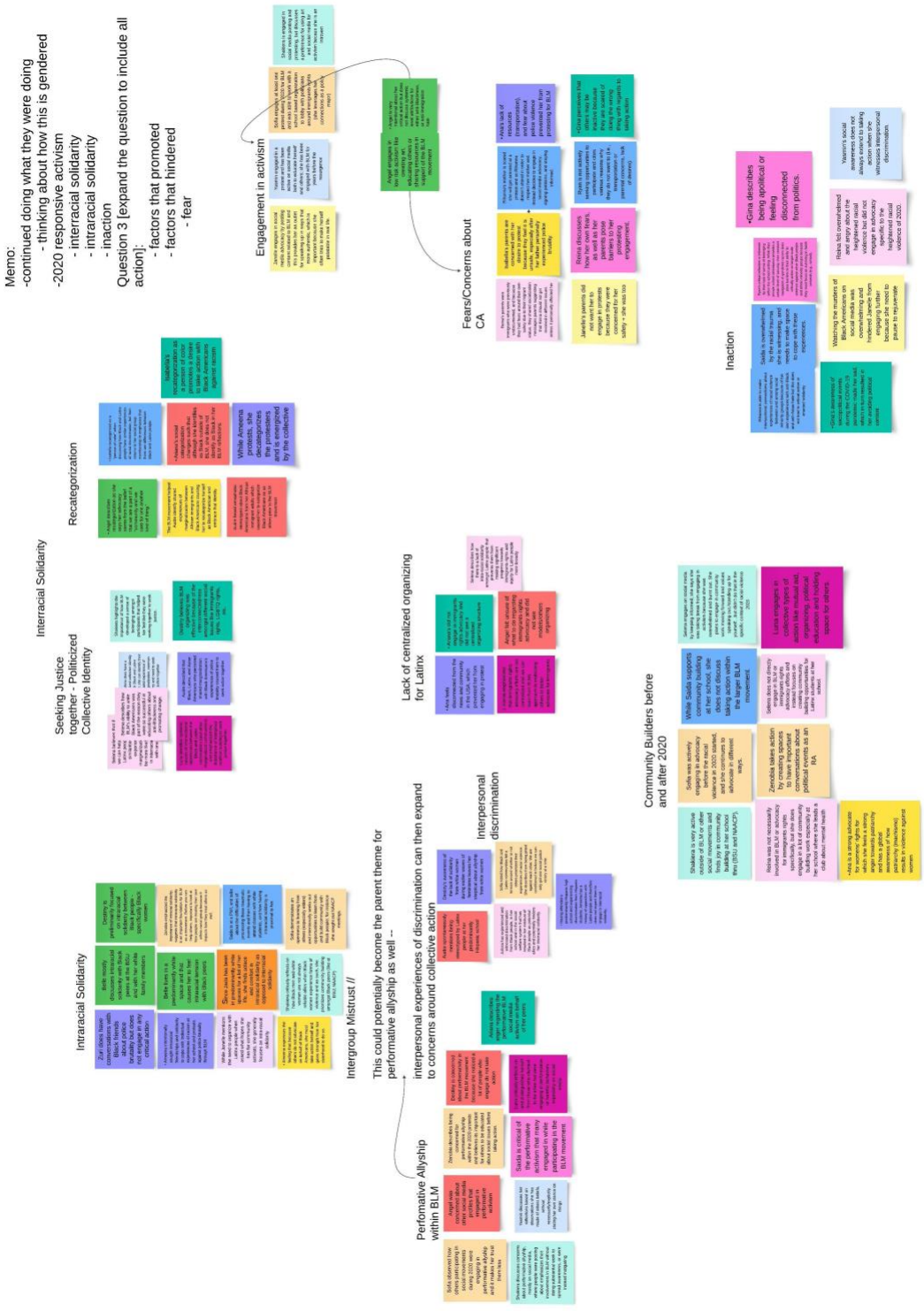
Codes	Subcodes	Description
Critical Social Analysis co-creators reflect on and interrogate the root causes of sociopolitical events	**Self-awareness**	Youth explored issues like racism and/or, sexism, that are impacting them personally and become concerned about how power, privilege, and oppression might threaten their sense of agency and well-being.
	Social awareness	Youth developed an understanding of how their society functions.
	Global awareness	Youth identified how global experiences of racism and sexism are connected and perpetuated by white supremacy and patriarchy.
	Intersectional awareness	Youth identified how multiple systems of oppression intersect to inform a specific type of interpersonal discrimination or systematic marginalization
	Gendered racism	Youth identified how systemic racism and sexism intersect to inform women of color's unique experiences of marginalization.
Group Membership co-creators' perceived membership with a social group	**Ethnic-racial identity**	Youth described the importance of their ethnic-racial identity. This includes youth describing an experience where their ethnic-racial identity is salient to them.
	Gender identity	Youth describes the importance of their gender identity. This includes youth describing an experience where their gender is salient to them.
	Gendered racial identity	Youth describes the importance of their gender-racial identity. This includes youth describing an experience where their gender-racial identity is salient to them.
	Girls of color	Youth describes the importance of their identity as girls of color. This includes youth describing an experience where being a girl of color was salient to them.
Relationship to Others Co-creators' perception of their relationship to others based on their social identities	**Social Group Categorization**	Co-creator engages in "othering" or describes a distinction between themselves and other social groups. Co-creator describes assumptions, beliefs, or perceptions about how another social group behaves or feels.
	Decategorization	Youth described a reduced salience of group membership. Cocreator doesn't emphasize their ERI or gender identity.
	Recategorization	Youth perceived group membership with someone who does not share their racial identities

	Spontaneous mention of intergroup	Youth spontaneously mentions an intergroup experience where the others' group membership was salient. This includes experiences of discrimination or solidarity.
Politicized Collective Identity Co-creators identification with a larger group with whom they engage in a struggle against systemic inequities	**Shared marginalization**	Youth described awareness of shared experiences of marginalization
	Common enemy	Youth identified a common source of oppression
	Seeking justice together	Youth described a belief in the importance of seeking justice with intergroup peers. Youth described taking action with intergroup peers.
Barriers to Accepting Allyship Co-creators discussion on why they mistrust interracial peers who advocate for their ethnic-racial group	**Intergroup anxiety - self**	Youth described anxiety about how to act amongst people from a different background.
	Intergroup anxiety - others	Youth described anxiety about how how others intergroup members may treat them because of their outsider group membership
	Intergroup mistrust	Youth described reluctance to collaborate with or accept allyship from intergroup members because of a lack of trust in their ability to support the cause.
	Fears of performativity	Youth describes fears regarding an individual's or racial group's intentions for engaging in allyship.
	History of opposition	Youth described feeling like they could not trust interracial peer because of an established history of discrimination or competition with that group.
Barriers to Enacting Interracial Solidarity Co-creators discuss why they did not take action on behalf of an interracial group	**Access to resources**	Lack of resources (e.g., transportation, peer support) posed barriers to youths' participation interracial allyship.
	Lack of centralized organizing	Youth described feeling like they did not know how to engage in advocacy because there was a lack of leadership or centralized place to learn more about the social issue.
	Uninformed	Youth did not feel like they knew enough about the social issue to engage in advocacy.
	Parental concerns	Parents prohibit or discourage youth from engaging in advocacy
Intraracial Solidarity		Youth described engaging in advocacy to support others in their ethnic-racial identity.

Social Movements Co-creator reflected on a specific social issue	**BLM**	Youth reflected on or mentioned the Black Lives Matter movement. This can include times where they reflect on others' participations. Also describes their own participation.
	Immigrants' rights/advocacy against heightened Latinx xenophobia	Youth reflected on or mentioned the immigrants rights advocacy or advocacy against xenophobia. This can include times where they reflect on others' participations. Also describes their own participation.
	Women's rights	Youth reflected on or mentioned the advocacy regarding women's rights. This can include times where they reflect on others' participations. Also describes their own participation.
Sociopolitical Engagement Co-creators described participating in different forms of sociopolitical action	**Art**	Youth leverages art to make political statements
	Community building	Youth took on a leadership role to create social justice or affinity oriented spaces.
	Contacting representatives	Youth described writing letters to, calling, or meeting with local representatives.
	Conversations with peers	Youth prioritized having conversations with others about the sociopolitical events and spreading awareness about social issues.
	Providing emotional support	Youth sought to provide emotional support to those experiencing marginalization.
	Mutual aid/donations	Youth helped organized mutual aid efforts or gave donations to social justice oriented groups.
	Protesting	Youth engaged in or helped organize protests.
	Social media activism	Youth posted online in ways that demonstrated alignment with BLM, advocacy against xenophobia against Latinx people and immigrant rights. These posts could also focus on spreading awareness of these social issues.

Figure 1

Thematic Map



Chapter 2

"You Have to Envision it First": A Qualitative Exploration of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Girls' Imagination, Radical Hope, and Commitment to Social Change

“Colonization of the imagination is the most dangerous and subversive form there is: for it is where all other forms of decolonization are born. When the imagination is unshackled, liberation is limitless.”
-Walidah Imarisha”

Abstract

According to sociopolitical development theory, youths' visions for a more just world are an essential tool for liberation. Political imagination and radical hope may work in tandem as precursors to sense of agency by promoting Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender expansive youths' commitment to social change. We used plática methodology and intersectional qualitative methods to explore 25 Black, Latina, Afro-Latina and Biracial girls and gender expansive youths' (15-21 years, M = 18.32), visions for themselves, other Black and Latina girls, and community activists in the United States. In regards to girls' visions for themselves and other girls, we found that political imagination and radical hope work in tandem to support girls' commitment to social change through their occupations. Additionally, Black girls shared hopes for radical self-acceptance, which were grounded in critical social analyses of how gendered racism impacted their self-esteem. Lastly, girls hoped for workplace equity rooted in concerns about gendered racism they may experience at work. In terms of girls' visions for what community activism could accomplish, most girls shared political imaginings about how community activists could mobilize others. They shared the importance of interracial solidarity and intersectionality in social movements. However, some girls also shared that while community activism was powerful, governmental support for anti-racist policies was the most important for long-standing change. Our findings highlight how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' visions of the future demonstrates a commitment to social change, and how political imagination and radical hope can be leveraged as tools for youth's sociopolitical development and resistance to gendered racism.

Keywords: Black girls, Latina girls, Afro-Latina girls, political imagination, radical hope, sociopolitical development

"You Have to Envision it First": A Qualitative Exploration of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Girls' Political Imagination, Radical Hope, and Commitment to Social Change

Throughout centuries of oppression and colonization, Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx communities have leveraged political imagination and radical hope to organize, mobilize, and fight for a more just and freer world (Hill-Jarrett, 2023; Kelley, 2002; Pérez, 1999). Although Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women and girls have been critical leaders in various civil rights movements (Crawford, 2023; Dickerson, 2008; Milkman & Terriquez, 2012), scholars and community activists have often neglected to seek out or actively silenced their input about their visions and hopes for social change (Earl et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2023). Much can be learned from the ways these girls' have imagined, developed and enacted creative and subversive resistance strategies to advance social movements while advocating for gender-racial equity (Esparza, 2010; Keller, 2012; Robnett, 1996; Segura & Facio, 2008; Taft & Gordon, 2013). Exploring Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' political imaginings and radical hopes for a more just world, may provide critical insight into how they are reflecting on systemic inequities like gendered racism, and strategizing on how to challenge it via individual or collective action.

Sociopolitical development theory provides a helpful framework to explore how youth of color critically reflect on and develop the skills and agency to take action to sociopolitical action against systemic inequities (Watts et al., 2003). As this theory has evolved, scholars have emphasized the importance of youths' political imagination not only to critically reflect on society, but to propose plans for what social change could look like (Scott et al., 2023). Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth may draw on political imagination as a tool to foster their sense of agency and inform the types of sociopolitical action they take (Bleh

et al., 2024; Dache, 2019; Kelley, 2002; Moore & Milkoreit, 2020). Similarly, radical hope described as a commitment to build towards a more just world with others, may foster youths' agency because it is rooted in an awareness of historic and modern-day resistance (French et al., 2019; Miller-Tejada, 2024; Moseley et al., 2020). Without a vision of what the world could be without white supremacist patriarchy and the radical hope that these visions are achievable, these girls may doubt their ability to make meaningful social change. Therefore, political imagination and radical hope may work in tandem to foster youths' agency to take action (Stetsenko, 2021). Aligned with calls from Black and Latina feminists (Kelley, 2002) we intentionally center the unique wisdoms of these girls and gender-expansive youth and delineate implications for how scholars, educators, activists and policy makers can enhance their gender-racial equity advocacy. Thus, the current study draws upon sociopolitical development theory (Scott et al., 2023; Watts et al., 2023), and radical hope literature (Christens et al., 2018; Moseley et al., 2020) to explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender expansive youths' visions for the future.

Theoretical Framing

Sociopolitical development theory describes how youth of color draw on sociocultural strengths to develop skills, attitudes, and beliefs to resist racism (Hope et al., 2024). The theory describes three core components or competencies: 1) critical social analysis (i.e., the process of understanding systems of oppression); 2) sense of agency (i.e., belief in one's ability to enact change as an individual or collective); and 3) sociopolitical engagement (i.e., commitment to and engagement in actions motivated by social justice.) Sociopolitical skills progress through multiple stages, suggesting that as individuals learn more about systemic inequities, they are more like to take sociopolitical action. As sociopolitical development literature continues to grow, scholars call for an integration of intersectionality to better understand how youth are

navigating and resisting intersecting systems of oppression - like gendered racism (Hope et al., 2024). I address this call by exploring the role of political imagination and radical hope in Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' resistance to gendered racism.

Political imagination is an important, but often overlooked component of sociopolitical development. In its original conceptualization, Watts et al., (2003) argued that imagination was necessary for having a clear vision of what would replace inequitable systems to guide critical action. Since, Scott and colleagues (2023) have expanded the original theory by operationalizing political imagination as a cognitive process where people consciously distance the present moment to engage, explore, examine, and (de)construct sociopolitical worlds or realities. Political imagination may serve as a bridge between their critical social analysis and their sociopolitical engagement (Scott et al., 2023). It is possible that imagination may facilitate sociopolitical action by strengthening their commitment to social change.

Radical hope, sometimes called critical hope, has been theorized to function as another bridge between marginalized youths' critical social analysis, and their decisions to take action (Christens et al., 2018; Moseley et al., 2020). Similar to political imagination, youths' radical hopefulness in their ability to create social change is informed by their understanding of their ethnic-racial communities' history of oppression and resistance (Moseley et al., 2020). Radical hope may support youth in transforming political imagination from just a plan into an actionable reality because if youth are not hopeful in the achievability of their visions for the future, they might not take action to see it through. Therefore, radical hope may work in tandem with political imagination to strengthen youths' sense of agency by promoting their commitment to sociopolitical action.

Sense of Agency

Youths' sense of agency is considered an important moderator between their critical social analysis and sociopolitical engagement (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' agency manifests on individual and collective levels resulting in varying levels of sociopolitical action (Hope, 2016). Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Studies exploring these girls' and gender-expansive youths individual agency emphasize their commitment to speaking up and addressing discrimination, often at the interpersonal level. One study found that Black girls' self-perception as agentic leaders was a core theme in how they affected change in their learning, religious, familial, and geographic communities (Garcia et al., 2019). Specifically, these girls developed and exerted sociopolitical control because they felt personally responsible for combating misogynoir and other injustices they faced in these various contexts. Another study found that Latina girls embody a "guerrera" (woman warrior) spirit, which contributed to their sense of agency to combat the discriminatory educational experiences at their school and persist in their post-secondary goals (Hernandez Rivera et al., 2023). Girls' awareness of systemic and interpersonal racism in their school made them feel that they needed to be their own protectors. Their guerrera spirit manifested in the practice of dandose a respetar (acting in ways that commands respect from others) - by centering their own needs and self-definitions to make sure others respected the ways they wanted to be treated (Hernandez Rivera et al., 2023). These studies suggest that Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth who have a stronger sense of agency are more likely to take sociopolitical action when faced with interpersonal discrimination.

Collective agency may be a particularly important for Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth who draw strength from their awareness of the legacy of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women leaders across history, as well as the sisterhood with other girls

and femmes that share their political alignment (Leath et al., 2022). Their collective consciousness and agency often result in an orientation towards communal care that primes them to engage in collective organizing and leadership by forming organizations at their schools and in their communities (Leath et al., 2022; Quiles-Kwock, Pinetta et al., under review). To date, there are mixed findings in terms of how agency moderates the relationship between critical social analysis and sociopolitical engagement (Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Suzuki et al., 2023). However, emerging research has begun to document the interconnected nature of political imagination and agency as promotive factors for youth activism and social movement participation (Bleh et al., 2024; Moore & Milkoreit, 2020).

Political Imagination as a Sociocultural Strength

While the concept of political imagination has often been overlooked within psychological research, other disciplines like sociology, history, and education have considered the role of political imagination in sociopolitical development (Fuist, 2021; Kelley, 2002; Scott et al., 2023). For instance, within the Black Radical Imagination framework, political imagination is enacted through freedom dreaming where individuals visualize the future that we want to live in, and equip themselves with tools and resources to work towards that world (Kelley, 2002). Black radical imagination stems from Afrofuturism, a framework and artistic epistemology that explores the cultural experiences of the African diaspora through alternative realities and futures using imagination, technology, and mysticism (Kelley, 2002) mirroring how Scott and colleagues (2023) describe political imagination as a tool for critical social analysis. It was developed as a way to communicate possibilities and spaces for Black empowerment, while also reclaiming lost histories (Womack, 2017) and has been used as a praxis for creating Black futures centered on their joy, healing, and thriving (Toliver, 2021).

At various points throughout history, Black feminist activists and scholars have used political imagination to foster collective agency and galvanize others for action (Kelley, 2002). The Combahee River Collective, created non-hierarchical and women centered spaces for Black women to convene, discuss, and strategize on how to combat systemic misogynoir. This allowed women to dream and theorize without the control of censorship from men within the movement. Poets and activists like June Jordan and Cheryl Clarke extended this work by making the LGBTQ community's experiences more visible to the Black community, and amplifying the freedom dreams of Queer community members. Scholar activist Angela Davis expanded the idea of whose expertise should guide visions of the new world by inviting and honoring community members' freedom dreams within the academy. As Black feminists guided conversations of freedom dreaming, they asked critical questions to ensure the world they were creating centered the most marginalized people. Specifically, they asked: "How do we build a multiracial movement? How do we move away from questions that focus on just race or gender as opposed to their intersection? What is freedom?" "Can we all get along enough to make a revolution?" (Kelley, 2002). By creating spaces for inclusive and collective freedom dreaming, Black women fostered collective agency that shaped and sustained the civil rights movement.

While there has been less theorization of the role of political imagination within Latinx communities, Latina feminists documented how Latina women have leveraged political imagination to foster individual agency. Specifically, Borderlands and Third Space theories allude to the role of imagination via the process of self-authorship and the development of imagined communities and borders to work towards the decolonization of our minds and communities (Acosta, 2008; Anzaldúa, 1987; Gutiérrez, 2008). Latina feminist have also discussed the decolonial imaginary used to re-writing history and subversively preserve their

culture (Perez, 1999; Esparza, 2010). Counter-storytelling has been used as tool to explore Latinx communities' vision for a more just and equitable future (Aldana, 2024). Latinx feminist scholars' explorations and enactments of political imagination invite important conversations, like "Who are we outside the societal scripts used to subjugate our people?", "How does the wisdom and knowledge that exists in the liminal spaces of our minds help us engage in spiritual healing from systemic oppression?" and "How do we work with others to decolonize our lands?"

Altogether, these bodies of work set the precedent for exploring political imagination as an important sociocultural factor contributing to Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical development. In addition to supporting critical social analysis, political imagination may also foster youths' agency as they "explore their social justice interests, establish their demands, experiment with revolutionary strategies, and conspire for exodus or revolt" (Scott et al., 2023, p. 2). Political imagination may serve as a bridge between youths' critical social analysis and sociopolitical engagement because having a vision for social change contributes to their sense of agency and commitment to social change.

Political Imagination amongst Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina Girls

Albeit small, an emerging body of work has highlighted the how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls engage in imagination to critically reflect on systemic inequities and/or engage in resistance strategies. One study demonstrated how affirming educational spaces allowed Black girls the freedom to critically analyze their experiences of gendered racism, and enacted political imagination enacted through counter storytelling (Davis, 2022). As a part of the Empowering Girls Through Art and Science intervention, girls and researchers engaged in portraiture to critically analyze systemic gendered racism, particularly in the sciences; girls portraits revealed nuanced insights about the history of racism in science, as well as visions for how they could

integrate cultural practices to enhance the field. Another study demonstrated how Black girls enact political imagination by creating feminist blog communities as a part of their activism (Keller, 2012). As a part of developing these blogs, girls had to reimagine and expand what it means to engage in feminist activism by using the digital space to embrace new understandings of community and social change (Keller, 2012). In both studies, Black girls' political imaginings fostered their individual sense of agency, and informed their resistance through self-authorship and/or community building.

Similarly, other studies have explored Latina girls' enactment of political imagination through arts-based interventions that allow them to critically analyze their social worlds. One intervention, Somos Escritoras (We are Writers/Storytellers), supported Latina mothers and their daughters in rewriting their pasts and imagining their futures. Over the course of several workshops, their mother daughter dyads created texts and artwork that critically analyzed the tensions, contradictions, and uncertainties they navigate as girls and women at the intersections of age, gender, culture, language, and race. They also identified and critiqued how gendered-racism impacted their communities' ability to thrive. Stories of their familial and cultural histories allowed them to reflect on the past, and co-created ideas for how to coalition-build towards racial equity. By reclaiming their stories and self-authoring who they were, these girls fostered a stronger sense of agency. Altogether, these studies highlight interconnections between political imagination, critical social analysis and agency. Emerging research also alludes to important connections between political imagination, radical hope, and sense of agency as contributors to radical healing and resistance to systemic oppression (Jarrett-Hill, 2023; Moseley et al., 2020).

Radical Hope as a Catalyst for Enacting Political Imagination

While having a vision for the future is necessary to create a plan, one must also have the hope that their plan is achievable to begin taking actionable steps towards carrying it out (Hill-Jarrett, 2023; Watts et al., 2003). Unlike traditional conceptualizations of hope, radical hope (sometimes referred to as critical hope) stems from an understanding that political change necessitates collective action. Radical hope is a necessary component to radical healing for people of color and indigenous individuals because it promotes agency and imagination in designing new futures through a decolonized lens (Moseley et al., 2021). Marginalized people develop radical hope by drawing on an understanding history of oppression and resistance, embracing ancestral pride, envisioning possibilities, creating meaning and purpose (French et al., 2023). Theoretical work alludes to significant overlaps in radical hope and political imagination in that both processes facilitate marginalized people's reflections on the past, present, and future based on their understanding of collective triumph and struggle (Jarrett-Hill, 2023; Moseley et al., 2020). Overlaps in political imagination and radical hope processes may also serve as pathways for youths' sense of agency and commitment to social change.

Radical hope is theorized to overlap with sociopolitical development processes such that critical social analysis serves as the cognitive component of critical hopefulness, and sense of agency serves as the emotional component (Christens et al., 2018; French et al., 2020; Suzuki et al., 2023). One study of critical hopefulness found that racially diverse urban youths' critical hopefulness was related to their sociopolitical action (Christens et al., 2018). Scholars conducted latent profiles analysis and found that 26.5% of youth were part of their "Critical and Hopeful" or "Critical and Exceptionally Hopeful" clusters, demonstrating both high levels of critical social awareness and hopefulness. Youth with greater critical hopefulness demonstrated greater sense of community and social justice orientation. Latinx youth were the most likely to demonstrate

critical hopefulness, emphasizing the importance of this sociocultural factor for their sociopolitical development. Another study examining associations of hope with changes in critical consciousness over the course of high school amongst racially diverse youth found that hope was highest among those with high trajectories of critical agency and critical action (Suzuki et al., 2023). Youth who were more hopeful tended to engage in more sustained critical action, suggesting their belief that engaging in critical action would result in a more positive future (Suzuki et al., 2023).

Qualitative explorations of radical hopefulness have identified overlaps between racially diverse youths' radical hopefulness, critical consciousness, and political imagination (Miller-Tejada, 2024). One youth participatory action research study, explored immigrant origin youth of colors' radical hope through their political imaginings of a more just world. Specifically, youth engaged in photo voice and other forms of artistic explorations of their visions for themselves and their communities. Youths' artistic projects demonstrated a critical reflection of systemic inequities they experienced at the axis of racism and xenophobia. Their radical hopes centered the source of their hopefulness, which often were related to their collective sense of agency - especially cultural pride in their ethnic-racial community, as well as solidarity with other marginalized people. Youth also conceptualized radical hope as an action, describing their political imaginings for how they could take sociopolitical action. In this study, youths' radical hopes and political imaginings were considered interconnected processes that strengthened other components of their critical consciousness. To date, there is a lack of research exploring the overlaps between Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' radical hopes and political imaginings. Therefore, the current study explores how these two sociocultural factors contribute to these girls' sociopolitical development.

The Current Study

Drawing on sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003; Scott et al., 2023), and radical hope literature (Christens et al., 2018; Mosley et al., 2020), this study explores Black, Latina, and African Latina girls and gender expansive youths' visions for the future. This study will specifically consider the role of radical hope in catalyzing political imagination into these girls' and gender-expansive youths' sense of agency. The present study is guided by three overarching questions:

1. How are Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth incorporating political imagination, radical hope and/or commitment to social change into their visions for themselves and other girls from their ethnic racial communities?
2. How are Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth incorporating political imagination and/or radical hope into their visions for what community activists can achieve for their ethnic racial-communities?
3. In what ways do Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' visions for the future expand current understandings on the importance of political imagination and radical hope in sociopolitical development theory?

Methodology

This paper draws from the larger Hope Resilience Action (HRA) study, a project focused on exploring Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender expansive youths' critical consciousness and sociopolitical development. The HRA study included a cross-sectional survey data and semi-structured individual interview data regarding how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender expansive youth leveraged hope, cultural resilience, and action to navigate gendered racism and systemic oppression. In the current study, we focus on exploring the role of

political imagination, and radical hope in fostering girls' sense of agency and commitment to sociopolitical change.

Sample

We recruited 25 girls and gender expansive youth, ages 15-21 (M = 18.32), from across the United States. Eight girls identified as Black, seven girls identified as Hispanic or Latina (n = 5), three girls identified as Afro-Latina (n = 3), and seven girls were Biracial. In regards to gender, four youth identified as gender expansive (n = 4) (i.e., femme, gender queer, gender fluid, and unsure yet) but on the spectrum of girlhood. Gender expansive youth refers to a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. While our study focused on girls, we did not consider girlhood within a binary, and instead considered the spectrum of girlhood; our understanding of girlhood includes gender expansive youth assigned female at birth who identified as non-binary genderqueer or gender fluid, or youth who identify as a girl or femme now. I recognize that gender is a fluid and complex construct. Therefore, we invited gender expansive youth to participate if they felt their current gender identity aligned with our intention to amplify girls' stories. (See Table 1 for participant demographics).

Recruitment

All study procedures were approved by the University of Virginia (Study #4192). We recruited Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina adolescent girls and gender expansive youth in several ways. Based on IRB requirements, we could not recruit adolescents directly, so we began recruitment by soliciting support from youth serving organizations (e.g., Creciendo Juntos and Birth Sisters of Charlottesville) and parent groups through the teams' personal and professional networks and through social media. Initial social media campaigns began through our personal

accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter). We sent out electronic flyers with detailed information about the study, and a link to the informed consent and demographic survey. After interested participants provided informed consent, they received a link to Calendly (i.e., online calendar scheduling app), where they could schedule an interview with a member of the research team. This strategy worked well initially as we successfully recruited and completed pláticas with 3 co-creators. However, we faced several recruitment concerns after circulating our flyer on Twitter. Namely, Twitter attracted an international audience, which resulted in a series of fake participants and sign ups. After we received several fraudulent sign ups with international geolocations and duplicate email addresses, we shut down the original survey and began a new survey exclusively using word of mouth and Instagram recruitment. I developed the @hoperesilienceaction Instagram study page to send targeted reels to share our study. We controlled our intended audience by using filters by race, age, and/or gender. At this point I expanded the age range to include young adults ages 18-21. Finally, some co-creators referred their friends, which is referred to as snowball sampling.

Plática Methodology

As a feminist scholar, I recognize the deep connection between epistemology (i.e., how scholars build a "system of knowing" based on their world views) and methodology (i.e., how we frame, theorize, and our data) (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). Scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Emma Pérez (1999), and Chela Sandoval (2000) argue that new knowledge is uncovered by looking in liminal spaces and interstitial gaps, borders, and intersections (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). Perez urges scholars to seek out "the unheard, the unthought, the unspoken" (1999, p. 5). Thus, Chinan@/Latina feminist scholars encourage us to leverage our cultural intuition to ground our methodologies in decolonial and feminist thoughts so we can

create tools that build on our ways of knowing and allow us to come to research as our full selves (Calderon et al., 2012; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). These scholars argue that through pláticas (e.g., deep conversations), we can co-create theory within and amongst communities.

I employed plática methodology, "a collaborative process that involved sharing stories, building community, and acknowledging multiple realities and vulnerabilities" (Burciaga & Tavares 2006, p. 805) as a tool for data collection. Plática methodology was developed by Chican@/Latina feminist scholars in order to engage with research participants in a way that promotes connection by bridging the personal and the academic (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). Scholars recognized traditional methods of qualitative inquiry would not work with Hispanic/Latinx populations due to the lack of reciprocity and mutual sharing in structured, or semi-structured interviews. So, Valle and Mendoza (1978) identified pláticas as a more culturally appropriate method that allows scholars to integrate more cultural formals. For this reason, I refer to the girls, young women, and gender expansive youth as co-creators throughout the study as opposed to participants.

Pláticas begin with "la entrada (the entrance)" where they establish a link between the interviewer and the interviewee. In our study, we created a short PowerPoint that included a photo of interviewees at about age 16 and shared how our understanding of sociopolitical engagement was at that age, as well as how it has changed over time. We also shared the origins of the research project and defined key terms we would use so we were all on the same page in terms of language. The process continues with "amistad (friendship)" which focuses on developing conversational play before entering into discussion. In our pláticas, this often occurred even before the entrada, when we asked girls and gender expansive youth about how their day was going. After our brief introduction, we asked co-creators if they had looked at the

co-creator guide prior to the interview, and asked them where they wanted to start. If co-creators had not reviewed the guide, or seemed or reserved, we would open the interview with an informal question like "how would you describe yourself in three words?" During our pláticas, we also engaged in amistad through speaking informally. Amongst some of the Latina and Afro-Latine participants, we sometimes code switched, and spoke in Spanish or Spanglish. Throughout the interviews, we also shared how our experiences were similar or different to theirs, and demonstrated empathy as they shared their stories. Lastly, "la despedida (farewell)" concluded with a show of appreciation to both parties. This often occurred very naturally at the end of our pláticas; we thanked girls for sharing their stories and knowledge, and many girls shared immense gratitude for including them or for exploring a research topic they also felt was important.

Interview Protocol

Once co-creators consented to participating in our study, girls and gender expansive youth were matched with a research team member who shared their ethnic or racial identity. I interviewed all Latina girls and gender expansive youth as well as Afro-Latina girls who did not identify as Black. Raven, Channing, and Saidi interviewed Black girls and gender expansive youth, as well as Afro-Latina girls who identified as Black. Prior to meeting for our plática, interviewers emailed a "co-creators guide" to each girl/gender expansive youth which included a list of key terms, their definitions, and key study questions we hoped to discuss. Co-creators were encouraged to review the guide before our plática (See Appendix A for co-creator guide). Most co-creators chose to begin with racial-ethnic identity, or school experiences, however, this varied greatly. All but one participant was asked about their hopes for themselves and other girls as a way to close the interview. Since we asked these questions intuitively, co-creators were

asked a variation of the question, “What do you hope for yourself as you get older?” Typically, co-creators were then asked some variation of “What do you hope for other Black and Latina girls who are growing up now?” The second question had slightly more variation in how it was presented or answered because some girls tended to focus on girls who were from their ethnic-racial group, while others expanded to include girls from other ethnic-racial groups. Most girls were asked, “What are your hopes for the BLM movement” and/or “What are your hopes for Latinx activists in your community?” While questions regarding hope for activism came up naturally in many girls and gender expansive youths’ conversations about BLM, or the lack of activism combating ICE detention at the border, some girls did not steer the conversation in this way. (See Appendix B for research team plática guide).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity describes the act or intention of a researcher to think about how their identities and lived experiences relate the ways they engage in research (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). Engaging in reflexivity is important because it allows us to better understand how the researcher shows up in their work - for instance, why they were invested in the research questions, why they choose a specific methodological approach, or why they decided to choose a specific type of dissemination. I am a second-generation Latina, lesbian, woman scholar who grew up in New York City. As a child, both hope and political imagination were important components that supported my sociopolitical development and overall well-being. In the face of systemic barriers to my education, I spent a lot of time imagining how I could make an impact in my community through my career. Recognizing how systemic racism impacted women of color’s health and access to education, at one point, I even imagined being both a midwife and a teacher to directly serve the Black and Latina women in my community. Although my political

imaginings have changed over time, radical hope fueled my desire to continue pursuing social justice work, because I knew it was needed, and I had a sense of agency to believe that my contributions mattered. In many ways, I still feel the little version of Taina hoping and dreaming for myself and for this world.

As a community and developmental psychologist, I gravitate towards feminist and liberatory epistemological approaches. My research focuses on amplifying the voices of Black and Latina women and girls, by highlighting our cultural strengths. In my research agenda, I have sought to explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' sociopolitical development with a specific focus on the role of identity, hope, and community to foster resistance against oppression. Further, I have sought to integrate Black and Latina feminist theories and practices into psychological work. For instance, in this study, I draw on Black feminist theories, like intersectionality in analysis, and interpretation of this work. Additionally, aligned with Black feminism, I believe we must expand our conceptualizations of who qualifies as a scholar, and I refer to our "participants" as co-creators, and view them as experts of their own experiences. Further, I was guided by my Latina scholarship to practice relational and connection focused research as opposed to traditional forms of hierarchical and structured research, through plática methodology. Lastly, throughout my paper, you will see the use of the terms "we" and "our" to signal that I am a part of this community. However, I recognize that mine is just one of the many different experiences amongst all the Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls.

In order to expand my perspective, I developed a team of Black and Latina women scholars to support the recruitment, collection, and analysis of the data. As Black and Latina scholars, we were all able to engage in a co-creation process with other Black and Latina girls drawing on experiences of our own girlhood that allowed us to connect with them. Our ways of

knowing and lived experiences provided a critical and unique knowledge base beyond our level of academic expertise. Being able to share our experiences as women from the same communities allowed for a level of mutual vulnerability which contributed to deeper and richer conversations. All scholars on the team are invested in studying psychological processes related to resistance through cultural strengths, for example, fostering racial ethnic identity, critical consciousness, and mental health. Our research is part of our scholarly activism aimed at promoting radical healing in our communities. See Table 2 for research team reflexivity.

Data Analysis

Our data analysis consisted of two rounds of coding. Our first round of coding used inductive coding inspired by grounded theory techniques, which is a data driven approach where scholars derive theory from participants' narratives (Braun & Clark, 2006; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). Saldana describes grounded theory as, "a series of cumulative coding cycles that ultimately lead to the development of a theory – a theory "grounded" or rooted in the original data themselves" (2013, p. 51). We began data analysis after the majority of data (n = 23) had been collected. I began with data familiarization by reading through the transcripts and identifying excerpts that answered each hope question. My initial review included 76 relevant excerpts from 23 interviews, using key search words like, "hope," "achieve," "dream," and "accomplish." I also read the last few minutes of each interview, since that is when most interviewees were asked about their hopes for themselves, other girls, and community activists. I entered each excerpt into an excel sheet alongside the participants' pseudonym.

At this point, I assembled my coding team which comprised two Latina undergraduate woman scholars and one Black high school girl scholar. In alignment with grounded theory, my coding team and I engaged in line-by-line coding, where we applied open codes to each excerpt

in excel (Saldana, 2016). Open codes refer to a method where researchers apply one-to-three-word memos to co-creators' responses in order to break the data into manageable chunks that we could then organize into thematic categories. The purpose of open coding is to get a better understanding of what is going on with the data by identifying a list of subtopics, or subcodes (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022; Saldana, 2016). For instance, in reviewing girls' hopes for themselves, some of the most frequent open codes included, "supporting community," "giving back," "impact," "activism," and "career." When asking about girls' hopes for other Black and Latina girls, the most frequent open codes were: "pride," "avoiding barriers," and "self-love/worth." Lastly, some of the most frequent open codes we applied for girls' hopes for activists, included: "spreading awareness," "mobilization," and "inclusivity."

As discussed in grounded theory, in step two, we met to organize the open codes into axial codes, or larger themes within the data (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022; Saldana, 2016). Axial coding helps researchers to identify themes in the data by discussing and identifying how different codes might relate to each other. Using splitting and lumping, we identified where we could condense our open codes based on similarities as well as where certain open codes might serve as "subcodes" within larger theme codes (Saldana, 2016, p. 229). We engaged in the lumping process on Jamboard (i.e., a digital interactive whiteboard developed by Google; Varghese, 2016). First, myself and two Latina undergraduate scholars listed the open codes we felt were most frequent and/or salient while reading the excerpts to the first question. Then, we grouped similar open codes together achieving three primary codes. We repeated this process for questions two and three and found three codes relating to girls' hopes for other girls and five codes for girls' hopes for BLM and other activists. Seeing significant overlap between girls' hopes for themselves and other Black and Latina girls, we included codes in the same codebook.

Our initial codebook included four codes specifically addressing responses to questions about Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' hopes for themselves and other girls (Table 1) and four codes related to their hopes for BLM and other activists (Table 2). Then, in order to test the reliability of the code book, the entire coding team applied the preliminary codes to three transcripts and we made adjustments to better align with the data. For instance, during open coding we discussed the saliency of girls' hopes to give back to family. However, during axial coding, we recognized that the code was not frequently applied, and therefore, we removed that subcode. Similarly, in our initial codebook we had included a subcode for mentions of giving back to a specific ethnic-racial community; however, we did not find this subcode to be as prevalent while coding. Both the "family" and "ethnic-racial community" subcodes were then collapsed under the "supporting community" code. We continued to refine the codebook until the team felt that the codes aligned well with the data, and we could confidently apply the codes without needing to change them (See Table 2 for Codebook.)

Once the codebook was finalized, the team used consensus coding in Dedoose to apply the codes. In order to ensure that we had captured all participants' responses before applying the axial codes, research assistants also read the transcripts holistically in Dedoose and also identified any excerpts they felt addressed our key research questions. After their review, we added 67 new excerpts to our dataset, which included excerpts that had been missed, or data from participants' who had been interviewed after step one. Through group consensus, we identified 143 excerpts for our final dataset. The full coding team met for an hour and a half, bi-weekly, to review the excerpts in each interview and apply codes. While coding, we focused on individual excerpts within one interview, each coder named the codes they believed were relevant, and then, we debated any disagreements before proceeding to the next excerpt. In cases

where we were unsure, we examined other times a specific code was applied, and added rules for consistency in our codebook.

Where relevant, we added memos that documented useful context for participants' responses. For example, in one memo we noted, "This participant talks about education & career success throughout the interview." We also kept memos that helped us document where we were "reading for culture" (Rogers et al., 2022) where we noted areas where we felt participants' responses alluded to something further using our ways of knowing as women of color. For example, in one memo we noted, "Luna discussed hopes for her community in response to hopes for herself because of her communalist orientation to the world stemming from her biracial heritage (Cuban & Chinese) and ancestral roots in communism." The most common way we saw girls' insinuated information involved references to "my community," where we believed girls alluded to their ethnic-racial community. Generally, we were able to code approximately four interview transcripts per session.

Finally, we engaged in step three of grounded theory coding analysis, where we developed a conceptual map of our axial codes to begin identifying higher order themes. Upon completion of coding, we first explored code frequencies and co-occurrences using Dedoose qualitative charts. We also engaged in "shop talking" where we discussed how the codes interacted to form higher order themes (Saldana, 2016). I asked members of the coding team to reflect on how they would describe the overall theme for each question to a family or community member. Using this prompt, we each wrote down what we thought the most important theme was to each question. These responses were used to develop three initial higher order themes: 1) girls' hopes for themselves and other girls often centered around serving their community through career attainment; 2) girls hoped for safe spaces where they, and others, could exist

without fear; 3) girls hoped BLM activists could spread awareness of marginalization happening in their communities and increase opportunities for social mobility.

After drafting preliminary results, I engaged in secondary coding, and returned to the data to consider these themes within the context of the sociopolitical development theory. I developed deductive codes based on our key study questions, such as: political imagination, radical hope, critical social analysis, and commitment to social change. Aligned with the literature, radical hopefulness was coded when co-creators' responses demonstrated hopefulness rooted in their critical social analysis of systemic inequities (i.e., racism, xenophobia or gendered-racism), and/or in their collective agency to effect social change. Political imagination was applied when co-creators' responses included visions for the future were oriented towards social justice. I coded when girl and gender expansive youths' vision for the future demonstrated individual political imagination, radical hope, and a commitment to agency. In their responses to their visions for community activists, I also coded where youth demonstrated collective political imagination, radical hope. After this secondary coding, I developed six higher order themes described in the results below.

Results

Our first research question sought to uncover how these co-creators' visions for themselves and other Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' futures. We identified three themes: 1) radical hopes and political imaginings for affecting change through their careers; 2) (lack of) hopes for eliminating gendered racism; and 3) (radical) hopes for self-love. The second research question considered how these youth incorporated political imagination and radical hope into their visions for what community activists could achieve for their ethnic racial communities. We identified two themes: 1) radical hopes for spreading

awareness of systemic racism and 2) radical hopes and political imaginings of strategies for political change. We discuss how the themes expand scholarly understanding of political imagination and radical hope as promotive factors for critical action in the discussion to address our final research question.

"I'm a strong believer in being the change you want to see": Visions for Themselves and Other Girls

Radical Hopes and Political Imaginings for Affecting Change through their Careers

When describing their visions for themselves and other girls, co-creators' radical hopes and political imaginations intersected to inform their visions of themselves as agents of change through their social justice-oriented careers. Many girls wanted to become doctors, scientists, or lawyers to provide services that were lacking in their neighborhoods. For example, Isabella an 18-year-old Latina young woman was pursuing a career in law to support Latinx immigrants navigating the immigration system. She said,

> I've been talking about this since the eighth grade, and wanting to be an immigration lawyer…I want to help as many immigrants as possible. I'm just going to be handing out papers, like it's nothing…So if I can help people who are within my community

Having to navigate her family's experiences of marginalization in the immigration system, Isabella educated herself the systemic roots of xenophobia. She envisioned that as a lawyer, she would have access to power that would allow her to support others on a larger scale.

Audre, a 17-year-old Black girl, shared radical hopes to address mental health disparities in her home country, by pursuing multiple careers. She said,

> I want to be a doctor, obviously. And maybe I want to be able to start my own nonprofit where I can help people get mental help. And go to like, third world countries like the

> country I was born in, Tanzania and like help the mentally ill there because I know they're outcasted..

Recognizing that people in Tanzania experience significant health care inequities, Audre's radical hope for herself involved political imaginings of a career of service, where she could fill multiple roles in her community.

Other co-creators shared political imaginings of how they could leverage their careers to give back to their communities by using their skills or engaging in philanthropy. Reina, an 18-year-old Latina woman who aspired to hold a C-Suite position (i.e., senior executive leaders in an organization), said,

> I really hope to come back to my community and...provide some assistance to any nonprofits in my area. I know I have benefited from nonprofits, and my family has…So I would like to come back and support them in any way that I can. Whether or not it'd be like financially or with any skills that I learned throughout my career

In our plática, Reina described how being in a position of power would contribute to her social mobility and ability to give back to her community. As an executive leader, she also wanted to support other women of color coming up in the field.

Similarly, Ariana, a 17-year-old Afro-Latina gender questioning youth, imagined giving back to her community through philanthropy. She said, "It could be…. giving somebody a feeling that they could actually be successful too or feel that [they] have a reason to speak and that I'm a person that can speak to…" Both Reina and Ariana imagined using their professional capital to support their communities, especially other women of color, in pursuing positions of leadership within their fields.

(Lack of) Hope for Eliminating Gendered Racism

Although many Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina co-creators viewed their careers as vehicles for social change, others' responses emphasized their anticipation of gendered racial discrimination during womanhood, especially at work. Gina and Karina hoped that as working women, they would not have to face gender-racial discrimination. Gina, a 20-year-old Biracial white Latina young woman hoped for a change in workplace culture. She hopes that one day Latinas in positions of power would not be fetishized or tokenized. Likewise, Karina, a 21-year-old Biracial white Latina young woman shared,

> I hope that our society in general moves more towards people not having to face obstacles because of their race or ethnicity. And I mean, that's for me, but it's also for everyone else… we would have people who are more qualified in certain positions that are very powerful. Because it seems like people who do deserve those positions, sometimes they can't get to it just because of who they are…

Karina's experiences of ethnic-racial discrimination, informed her hopes that other Black and Latina girls would experience much less racial discrimination than she had. She also hoped that they would have more role models to look up to, so they would feel as though their goals were achievable. She envisioned greater work-place equity would be beneficial on a societal level as more qualified people could be a part of leadership. Both Gina and Karina's hopes were not radical, in that neither seems to feel a sense of agency in changing the social conditions that maintain work-place inequities. Their responses also did not extend to political imagination, because they did not share explicit visions for how it could be achieved.

For some co-creators, the perceived barriers they anticipated facing in their careers caused a lack of hope and agency for their ability to achieve their visions for the future. In her hopes for other girls, Audre, a 17-year-old Black girl, explained,

> I feel like this is unrealistic. But I want there to be a world where Black girls are not afraid or held back from becoming their best self and achieving their dreams…I want to see…. more Black doctors… Black girl lawyer… Black girl business owners…I just want to see more Black girls in positions of leadership.

Audre's response signaled a few key points. It is likely Audre's critical awareness of systemic and interpersonal discrimination makes her feel her own hopes are "unrealistic." Audre noted that Black girls held back from achieving their dreams, and may experience fear or doubt about their ability to persist in certain careers. These concerns may limit their ability to have radical hopes for themselves as they must prioritize feeling safe and respected in their field.

(Radical) Hopes for Self-love

Uniquely, Black co-creators' shared visions for greater self-love in womanhood. Some co- creators hoped and imagined that when they entered womanhood, they would find peace within themselves and develop a sense of pride in their identity. Girls like Shakiera and Julissa shared their reflections on how Black girls face unique challenges that may impede their ability to embrace themselves fully. For instance, Julissa a 16-year-old Afro-Latina girl, discussed how Black girls are growing up in a world that "brings them down". In response, she hopes for a world where they can "Grow up in a space of love… find their voice…find their meaning in this world, because there's so much meaning." Shakiera a 17-year-old Black girl described some barriers to self-love as being age related, and said:

> Young Black girls, a lot of them are fearful of embracing themselves, and there's the collective experience of wearing your hair in little braids and stuff. And then you go through a phase where it's like, whoa, all my white peers are going through something else. And then here I am wearing beret clips in my hair in the sixth grade. So that

> transition….and how as you go through different phases in your life, it's like you're transitioning and becoming more into yourself…

Shakiera observed that Black girls experience different types of challenges in the transition to adolescence that make them feel left behind. Her response suggests that she hoped and imagined that as Black girls grow up, they would be better positioned to come into themselves. It is possible that Shakiera is alluding to womanhood as a period where people stop making as many social comparisons, and start focusing more on their self-impression.

Many Black girls shared radical hopes for themselves and other Black girls to embrace their physical features. For instance, Jada, a 20-year-old Black and Latina young woman hoped that other girls "get released from the shackles of perms and what hair is supposed to look like." She went on to say,

> Our hair is beautiful. Regardless of how it grows out of your head…And if you really focus on trying to make it fit a certain image, then you're taking away from yourself at a point…So I just hope that they don't get too accustomed to dimming their uniqueness.

Jada's reflection highlights an awareness that Black girls are often expected to conform to beauty standards that do not align with their own natural beauty, and in turn cause them to feel they need to minimize themselves. Similarly, Zuri, a 15-year-old Black girl, said that she hoped as a woman, she would feel "more competent, confident, being a Black person." Zuri hoped to support other girls who were being "picked on" to not be "ashamed" of their Black identity. She reflected on how colorism reflects larger patterns of misogynoir that limit girls' self-worth when they internalize beliefs about their beauty and worth based on gendered-racial stereotypes.

Accepting their appearance may have been particularly salient to non-binary youth like Ryan, a 15-year-old Biracial white Black youth. Ryan hoped non-binary Black youth would:

> Feel comfortable in their skin and, like, feel happy with what, the way that they are regardless of whether they not, they want to, like, physically alter themselves. Like, I hope that they're happy with whatever outcome they come up with…I just hope that they find peace within themselves.

In another part of the plática, Ryan discussed that while attending public schools, their pronouns and non-binary identity were not respected, resulting in gender dysmorphia, and negative mental health after having to resist gender-conformity at their school every day. Ryan highlighted how deeply accepting one's own acceptance of their appearance contributed to their peace. In sum Black girls and gender expansive youth discussed how racism poses barriers to their self-love; they viewed accepting themselves and honoring their physical beauty as an act of resistance.

"Really mobilizing as a community is what I hope for in the future": Visions for What Community Activists Could Accomplish

Radical Hopes For Spreading Awareness Of Systemic Racism

Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina co-creators shared radical hopes that BLM and Latinx community activists would spread awareness of the injustices they were facing, so that others might care about their communities' experiences and galvanize to support them. Girls recognized that peoples' ignorance of the systemic inequities Black and Latinx people face might stifle their ability to empathize with them and support racial equity. Sofia a 20-year-old Latina young woman radically hoped that the Latinx activists in her community would amplify their stories and make sure others knew about the issues they were facing (e.g., ICE surveillance and xenophobia). She said,

> The first way or the first step in creating change, is making sure people know about the issues and know what areas they want to see change in, and kind of helping to secure those opportunities, secure education, secure resources for people in need.

She envisioned that if others were aware of the inequities Latinx families faced, they would be motivated to support their community. Saida 19-year-old Black women said,

> I hope that they can stop the killings. I hope that they can stop the detainments. I hope that we could further humanize our people….I feel like once you start seeing, people you have no choice but to ask questions or learn something every day….So it's like the representation I think is very good…it's building connections.…that builds a sense of humanization for the individual.

Saida theorized that the lack of familiarity about Black and Latinx communities' struggles resulted in a dehumanization that allowed racially privileged Americans to feel distant from these social issues. By having more exposure to Black and Latinx people's experiences, the believed others would feel a greater sense of empathy and motivation to take action.

Ameena, a 17-year-old Black girl summarized it best when she shared radical hopes that community activists would "shine light on other problems and like to bring other people in…" She went on to discuss how educating oneself about systemic injustice can be a form of critical action that is accessible to everyone, regardless of age. Collectively, Sofia, Saida, and Ameena, discussed the importance of education as an entry point and motivator of anti-racism; they highlighted that education could foster empathy and a sense of connection from others who may not have otherwise been invested in racial equity for Black and Latinx communities.

Political Imaginings and Radical Hopes of Strategies for Political Change

Co-creators' visions for what community activists could accomplish, often leveraged political imagination as a means for critical social analysis. These political imaginings resulted in two subthemes: 1) mobilization strategies; 2) avenues for change.

Mobilization Strategies. Co-creators shared political imaginings for how community activists could leverage collective power for change to strengthen racial justice movements. Of importance, many co-creators imagined fostering collective power through interracial solidarity between Black and Latinx communities. In her plática, Julissa discussed the importance of fostering interracial solidarity between the Black and Latinx communities, beginning with an awareness of how their experiences of marginalization are connected. She discussed how systemic inequities posed barriers to their ability to build community because,

> They don't learn...their heritage, they don't learn how whiteness affects them, and how whiteness is pushing them into these corners, you know, they have to learn that. You can't do anything else until you inform people. That's how enslaved people escaped slavery. They learned, they educated themselves, they had to learn and it starts with learning and you have to fund those communities to do that.

Julissa's awareness of the historical legacy of inter-and-intra racial solidarity informed her understanding of how she might apply those approaches to modern day injustices. She theorized that if Black and Latinx communities were able to make connections about how their experiences of racism are connected through white supremacy, they might feel a politicized collective identity with one other that promotes interracial solidarity. She envisioned that,

> We [Black & Latinx community] can love each other unconditionally, and hold each other accountable and communicate and have our differences and share culture. And you know, it does not have to be...hatred. We can move past that, like, we can build those bridges back up, and do so in a loving and equitable way…I don't know, this is like, it's like fairytale land. But you know, I think that one day we can start working towards it.

She shared political imaginings for how coalition building between the Black and Latinx communities could be difficult; yet continual investment in these communities was an act of love that could be transformative. Her response also demonstrated elements of radical hope in that she alluded to how collective power would increase the Black and Latinx community's agency and ability to advocate for racial equity.

Shakiera, a 17-year-old Black girl, also discussed the importance of solidarity between Black and Latinx communities. She shared political imaginings that interracial solidarity between Black and Latinx communities would make them stronger. She said,

> I hope that as communities like we are able to grow within ourselves. I know that the Black diaspora and even the Latinx diaspora are two of the most broken up diasporas because of colonization in different issues, that historically have changed the way we view each other in different regions of the world. So before we even fight any issue, we really do have to come together as groups

Like Julissa, Shakiera highlighted how colonization has resulted in some Black and Latinx individuals feeling untethered to their ancestral origins and sometimes to each other. She emphasized the need to address appropriated racism (a reframing of internalized racism where an individual internalizes dominant narratives of themselves as inferior; Banks & Stephens, 2018) to create a foundation to address these systemic inequities as a unified front. However, she also cautioned that in communities of color, it can be difficult to address these larger systemic issues which often exclude vulnerable members like transgender individuals. She posed the question: "So just how can we as a community come together and help ourselves before, you know we combat all the issues of the world?" Her question signaled that Shakiera believed there was still work to be done within these communities to support those who were the most vulnerable.

Within her own plática, Shakiera answers this question by theorizing on how intersectionality can be applied as a tool for centering the most marginalized members of the Black community, namely transgender people.

Intersectionality

Other girls shared political imaginings for how community activists could center the voices of the most marginalized people within movements for racial justice. Sofia, a 20-year-old Latina woman, shared political imaginings that cross racial coalitions would be inclusive in their membership and in the issues they prioritized. She critiqued that social movements often focused on "a specific issue, but not so much like intersectional efforts". She felt that activists could benefit from using intersectionality because "a lot of these people could benefit from hearing that, other people have similar experiences other people with multiple gender identities that are being discriminated against, or multiple, like, racial or ethnic identities." Like Shakiera, Sofia explicitly named the need for social movements to incorporate an intersectional approach to identify how systems impact communities. In doing so, activists could help others see how different experiences of marginalization were related, which might elicit a sense of collective identity and agency to tackle the root causes of the oppression.

Similarly, Karina, a 21-year-old Biracial white Latina, shared political imaginings for how Latinx activists should center the voices of undocumented immigrants. She said,

> I would just say that how the most vulnerable people are being treated is going to affect us as a whole.... So I would hope that we shine more light on, especially undocumented people…And then as a whole, the community would be able to more things, but until they get literally the bare minimum of not being fearful, of being deported…. I don't want to focus on anything else before that, because that's the most critical.

Karina shared political imaginations that galvanizing support for the most vulnerable (undocumented immigrants) was “critical” and foundational to any further intraracial coalition building. Sofia, Shakiera and Karina’s approach aligns with Black feminist theorizations that by addressing systemic inequities targeting the most vulnerable, we can achieve equity for more privileged members of a community, as well.

Avenues for Change

Co-creator’s shared radical hopes and political imaginings for how different types of organizing and critical action related to varied degrees of impact. Generally, co-creators emphasized the importance of achieving policy level change. However, they noted that policy changes are often achieved because of collective power of grassroots organizing. For instance, Jada, a 20-year-old Black Latina young woman, shared radical hopes that the collective power of community activists would pressure the government into activists in addressing police brutality. Similarly, Rihanna, a 21-year-old Black and Asian young woman, emphasized that while the pressure from activism was important, she believed true systemic change happens through political change within the government. She stated,

> So it's like in an idealistic world…what would be wonderful is like a world where like, no, like Black kids can be out in the street and not be like, stopped for like playing ball on the street, like, in an area where they're allowed to play ball, you know, like, be walking on the street with a hoodie on and headphones in and not be like shot to death. You know, it's less about the work that these like activist groups are doing and it's more about what will the government finally hear because I feel activist groups are doing more [emphasis on more] than enough…it's just waiting for that answer and reply from the government.

Both co-creators' radical hopes and political imaginings for systemic level changes, reflected an understanding that the government has historically been resistant to anti-racist reform. Their responses alluded that while community level activism is necessary and important for applying pressure for political change, systemic oppression could only be dismantled through legislative changes and enforceable anti-racist policies.

Lastly, while most girls' visions for community activists did not incorporate them within the movement, Zenobia, a 21-year-old Afro-Latina young woman, shared radical hopes and political imaginings that young people in her generation would be able to sway our political system to be more liberal. She said,

> We [Gen Z] really don't play. And so I am excited, and hopeful of what we'll be able to accomplish. Because, to be frank, once these old white men get out of office, and you know, Millennials and Gen Z start to take over these, you know, higher legislative positions, I feel like we will be in better hands.

Zenobia's critiques about white old men and conservative politicians were informed by critical social reflections on how the Republican party's racist, xenophobic, and sexist policies have impacted marginalized people in the United States. Inherent to her vision was political imaginings about a more racially diverse liberal government. She associated liberal leaning people as being more open minded about the "advancement of more people." Since she believed Gen Z tended to be more radical and liberal leaning, and vocal about their political beliefs, she imagined they would advocate and vote for more just policies.

Discussion

This study expanded current conceptualizations of sociopolitical development (Hope et al., 2024; Watts et al., 2003) by exploring how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-

expansive youth incorporated aspects of radical hope and political imagination into their visions for themselves, other girls, and what activists could accomplish for their communities. On an individual level many co-creators envisioned themselves as agents of change through their careers. Co-creators sought vocations where they could directly serve their community or support social justice indirectly through mentorship, representation, and philanthropy. On a collective level, co-creators envisioned activists could leverage mobilization strategies like interracial solidarity, and analytic tools like intersectionality that would help activists apply pressure to the government to support anti-racist and gendered-racial equity reform.

While all co-creators demonstrated some level of hopefulness or imagination, some faced barriers to their radical hopefulness or political imagination, due to an awareness of how gendered-racism would impact their futures. Some Black co-creators talked about the importance of self-love as a foundation for developing a sense of individual agency in the face of the misogynoir they experienced in adolescence. Others expressed barriers to radical hope and imagination in anticipation of work-place gendered-racism they would face as women. Co-creators' expressions (or lack thereof) of radical hope and political imagination was related to their perceived agency both on individual and collective levels. These findings demonstrate how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' radical hopes and political imagination inform their sense of individual and collective agency, thereby highlighting important socio-cultural factors that support their sociopolitical development.

Radical Hope and Political Imagination Working in Tandem

Individual Agents of Change

Many girls and gender-expansive youths' visions for themselves incorporated both radical hope and political imagination. Specifically, co-creators envisioned their careers as

vehicles for social change, where they could leverage power they had through their jobs, to support gaps in their communities. Recognizing their ethnic-racial communities' inequitable access to resources motivated their desire to be the change they wanted to see. For the young women in college, we saw this sense of agency enacted as they described choosing majors that would position them to pursue careers in medicine, science, law, or politics; relatedly, they discussed pursuing interdisciplinary majors like Africana Studies, Women and Gender Studies, or International Studies that fostered their critical social analysis of (gendered)racism globally. Although younger co-creators sometimes described a limited sense of agency to take action due to their age, many began their journeys as change-makers by taking smaller steps like leveraging class projects to learn about social inequities and teach their peers racial-justice issues.

As seen in previous literature, Black and Latinx youth often view their careers as pathways for social achieving mobility and agency (Rapa, Diemer & Bañales, 2018). Our findings align with research demonstrating how Black and Latinx youths' sociopolitical development is linked to their vocational development (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2021; Uriostegui et al., 2021). Specifically, Black (Leath et al., 2022; Leath, Jones & Chavous, 2021) and Latina (Gomez et al., 2001; Rodriguez & Blaney, 2021; Venegas-García, 2013) young women pursue careers where they can make social change and challenge deficit gendered-racial stereotypes about women in their ethnic-racial communities.

Visions for Collective Change

On a collective level, co-creators incorporated both radical hopes and political imaginings by detailing strategies for how community activists, mostly within the BLM movement, could mobilize others. Co-creators who lived in predominantly Black and Latinx cities discussed the importance of interracial solidarity between these communities to foster the collective agency

and power needed to effectively advocate for more educational and economic resources in their communities. They described how limited resources and opportunities in these cities often caused interracial tensions posing barriers to their allyship. As Toni Morrison (1975) once said, "The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work". Racism has created structurally inequitable conditions, like impoverishment and educational disparities, which can contribute to marginalized communities fighting amongst each other for limited resources, as opposed to fighting collectively to address the root causes of such disparities (Davis & Martinez, 1993; Embrace Race, n.d). Similarly, to politicized collective identity theory, co-creators' theocratized that if Black and Latinx youth had more educational opportunities, and could make connections about how they experience of marginalization were rooted in white supremacy, they would be more likely to fight racism together (Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

Aligned with sociopolitical development theory, these girls argued that higher levels of critical social analysis promote more collective forms of action, including solidarity with other marginalized people (Ginwright & Cammarotta, 2002). While there is still much to be explored regarding how interracial solidarity functions amongst racially marginalized groups, some researchers have documented the role of critical *intersectional* awareness in facilitating collective identity between marginalized groups. For instance, studies highlight how immigrant origin young *women* engaged in gendered-racial advocacy by amplifying the #SayHerName movement to illuminate how misogynoir impacted Black women (Quiles-Kwock et al., 2024; Terriquez & Milkman, 2021). Still, more work is needed that explores how intersectional awareness promotes interracial solidarity between Black and Latinx communities.

Co-creators who discussed the importance of using intersectionality as a guide for grass-roots organizing focused on the importance of amplifying the most marginalized within their ethnic-racial communities. These girls identified that gender-expansive and undocumented people experienced unique forms of vulnerability compared to other more privileged members of their ethic-racial community. They critiqued social movements for not adequately highlighting the diversity within their ethnic-racial communities, or being inclusive towards those who were experiencing the most systemic violence. Aligned with Black feminist conceptualizations of intersectionality, co-creators imagined that amplifying the most marginalized in their ethnic-racial communities would improve social conditions for everyone else (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1989). Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls may be primed to think about social inequities through an intersectional lens at an early age as they reflect on gendered-racial socialization and discrimination during adolescence (Azmitia & Mansfield, 2021; Cerezo et al., 2019; Thomas, Hoxha, & Hacker, 2013). In fact, most of the co-creators who discussed intersectionality were high school students.

Some co-creators described how their political imaginings for social change were rooted in a critical social awareness of power dynamics between grassroots/community activists and the government. While co-creators valued and described the importance of grassroots activism, they also stated that racial justice could not be achieved without governmental action - specifically the implementation of anti-racist policies. However, they noted that historically, anti-racist policy has been fought for by marginalized communities throughout various civil rights movements that pressured governmental bodies to take action. This highlights both an awareness how racism has been maintained through policy over years, as well the grassroots resistance which has been spearheaded by Black and Latinx communities. These findings conferred with both political

imagination and radical hope theories in that both incorporate which argue youth of color's awareness of the history of oppression and resistance inform their hopes and visions for what is possible in terms of their individual and collective action (Miller-Tejada, 2024; Mosley et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2023).

Self-Love as Foundations for Resistance

Another subsection of girls and gender-expansive youths shared radical hopes, and imaginings (not political imagination) for how self-love and community support would serve as foundations for resistance. When asked about their visions for themselves, many Black girls and gender-expansive youth radically hoped that womanhood would allow them to grow into themselves and develop a greater self-love. These co-creators highlighted the misogynoir (e.g., like comparisons to white-centric beauty standards) they experienced during adolescence that posed barriers to their ability to embrace themselves fully (Bentley-Edwards & Adams, 2024; Stokes et al., 2020). We add to research that highlights how misogynoir impacts Black girls' sense of self and agency in adolescence (Butler-Barnes et al., 2022; Szymanski & Lewis, 2015; Winchester et al., 2022). Although Black co-creators' hopes for self-acceptance were not explicitly demonstrating a commitment to or plan for social change, they were still political in nature as girls are resisting harmful misogynoiristic societal messaging about their worth. For Black girls, learning to love themselves is indeed an act of resistance and form of activism (Leath et al., 2024; Leath et al., 2022; Quiles-Kwock, Pinetta, under review). Therefore, developing a greater self-love may be one foundational Black young women's sociopolitical developments as it relates to their sense of agency and resistance to misogynoir.

Gendered Racism as a Barrier to Radical Hope, Political Imagination, and Agency

The few girls and gender-expansive youth who lacked radical hope and political imagination, tended to focus exclusively on describing their experiences of discrimination. For many of these girls, experiences of ethnic-racial or gendered-racial discrimination caused them to anticipate future discriminatory experiences especially in the workplace. Additionally, the lack of representation of women in leadership roles left them concerned about barriers they would face, as they rose the ranks in their field. As seen in previous research, youths' understanding of the systemic barriers, like harmful gender-racial stereotypes can limit their career aspirations and make it difficult for them to envisioning a word where they can be successful in certain fields (Debroose et al 2018; 2023; Deimer & Hsieh, 2011).

It is important to note that even co-creators who demonstrated lack of hope, pessimism, or apprehension on the individual level, discussed some level of hopefulness in their visions for community activists. However, for some co-creators, the awareness of systemic racism and gendered-racism made them feel their hopes for community activists as being "idealistic" or "utopian." Consistent with decades of civil rights movements, these co-creators' hopes centered on having access to basic human rights, like: an equitable education, an end to gender-based violence, and a transformation of the values we assign to different workers (Kelley, 2002). Co-creators' lack of *radical* hopefulness may stem from recognizing that these demands have remained unaddressed over decades, which hinders their ability to imagine a more equitable future (Scott et al., 2023).

Relatedly, girls who lacked radical hopefulness tended to live in predominantly white neighborhoods, or neighborhoods where not many people shared their ethnic-racial identity. It is possible that these girls felt a lack of communal support that diminished their radical hopefulness or made their political imaginings feel less feasible. Having a sense of community and

understanding the legacy of ancestral legacy of resistance is an important pathway for radical hope (Christens et al., 2018; Moseley et al., 2019). Researchers have also highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships (Christens, 2012) and community organizations (Christens, 2019) in supporting sense of agency. Living amongst people who shared their ethnic-racial identity may have also increased socialization opportunities for youth to learn about their ethnic-racial groups' history of resistance (Pasco et al., 2021).

Limitations & Considerations

We employed plática methodology as a relational approach to interviewing and data interpretation that had many benefits, as well as implications for the interpretation of these findings (Fierros & Bernal, 2016). Since the pláticas were unique to each co-creator, and responsive to how they guided the conversation, it is notable that co-creators were asked the interview questions differently. Specifically, while all but one co-creator was asked about hopes for themselves as they got older, there were a variety of ways girls were asked about their hopes for other girls (e.g., just girls in their ethnic-racial group or Black and Latina girls) and community activists (e.g., BLM, Latinx activists, or community activists). Therefore, we recognize that girls' and gender-expansive youths' responses may have been informed by preceding dialogue regarding critical social analysis and sociopolitical engagement of the heightened racial violence and activism during 2020. We may have also missed certain hopes they had regarding intergroup advocacy as the majority of girls and gender-expansive youth were asked questions in ways that focused on their ethnic-racial groups. Although not a limitation, using plática methodology did introduce variability within the data, and we tried to address this by including the questions that girls responded to in the results to better contextualize which group they were primed to focus on.

Furthermore, our questions did not directly ask about their political imaginings for themselves or community activism, or use words like imagination that would prompt girls to describe *how* their visions for themselves or their communities could be brought to fruition. It is likely that we missed more nuanced responses about what they envisioned a more just world could look like or how it could be achieved. However, while we did not ask directly, girls' and gender-expansive youths' responses were indeed very political in that they focused on their role as change makers and offered descriptive visions for how activists could mobilize others. In fact, we applied political imagination as a theoretical framework after data collection; we first noticed that co-creators' responses to their hopes for the future featured individual and collective visions for social change, during preliminary analysis. We believe in the value and contributions of our co-creators' responses, but encourage future research exploring political imagination to ask more directly about these imaginings, and to provide opportunities for elaboration by probing how girls think their visions could be facilitated.

Implications for Scholarship and Practice

Our findings have several implications for researchers, educators, policy-makers, activists working with and advocating for Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth. First, more scholarly work is needed to understand when, how, and why girls and gender-expansive youth choose to enact their political imaginings or develop a radical hopefulness to better understand how these sociocultural factors serve as a bridge between their critical social analysis and their sociopolitical engagement. Scholarly investigations of youth and particularly girls of colors' sociopolitical development would benefit from integrating Black and Latina feminist epistemologies. By drawing on intersectionality and plática methodology as analytic tools, we were better able to: 1) contextualize girls' and gender-expansive youths' lived

experiences within the context of systems, 2) form deep connections with our co-creators which fueled more nuanced and vulnerable conversations in data collection, and 3) amplify youths' wisdoms about how to organize. Thus, we encourage sociopolitical development researchers to integrate women of color feminisms to enhance the real-world applicability of their scholarship and emphasize the need to use this work to proactively advocate for Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth, beyond the academy, and in community with educators, community organizers, and policy-makers.

Schools and youth serving organizations should seek to foster opportunities for these girls and gender-expansive youth to practice enacting their political imagination and radical hope. We identified a unique dichotomy between girls who have radical hopes to serve as change makers in their career, and those who expressed lack of hope because they imagined entering the workforce and still facing the same gendered racism they did in their schools at their jobs. This finding highlights how gendered-racism hinders youths' ability to envision a more just world. In addition to creating more diverse and culturally relevant curricula, schools must proactively create opportunities for political imagination and hope by reinventing mainstream curriculum standards. For instance, educators could encourage where girls can dream up solutions to dream up solutions to societal problems, and have their ideas affirmed and supported through concrete opportunities in their local communities (Leath et al 2024). As suggested in previous work, fostering political imagination must start early in childhood and can include culturally relevant history storytime, or asking students to create their ideal world with Legos (Flores et al., 2018; Scott et al., 2023; Sizemore Davis, 2022; Toliver, 2022; Young et al., 2021). Greater sense of agency and desire for autonomy can be nurtured among adolescents by providing scaffolded opportunities for them to enact their political imaginings. For instance, educators and youth

service workers can support students to write their own school plays about social issues important to them, or organize mock political campaigns during election season where youth develop their own political platform highlighting their plans for social change. Importantly, as youth share their political imaginings, adults must support and affirm their beliefs; this includes resisting the tendency to immediately identify barriers to implementing their ideas, but to think creatively with youth about how to make things happen, and be honest about the resources that are or are not available to them.

Lastly, policy makers and community activists should consider implementing these girls' and gender-expansive youths' expertise into their own advocacy. The vast majority of co-creators shared nuanced articulations of the pervasive social injustices that continue to plague their ethnic-racial communities, as well as visions for what resistance could be achieved at a collective level. These co-creators provided key insight into the social issues they find most salient and harmful like: gender-racial workplace discrimination and global violence, inequitable educational and economic opportunities, and white-centric beauty standards. The demands across these movements have remained consistent and while progress has been made, these co-creators are still asking for the same rights that their foremothers did (Kelley, 2002). Girls and gender-expansive youth in our study emphasized the need for governmental change that supports their health, well-being, and general safety. However, they also expressed a lack of trust that the government would seek social justice change proactively, reflected in the historically low approval ratings by constituents. I highlight the need for policy makers and representatives to not only seek out the voices of their constituents - including youth - but also to prioritize their concerns within their advocacy efforts. This could mean establishing a community advisor board

with youth representatives to share on-the-ground knowledge about how policies might impact their community (Haddad et al., 2021).

Conclusion

This study expands current sociopolitical development theory by underscoring the importance of political imagination (Scott et al., 2023) and radical hope (Christens, 2018; Mosley et al., 2020) as sociocultural factors that promote and potentially sustain Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' resistance to gendered racism. I found that Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth incorporated aspects of radical hope and political imagination into their visions for themselves by pursuing social-justice oriented careers to address gaps of resources in their ethnic-racial communities. Co-creators also described visions for how community activists could employ mobilization strategies like interracial solidarity and analytic tools like intersectionality to pressure the government to endorse policy level changes, while amplifying the voices of the most marginalized in the community. However, some co-creators faced challenges to their hopefulness and imagination due to the pervasiveness of gendered racism. As scholars, educators, activists, and policy-makers work with and advocate for Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina youth, political imagination and radical hopefulness may support girls' meaning-making and resistance to racially-charged sociopolitical events. Yet, so much can already be learned from these girls and gender-expansive youth about how gendered-racism impacts their development and how we can enhance our current approaches to advocacy for (gendered)racial-justice.

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Table 1.
Co-creator Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Racial-Ethnic Identity	Ethnicity	Gender	Migration Status	State
Ameena	15	Black	Liberian	Girl	Second generation	Illinois
Ana	17	Latina	Peruvian	Girl	Immigrant	Virginia
Angel	21	Latina	Puerto Rican	Gender fluid		New York
Ariana	17	Afro-Latina	Dominican Republic	Unsure		California
Audre	17	Black/African American	Tanzanian	Girl	Immigrant	Texas
Belle	17	Black		Girl		Michigan
Destiny	21	Black	Nigerian	Girl	Immigrant	Texas
Genesis	19	Biracial Latina and white	Salvadorian	Girl		New York & Virginia
Gina	20	Biracial Latina and white	Brazilian	Girl	Second generation	Virginia
Isabella	18	Latina	Salvadorian	Girl	Second generation	Washington D.C.
Jada	20	Biracial Black and Latina		Girl		New York
Janelle	20	Black/African American		Girl		Virginia
Julissa	16	Biracial Latina and Black	Afro-Latina	Girl	Second generation	Illinois
Karina	21	Biracial Latina and white	Venezuelan	Girl	Second generation	Florida
Luna	21	Biracial Latina and Asian	Cuban & Chinese	Femme	Second generation	New York
Reina	18	Latina		Girl	Second generation	California
Rihanna	21	Biracial Black and Asian		Girl	Second generation	New York
Ryan	15	Biracial Black and white	Black and Irish	Non-binary		Ohio
Saida	19	Black		Girl		New Jersey
Selena	17	Latina	Mexican	Girl	Second generation	Maryland
Shakiera	17	Black/African American		Girl		Ohio
Sofia	20	Latina/Latinx/Hispanic	Salvadorian	Girl		Virginia
Yasmin	15	Latina	Mexican	Girl	Immigrant	Oklahoma
Zenobia	21	Afro-Latina	Haitian	Girl	Second generation	Florida
Zuri	15	Black		Girl		North Carolina

Table 2
Data Collection & Coding Team Reflexivity

Name	Role in Paper	Salient Identities	Investment in Research
Taina Quiles	Doctoral candidate; conceptualized study, formulated plan for analysis,	Second generation Latina lesbian woman;	I am deeply invested in research that promotes Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women and girls' healing and thriving. For this project I was specifically interested in amplifying these girls' stories of discrimination as well as document the ways they may already be actively engaged in resistance. I believe research can be used as a powerful tool to educate others and advocate for more equitable social conditions for these girls, and the next generation of girls to come. I hope to use these findings to highlight ways we can support these girls on an interpersonal, communal, and policy level.
Dr. Seanna Leath	Assistant professor in psychology. Supported grant writing, and acquisition for the HRA study. Assisted with coding analysis. Provided support with the theoretical framing, and feedback on the manuscript.	Black cisgender woman; first-generation college student; mother to four children; from working class Southern community	At the core, my program of research focuses on how families and educators can support Black women and girls in living deeply meaningful and healthy lives. This means that my work is constantly toeing the lines of examining and identifying oppression, while also encouraging radical shifts in how we think about, connect to, and care for Black women and girls in society.
Dr. Channing Mathews	Assistant professor in psychology; supported data collection and analysis. Provided support with the theoretical framing, and feedback on the manuscript.	Black queer cisgender woman; 2nd generation college student; from middle class Southeastern community	I always seek to center the success and thriving of Black and Brown youth, and to use my skills to invest in the generations that come after me. As a former Black girl who felt the absence of Black women in the spaces I wanted to take up, I seek to be that Black woman to others.
Raven Ross	Graduate student in psychology; supported with data collection and polishing the paper 3 manuscript for publication	Biracial cisgender woman; first-generation college student; from working class and middle class backgrounds	I hope the work I contribute to will show how we can support and uplift Black and Latina girls. By listening to their ideas, experiences, and stories, we can learn how to support girls in ways that are meaningful to them.
Maria Rosario	Undergraduate scholar supported with data cleaning and analysis for paper 2	White Latina woman, undergraduate student	My experiences of being an ethnic minority woman in the United States has catalyzed my interest in conducting research with

			racial/ethnic minorities and engaging in work that promotes their mental health.
Violeta Rosario	Undergraduate scholar; supported with data cleaning and analysis for paper 2	Latina American, woman, first-generation college student.	I was also brought to this work by my interest in the lived experiences of the Latinx community. I would like to know more about their experiences with racism and how they express these experiences.
Victoria Rowe	High school scholar; supported with data cleaning and analysis for paper 2	Black girl	The biggest reason I joined this project was to help me understand my own views, and possibly how general experiences may have influenced my own view, and my views on others. Seeing a wide variety of texts and introspective participants really helped paint a picture to allow me to become aware of how privilege and experience come together to force certain perspectives to come to light, both positive and negative.

Table 3.
Codebook

Hopes for Self & Other Girls	Definition
Supporting community through educational and career success	aspirations to fill in gaps within their communities by providing resources, giving back, or showing up for marginalized communities they belong to including their ethnic racial community or geographic community or gender community
Achieving educational and career success	Aspiring to attain higher education or career success to gain a skill/expertise that will help provide a resource to the community
Increasing representation	hoping others in their racial ethnic/ other communities can achieve leadership positions
Specifying community	specific mentions of community. Can include racial ethnic, family, neighborhood, school, etc.
Giving back	wanting to give back or provide a service based on a sense of responsibility to group
Personal growth	Descriptions which focus on hopes for themselves related to developing a greater sense of security in their identity and set of skills.
Personal success	Aspiring to specific educational and career goals due to personal investment or interest, and not in relation to experiences of racism.
Pride and identity acceptance	Mentions of self love or embracing their racial identity
Embracing physical appearance	focus on embracing physical attributes likes skin color and hair
Overcoming barriers	Articulating a recognition of systemic oppression related to race/ethnicity and gender. Also includes anxiety around possibilities of experiencing marginalization or rebuking societal expectations.
Sexism	Specific mentions of fears around experiencing sexism in different contexts
Avoiding barriers	Discussions of hoping to avoid experiences of racism, sexism, and gendered racism
Social change	discussions of recognizing their own power to effect change, hoping others speak up, and seeking spaces for solidarity
"Dreaming big"	hoping girls allow themselves to set goals without limits or restrictions based on stereotypes or fears around discrimination
Career & educational elevation	mentions wanting girls to attain higher education and career success
Agency	expressing desires for girls to be able to accomplish their academic and professional goals

Hopes for Activists	
Issues of Importance	
Gendered racism	Hope for addressing barriers related to being a black/latina women
Anti-Blackness	Hope for addressing police brutality, and abuses of power within the criminal legal system and its eradication of it
Movement Strategies	
Mobilizing others	Hoping for getting other people to rally behind the social movement
Amplifying most marginalized voices	Hoping that the concerns of those who are more marginalized within the community are given attention
Engaging in interracial solidarity	Hoping that those from other racial-ethnic communities can support one another
Acceptance by others	
Safer spaces	Sharing desires for the development of spaces where they can feel safe and free to be themselves. Explicit mentions for "spaces" or locations of where they can be carefree. Mentions the creation of a new space.
Changing stereotypes	challenging and disrupting stereotypes about their racial ethnic community
Governmental Change	Discussions of policy or governmental change as a tool for racial equity
Community driven change	Action taken to provide change on a local or grassroots level. Focuses more on direct services, mutual aid, increasing representation and providing immediate relief to the community.
Increasing opportunities	striving for more equitable opportunities for education and employment for people of color
Spreading awareness & educating others	hoping activism will be useful in spreading awareness of discrimination, and providing educational resources so others have a better understanding of their experiences.

Chapter 3

A quantitative investigation of Black and Latina adolescent girls' experiences of gendered racial microaggressions, familial racial socialization, and critical action

“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”
— Audre Lorde

Abstract

As Black and Latina adolescent girls experience race and gender discrimination, they may turn to their families to explore their beliefs about, and responses to, systemic injustice and oppression. Familial racial socialization is a likely entry point for critical action (like community activism), linking ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness in youth development. This study draws from survey data with 315 Black (n = 158) and Latina/Afro-Latina (n = 157) girls (n = 282) and gender-expansive youth (age 13-17) from the southeastern United States. I conducted a hierarchical linear regression to investigate whether familial racial socialization moderated the relationship between experiences of gendered racism and community activism. Findings indicated that girls who received more familial socialization and were more frequently stereotyped as being angry participated in more low-risk and formal political activism. Also, Black and Latina girls who were more frequently stereotyped as angry and received *more* messages about racism from their families engaged in more high-risk activism, while girls who were more frequently perceived as angry and received *less* racial socialization, engaged in less high-risk activism. I discuss the implications of our results for families, educators, and scholars who support Black and Latina girls' sociopolitical development.

Keywords: Black girls, Latina girls, critical action, gendered racism, racial socialization

A quantitative investigation of Black and Latina adolescent girls' experiences of gendered racial microaggressions, familial racial socialization, and critical action

While the dual pandemics of racism and COVID-19 resulted in a racial reckoning across the United States (Martin et al., 2023), Black and Latinx youth may have already experienced moments of "racial awakening" during their upbringing that helped them cultivate tools to reflect on racial inequities prior to the summer of 2020 (Anderson et al., 2022; Hope et al., 2020; Neville & Cross, 2016). Beyond racism, Black and Latina girls face unique forms of discrimination at the intersection of their race and gender, also referred to as gendered racism (Lewis & Neville, 2015). For example, scholars have documented how gender shapes Black and Latina women's experiences of racism and xenophobia by examining their unique experiences of anti-Black police brutality and family separation at the border (Amuchie, 2015; Hernández, 2019). Public discourse of anti-Blackness within the criminal legal system has often centered the experiences of Black men, while Black women's experiences of physical, psychological, and sexual violence are often left untold (Al Jazeera Staff, 2023; Amuchie, 2015). Similarly, few voiced concerns about the sexual violence and murders of the Latina and Black migrants in Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) or police custody. Numerous police and ICE officers used their status to abuse women and girls and force their silence by threatening deportation (Fernandez, 2019). The recurrence of gendered-racial violence and discrimination underscores ongoing messages about the lack of investment in Black and Latina women and girls' well-being in the United States. As Black and Latina adolescents consider these societal events in relation to their own intersectional identities and discriminatory experiences, messages they receive about race and racism contribute to their ethnic-racial socialization (Bañales et al., 2021; Hope & Bañales, 2019). In turn, girls' ethnic-racial socialization and identity beliefs become integrated

into how they view themselves (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014) as well as their decisions about how to respond to gendered racism.

In order to make sense of these events, Black and Latina girls may have turned to their families and engaged in critical discussions about what it means to resist race and gender oppression as Black and Brown people (Mathews, 2023). These types of conversations are important opportunities for familial racial socialization, defined as messages families communicate with their youth about values, traditions, and practices associated with their ethnic-racial group (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). Familial racial socialization has been shown to buffer the deleterious effects of racism, as a critical component in how youth come to understand racism as a systemic problem (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Jones & Rogers, 2023). Emerging literature has also begun documenting how familial racial socialization promotes youths' resistance to systemic oppression, like racism and xenophobia (Ayón et al., 2019; Bañales et al., 2020; Glover et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2022; Pinetta et al., 2020). Considering how familial racial socialization contributes to youths' responses to gendered and racial discrimination can help nuance our empirical understandings of youths' critical consciousness, ethnic-racial identity, and overall well-being. This study considered the role of familial racial socialization in adaptive and healthy coping from experiences of gender racism. I specifically examine how familial racial socialization may inform the relationship between Black and Latina girls' experiences of gendered racism, and their resistance in the form of community activism.

Theoretical Framing

This work draws upon intersectionality theory (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991), and the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness (Mathews et al., 2020) to describe how identity and socialization processes relate to critical action.

Intersectionality is an important theory and problem-solving analytical tool with three main purposes: 1) illuminating how institutions of power are organized, 2) diagnosing a social problem, and 3) enhancing action (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Tenets of intersectionality encourage scholars to consider the intersecting systems of power that relate to how an individual or collective experiences social inequality within the social contexts where the inequality is happening. I apply intersectionality by contextualizing Black and Latina girls' experiences of gendered racism and resistance within the socio-historical context within the United States. Intersectionality is also used to consider the complexities of youths' decisions to take critical action, including their risk assessments of different types of community activism.

The integrative model provides a novel framework for how critical consciousness and ethnic-racial identity processes intertwine and relate to youths' understanding and responses to systemic oppression (Mathews et al., 2020). Critical consciousness development refers to the process by which youth advance their ability to critically reflect on and take action against systemic inequalities (Watts et al., 2011). Critical action is one key component, which describes individual and collective acts of resistance that allow marginalized youth to challenge systemic inequities that impact their communities (Diemer et al., 2021). Ethnic-racial identity development is a multidimensional construct that describes how youth develop attitudes and beliefs about their ethnic-racial group membership over time (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Within this framework, youths' ethnic-racial identity is deeply related to and interconnected with their critical consciousness development (Mathews et al., 2020). These relationships are described in four postulates that detail broad intersections of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness processes. This study focuses on Postulates 1 and 2, which highlight the

relationships between youth's racialized experiences, their ethnic-racial identity processes, and critical action.

This study expands Postulate 1, which posits that youths' exposure to salient ethnicity or race-based experiences (e.g., discrimination or ethnic-racial socialization) may predict critical reflection and promote further ethnic-racial exploration (Mathews et al., 2020). Black and Latina girls' identities are not unidimensional, and the interconnectedness of their race and gender informs their self-concept and perceived agency (Okello, 2018; Quiles et al., in prep). Thus, studies exploring the singular impacts of racism or sexism on Black and Latina girls' development may be limited in understanding girls' intersectional experiences, appraisal, and responses to discrimination (Stokes et al., 2020). I draw on intersectionality to contextualize how these girls' critical action is informed by their experiences of gendered racism (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Additionally, I expand current studies focused on Black and Latina girls by including youth whose conceptualization of girlhood and femininity are more expansive (gender-expansive youth), than binary (i.e., boy and girl) constructions of gender (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). Lastly, I draw on intersectionality to guide our discussion of critical action, by focusing on one type of action - community activism - as both an adaptive and potentially risky response for Black and Latina girls navigating gendered racism.

This study also expands Postulate 2, which suggests that ethnic-racial identity processes promote critical action (Mathews et al., 2020). While the integrative model discusses how racial socialization plays an important role in informing both ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness development, more work is needed to understand how familial racial socialization works in tandem with these processes to promote youths' resistance to gendered racism. For instance, the communalist nature of Black and Latinx families informs youths' self-definition

(Okello, 2018; Quiles et al., in prep), sense of agency (Bañales et al., 2021), and sense of responsibility when deciding to take action on behalf of their racial-ethnic group (Hope et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2022; Pinetta et al., 2020). As Black and Latina adolescents experience racially salient or discriminatory events, they may turn to their parents for support while reflecting on and responding to what happened (Mathews, 2023). Therefore, familial racial socialization may also serve as an important component to youths' critical consciousness development and their overall well-being (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Mathews et al., 2020). I argue that fostering a strong ethnic-racial identity, which is developed through familial racial socialization (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), is an essential component of Black and Latinx youths' health and well-being (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Thus, I discuss how scholars, parents, and youth-serving organizations might leverage positive ethnic-racial identity and socialization to support girls' resistance to gender and racial discrimination.

Contextualizing Black and Latina girls' experiences of Systemic Oppression in the U.S.

Although the Black and Latinx diasporas have unique histories and experiences of systemic oppression, both populations have been greatly shaped by white supremacy through colonization and enslavement (Hall, 2019; Britannica, 2024). Given shared experiences of marginalization rooted in white supremacist, heteropatriarchal ideologies, studying Black and Latina girls' experiences together can illuminate how experiences of gendered racism and xenophobia impact their physical and mental health and overall well-being. Currently, the Latinx and Black communities make up the largest ethnic-racial minority groups in the United States and simultaneously experience significant physical and mental health disparities due to systemic racism (Census Bureau, n.d.). Research has documented how Black and Latina women experience social environments, beginning in childhood, that put them at greater risk for ill

health (e.g., higher mortality rates, maternal mortality, cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disorders, and obesity later on in life (Chinn et al., 2021; Lillie-Blanton et al., 1993; Paz & Massey, 2016). Historical and collective racial trauma has also resulted in poorer mental health among Black and Latina girls (Tynes et al., 2019). Therefore, systemic racism leaves Black and Latinx youth especially vulnerable to negative health outcomes and creates a hostile environment for youth development (García Coll et al., 1996; Murray, 2018). This may be especially important for Black youth, as more than half of Black families live in the South, a region with the poorest health outcomes, lowest access to health care, and weakest social safety nets in the country (Office of Minority Health, n.d.).

For this study, I chose to focus on the experiences of Black and Latina girls living in the "Traditional South"[1] in the United States. For both the Black and Latinx communities in the United States, the South has a long history associated with racial violence and colonization. For Black Americans, states in the Traditional South shared a history of confederate membership and the enslavement of African people (Amanpour and Company, 2022). Further, during the Mexican-American war, many Mexican people (the largest ethnic group of Latinx people in the United States) became American citizens through the annexation of Texas and other lands that were originally part of Mexico (National Archives, 2021). Through powerful resistance and racial justice movements, many Black and Latinx families have come to reclaim the Traditional South as their home (Amanpour and Company, 2022). Still, for many, the South "feels frozen in time", and is considered to be more overtly racist than other regions (Amanpour and Company, 2022). Studying Black and Latina girls' experiences of gendered racism in this region provides

[1] For the sake of this study, we considered the Traditional South-eastern Region of the United States to be: Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, or Virginia.

critical insight into how they resist systemic oppression in spaces that constantly remind them of the legacy of racism in the United States.

Black and Latina Girls' Experiences of Gendered Racism

Black and Latina girls may have witnessed the impact of racist and sexist policies on a macro level as they watched the news in 2020 and saw the range of racial and gender discrimination, like the lack of coverage of Black women killed by police (Al Jazeera Staff, 2023; Amuchie, 2015) or sexual violence of migrants at the border of Mexico (Fernandez, 2019; Hernández, 2019). However, these girls may have already experienced or witnessed gendered racial discrimination on an interpersonal level through experiences of microaggressions, or covert manifestations of gendered racism (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). Understanding the various forms of gendered racism that Black and Latina girls may experience is important in being able to assess their impact. Both Black and Latina girls experience stereotypes of beauty and objectification that are associated with expectations of promiscuity (e.g., being sexually active and/or available) (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Kiyama et al., 2016), exoticism (e.g., being considered an "unusual" or foreign beauty) (Lopez, 2023; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014), and gatekeeping in academic and professional spaces (Rogers et al., 2022). Further, there are parallel stereotypes about Black and Latina girls as "strong", "spicy", or "sassy" that relate to the lack of support they may receive from adults in their lives who believe they may not need help (Epstein et al., 2017; Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). Lastly, educators and other adults' negative stereotypes of Black and Latina girls as angry, defiant, or troublemakers can contribute to their hyper surveillance and criminalization, which limits their educational and professional opportunities, reifies the school-to-prison pipeline (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Lopez, 2023; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014), and sometimes

results in physical harm from punitive disciplinary practices (Stelloh & Connor, 2015). While research has documented that Black and Latina girls' experiences of gendered racism impact their well-being, opportunities, and overall development (García Coll et al., 1996; Murray, 2018), it is important to recognize these girls' experiences of gendered racism are experienced, appraised, and navigated differently based on their social position (King, 2005; Spates et al., 2020).

Black girls often face stereotypes related to their physical appearance, independence, sexual behavior, and levels of aggression (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Rogers et al., 2022). Stereotypes about Black women originated from white supremacist ideology meant to condone the gendered racism enslaved African women were subjected to during times of slavery (Felder, 2018). In regards to beauty, contrasting stereotypes exist for Black women such as the unsexual, maternal, and helpful Mammy with the seductive and lustful Jezebel. Slavery also perpetuated the stereotype of the Strong Black Woman, who would endure anything, ultimately exploitation, violence, and dehumanization (Felder, 2018). These stereotypes continue to plague Black women and girls today, resulting in disparate health outcomes like greater stress, eating disorders (APA, 2021; Godbolt et al., 2022), and sexual violence (APA, 2021). A qualitative study exploring Black adolescent girls' experiences of gendered racial microaggressions highlighted that they experienced discrimination related to their appearance (e.g., Afrocentric hairstyles), perceived intelligence, and comparison to white girls (Gadson & Lewis, 2022). Girls described how their male peers simultaneously viewed them as desirable sexual partners, but not suitable for long-term relationships; this impacted Black girls' sense of self-worth. Black girls felt silenced and marginalized by adults who often disregarded their need for support, even when they reported harassment based on race or gender. In contrast, Black girls felt hyper-visible when receiving

disciplinary action, often describing instances where they received harsher punishment than their white peers, or were assumed of wrongdoing within a conflict (Gadson & Lewis, 2022).

Similarly, research focused on Latina girls has documented their experience navigating stereotypes about their socioeconomic status, intelligence, and sexual activity (Kiyama et al., 2016; Lopez, 2023; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). Stereotypes about Latina women and girls' beauty and power stem from colonization as well as more recent stigma around immigrants (Lopez, 2023). Latina girls are often dichotomized as "good girls" or "bad girls" (Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). Good girls are considered virginal and virtuous, and live a life in service to others, aligned with values of marianismo (i.e., idealized feminine gender role characterized by submissiveness, selflessness, and humbleness) (Lopez, 2023; Piña-Watson et al., 2014). Bad girls, on the other hand, are considered "pagan putas" who are considered promiscuous, defiant, and angry. Latina girls stereotyped as "bad girls" are often assumed to be at risk for unwanted teen pregnancy or gang membership (Lopez, 2023; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). One qualitative study demonstrated how clinicians working with Latina girls dichotomized them as "good" or "bad" based on how their behaviors mapped onto Latinx gender scripts of women as caretakers of their families and communities (Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). Another retrospective qualitative study explored Latina and Caribbean women's accounts of gendered racism in adolescence, and highlighted discrimination based on their appearance (especially hair) and intelligence (Araujo Dawson et al., 2023); Latinas with darker skin tones experienced greater marginalization rooted in anti-Blackness than lighter-skinned Latinas who already experienced daily microaggressions and exoticism. Across studies, I see how Latina girls are negatively impacted by stereotypes, and gate-kept from important educational opportunities. In turn, Latina girls experience greater stress and mistrust of various systems (e.g., schools and immigration)

(Araujo Dawson et al., 2023; Kiyama et al., 2016; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). While Black, Latina and Afro-Latina girls experience a range of gendered racial microaggressions, there is still more to learn regarding adolescents' resistance to such marginalization through critical action.

Black and Latina Girls' Resistance Strategies Through an Intersectional Lens

In many cases, activism for women and girls of color is "not a choice, but a matter of survival and self-determination" (Wane, 2011). From a young age, Black and Latina girls understand the importance of collective resistance (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016) and are often socialized to "look out for the others" because they would become the pillars of their families (Spates et al., 2020). While these messages may spark their desire to take critical action on behalf of themselves and their community, many factors contribute to if and how these girls might decide to take action (Anyiwo et al., 2018). In the current study, we explored girls' participation in community activism, a type of critical action. Community activism is defined as action taken to formally change judicial, legislative, or electoral processes often within a politicized collective of allies and oppressed groups (Hope et al., 2019).

Hope and colleagues created a measure assessing community activism to explore Black youths' "sociopolitical action planned and executed for the specific benefit of positive social change, eradication of oppression, and promotion of justice in and for the Black community" (Hope et al., 2019). This construct considers how Black adolescents' community activism embodies collective resistance to structural oppression. Ultimately, they found that Black youth engage in three types of activism, low-risk activism (i.e., relatively passive, conventional, and safe social and political actions with minimal risk of personal harm, arrest, and danger), high-risk activism (i.e., highly visible, assertive, social and political action that may result in bodily harm, involvement in the criminal justice system, or damage to possessions), and formal political

engagement (i.e., traditional political involvement, like organizing political events, donating to organizations, and supporting political candidates from their communities; Hope et al., 2019). While this construct was developed for Black youth, I recognize its utility in examining Latinx and Afro-Latinx youths' experiences because of their shared communal values (Gray et al., 2020), and similar experiences of systemic oppression (Araujo Dawson et al., 2023; Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014).

While there is still limited research that examines how Black and Latina girls engage in critical action, research shows that these girls leverage self-expression as a method of individual resistance when they are experiencing discrimination in contexts like their schools. In some cases, Latina girls used visible forms of self-expression, like physical fighting, to demand respect from peers who discriminated against them at school because they felt this physical display of aggression made it clear that they would not passively accept discrimination at school (Kiyama et al., 2016); this could be considered a form of high-risk activism, where girls risk their safety to resist discrimination. In other cases, girls engage in low-risk activism by leveraging the arts (e.g., writing) to reflect on and respond to discrimination (Flores, 2021.; Kelly, 2020). Regardless of how girls "speak up," the literature demonstrates that Black and Latina girls create opportunities to share their voices.

Other studies highlight how Black and Latina girls engage in collective resistance, via low-risk activism, by creating opportunities for community building both in person (Suzuki et al., 2023) and online (Garcia et al., 2020; Kelly, 2018a, 2020) that support healing and social change within their communities. One quantitative study demonstrates how Latina youth are four times more likely to engage in service-oriented and low-expression civic engagement than critical action (Suzuki et al., 2023). These community-oriented resistance strategies may not

traditionally fit into "critical action." An intersectional examination of these findings suggests that Latina girls' choices to target an "internal" or community-level mutual aid are informed by gendered socialization, such as marianismo. Focusing community impact, like mutual aid, may also be protective for communities that must avoid interactions with police and immigration forces. Girls' assessment of their families and communities' strengths and vulnerabilities, may influence their decisions on how to take action (Suzuki et al., 2023). Other studies demonstrate how Black girls use social media, like Snapchat and Twitter, to create safe spaces for sisterhood, and sociopolitical conversations with other Black youth (Garcia et al., 2020; Kelly, 2018b). One study found that Black girls developed social media communities, where they could speak out against injustice at their school, (e.g., lack of attention for Black History Month or teachers were wearing #BlueLivesMatter shirts) (Kelly, 2018b); these spaces fostered a sense of collective identification that supported their navigation of racism in their school. So, measures of critical action developed for Black and Latina girls must incorporate a more nuanced understanding of the cultural and community factors that influence how and why they take action in response to discrimination.

Identity & Familial Racial Socialization Processes as a Catalyst for Action

Research has shown that ethnic-racial identity and socialization processes are helpful in coping with racial discrimination (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Adolescence is an important time for ethnic-racial identity development, as youth's exposure to different events may ignite critical reflection about themselves, those in their ethnic-racial group, and the rest of society (Mathews et al., 2020). As their race becomes more salient, youth may engage in more exploration, and reach out to parents, or family to gain further insight. Reaching out to family may be particularly important after youth experience or witness discrimination, and

previous research shows that much of parental socialization is retroactive as parents help youth navigate these events (Mathews, 2023).

While research has shown that stronger ethnic-racial resolution may be an important factor for critical action (Mathews et al., 2020), this may be in part because familial racial socialization processes help fortify youths' sense of agency and support (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Bañales et al., 2021). Familial racial socialization supports youth in processing if an event poses a threat and whether they have the resources needed to cope with the event (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Parents offer verbal (overt) messages (i.e., passing down information, skills, traditions, or cultural information) or nonverbal (covert) messages (i.e., familial modeling and exposure to cultural events) (Paasch-Anderson et al., 2019; Umana-Taylor et al., 2004) that inform their understanding of their social position. In addition to this general racial socialization, emerging research demonstrates that parents may tailor their socialization messages to address the intersectional realities of their children through gendered racial socialization (Stokes et al., 2020). This is important to consider within the context of 2021, as Black and Latina girls were likely discussing how to respond to race and gender discrimination with their families.

Emerging literature demonstrates how familial racial socialization is related to not just coping, but also promoting action (Anyiwo et al., 2018). For Latinx youth, political discussions may be incorporated into familial racial socialization, promoting a greater sense of collective responsibility, as well as greater expectation for community involvement (Martinez et al., 2022; Pinetta et al., 2020). A study observing Latinx families' discussions about race and racism found that parents tended to reassure their children about safety, educate them about nativity and documentation, and encourage them to adapt and expect discrimination (Ayón et al., 2019). In turn, these parents also modeled and advised children to advocate for themselves and others,

reinforced a sense of ethnic pride, and talked to their children about the value of diversity and empathy. A study focused on Black families found that Black parents used familial racial socialization to impart several coping strategies, ranging from avoidance to assertive defiance, after their child experienced racial discrimination (Glover et al., 2022). Another study that examined familial racial socialization and critical consciousness among dyads of Black youth and their parents found that youth who received more cultural pride messages engaged in more sociopolitical discussions and received more civic modeling from their parents; these socialization practices were positively associated with youths' critical agency (Bañales et al., 2021). In line with this work, this study seeks to continue exploring how familial racial socialization may inform the relationship between discriminatory experiences (e.g., gendered racism) and critical action (e.g., community activism).

The Current Study

Drawing on the *Intersectionality* and *Integrated Model of Ethnic Racial Identity and Critical Consciousness* theory (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991; Mathews et al., 2020), this study expands the literature on Black and Latina girls and gender-expansive youth's experiences of gendered racism, identity socialization, and critical action. Our study is guided by the following questions and hypotheses: 1) What is the relationship between girls' experiences of gendered racism and community activism? Aligned with previous work exploring Black and Latina youths' responses to racism, I hypothesize that Black and Latina girls who experience more gendered racial microaggressions will engage in more activism (Diemer et al., 2021). 2) Does familial racial socialization moderate the relationship between experiences of gender-racial microaggressions and community activism? Based on research exploring the relationship between ethnic-racial identity and socialization processes and critical action, I expect that girls

who received more familial socialization will engage in more community activism when experiencing greater discrimination (Ayón et al., 2019; Bañales et al., 2021; Glover et al., 2022; Pinetta et al., 2020).

Method

This study draws from the Hope, Resilience, Action (HRA) study which centers on Black and Latina girls' responses and resistance to gendered racism within home, school, and social media contexts. I collected survey data during August 2021, when youth in the United States were navigating the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, heightened racial violence, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, and a shift in sociopolitical power due to change in the presidential administration.

Participants

The current sample included 315 adolescent girls (13-17 years old, $M = 16.65$, $SD = 1.49$), including 158 Black (50%), 154 Latina (49%), and 3 Afro-Latina (1%) participants from the Traditional South-eastern Region of the United States. In terms of gender, participants identified as: girl ($n = 282$, 89.5%), butch ($n = 6$, 2%), femme ($n = 9$, 3%), and gender-queer ($n = 12$, 4%). Gender-queer participants were eligible to participate if they were assigned female at birth, or identified on the spectrum of girlhood. Almost half ($n = 140$; 44%) of the participants reported that either they or their parents migrated to the United States. Most of the participants received free or reduced lunch (n = 193, 61%). On average, girls reported that 51% of their neighbors, and 56% of their classmates shared their ethnic-racial identity.

Procedures

After receiving IRB approval at the University of Virginia (4192), I worked with Qualtrics XM to distribute the anonymous quantitative survey. As a survey panel service,

Qualtrics draws on a variety of methods, such as partnering with organizations and nonprofits to recruit eligible participants for studies (Qualtrics, n.d.). Qualtrics leverages multiple partnerships for each survey panel in order to aggregate diverse samples that fit researchers' specifications, including hard-to-reach populations. Inclusion criteria in the current sample required individuals to be Black, Latina, or Afro-Latina "girls" between the ages of 13 and 17, living in one of the states, considered the "Traditional South". It is important to note that while recruitment focused on girls, I did not consider girlhood within a binary; our understanding of girlhood includes gender-expansive youth assigned female at birth who identified as non-binary, genderqueer or gender fluid, or youth who identify as a girl or femme (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). Gender is a fluid and complex construct, so, gender-expansive youth were invited to participate if they felt their current gender identity aligned with our intention to amplify girls' stories to participate. The Qualtrics platform made the study description available to all parents who reported having daughters who met the inclusion criteria in the traditional southeastern region of the United States. To access the survey, parents provided informed consent, after which girls provided informed assent using an electronic signature. The estimated survey length was 20-25 minutes. Girls were compensated approximately $9 USD for their participation.

Measures

Demographics

Girls were asked to provide information regarding their race, gender, migration status, and socio-economic status. Girls reported their ethnic-racial identity by selecting the options "African American," "Afro-Latina," "Black," "Hispanic/Latina," or "Multiracial." Moreover, the girls shared their gender identity by using the options: "Girl," "Butch or Stud," "Femme," "Gender Non-Conforming or Genderqueer," "Transgender girl," "I don't know," "Other," or

"Prefer not to answer." Migration status was gauged through the question, "Did you or your immediate family immigrate to the United States from a different country?" Girls respond either "Yes" or "No". Lastly, I asked girls if they received free or reduced lunch as a proxy for socioeconomic status; in response to the question, "At your school, do you qualify for free or reduced lunch?", girls could respond, "Yes" or "No."

Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration (α = . 73)

The Ethnic Identity Scale was developed to assess three components of ethnic-racial identity: exploration, resolution, and affirmation (Umana-Taylor et al., 2004). I used the brief version to examine ethnic-racial identity exploration or the degree to which girls had explored their identities, which included nine items. The exploration subscale consisted of three items, including, "I have read books/magazines /newspapers or other materials that have taught me about my ethnicity." These questions were answered using a 4-point Likert scale, from 1 = "does not describe me at all" to 4 = "describes me very well."

Gendered Racism

In order to measure experiences of marginalization, I used four subscales from the Gender Racial Microaggressions Scale for Black women (Lewis & Neville, 2015). Participants responded using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "all of the time" to 5 = "none of the time." I modified the measure to be more specific to girls' age by changing items that mention the workplace to focus on school (e.g., I have been disrespected at school), and replacing the word "women" with "girls" within. The *assumptions of beauty and sexual objectification subscale* (α = .89*)* was used to measure girls' experiences of stereotypes about aspects of girls' appearance and sexuality, using 11 items. This subscale included items like, "Someone made sexually inappropriate comments" or "Someone made negative comments about my hair when it was

natural." The *silenced and marginalized subscale* (α = .88) was measured using a 7-item subscale of girls' perceptions of being ignored or having their intelligence questioned at school. The subscale included items like, "My comments have been ignored." *Strong Black/Latina women stereotype*s (α = .83) were quantified using a 5-item subscale to gauge girls' perceptions of when they had been treated as strong, sassy, independent, and assertive. Sample items include, "I have been told that I am too independent." Lastly, the *angry Black/Latina women stereotypes* (α = .84) subscale was used to assess girls' experiences of being treated as angry or aggressive. The subscale consisted of three items, including "Someone accused me of being angry when I was speaking calmly."

Community Activism

Community activism was assessed using the Black Community Activism Orientation Scale (Hope et al., 2019). This measure was originally developed and validated to reflect variants of Black activism, with the intention to measure youths and young adults' orientation towards low-risk, high-risk, and formal political activism (ages 14-29; M = 19.7). The measure included 26 items across three subscales on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 = "extremely unlikely" to 5 = "extremely likely." *Low-risk activism* (α = .88) captured passive, conventional, and less risky behaviors like wearing a t-shirt or button with a political message. *High-risk activism* (α = .92) measured highly visible, assertive, and riskier forms of activism like blocking access to a building or public area with your body for a cause. Lastly, *formal political activism* (α = .92) quantified traditional involvement within formal political systems like donating money to a political candidate or organizing a political event. I tailored this measure by using an adaptive Qualtrics measure which matched each mention of race with the girls' self-reported racial identity. For example, in an item that says, "Display a poster or bumper sticker with a political

message specific to the [racial-ethnic] community," Latina girls would see Latinx community, and Black girls would see Black community.

Familial Racial Socialization (α = .85)

The familial racial socialization scale was used to measure girls' perception of the degree to which their families shared overt or covert messages regarding their ethnic-racial identity (Umana-Taylor et al., 2004). The overall measure included 12 items, of which seven items were used to assess covert messages. For example, "Our home is decorated with things that reflect my ethnic/cultural background" or "My family participates in activities that are specific to my ethnic group." Five items were used to measure overt familial racial socialization. For example, "My family teaches me about the values and beliefs of our ethnic/cultural background." or "My family talks about how important it is to know about my ethnic/cultural background." Questions were answered on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = "not at all true" to 5 = "very much." This measure has been used with both Latinx and Black populations.

Data Analysis

Hierarchical linear regressions (HLR) were conducted in SPSS (IBM Corps., 2023) to examine the role of gendered racism (i.e., being objectified, feeling silenced and marginalized, assumed strong, and perceived as angry) on each type of community activism (i.e., low-risk activism, high-risk activism, and political engagement). I also examined whether familial racial socialization moderated the relationship between girls' experiences of each type of gendered racism and their reports of community activism. Dummy coded variables were created to examine differences between Black and African American girls compared to Latina and Afro-Latina girls, and to explore differences between "girls" and "gender-expansive". I ran three separate models to examine how the variables related to the three types of community activism.

For each regression, at Step 1, I included key study variables like each type of gendered racial microaggressions and familial racial socialization. I include gender, migration status, and ethnic-racial identity exploration as covariates based on previous research indicating the importance of these identities in shaping critical action (Cadenas et al., 2022; Roy et al., 2019). In the next step, I included two-way interaction terms between each type of gendered racism and familial racial socialization. All continuous variables were mean-centered to allow for comparisons across measures. I used pairwise deletion to address missing data and maximize power.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

I conducted a series of t-tests to examine differences between Black and Latina girls among key study variables. I found that Latina and Afro-Latina girls receive more familial racial socialization than Black girls. Additionally, Black girls experienced being stereotyped as angry more often compared to Latina and Afro-Latina girls (See Table 1.) I also conducted a series of t-tests to examine differences between girls and gender-expansive youth among key study variables. I found that gender-expansive youth engaged in lower and more high-risk activism compared to girls (See Table 2.)

Next, I conducted Pearson's correlations for key study variables; raw means (M), standard deviations (SD), and correlations for key study variables are reported in Table 3. There was a positive correlation between ethnic-racial identity exploration and low-risk, high-risk, and formal political activism. There were also positive and significant associations between familial racial socialization and low-risk, high-risk, and formal political activism. Familial racial socialization was positively associated with perceptions of being angry and perceptions of being strong. Each type of gendered racial microaggressions (i.e., being objectified, feeling silenced

and marginalized, assumptions of strength, and being perceived as angry) was positively associated with each type of activism (i.e., low-risk, high-risk, and formal political activism).

Low-risk activism

At both steps, I found significant differences based on gender ($F(14, 238) = 6.03$, $p = .001$), such that gender-expansive youth engaged in more low-risk activism than girls ($\beta = .14$, $p = .01$). Youth who engaged in more ethnic-racial identity exploration ($\beta = .23$, $p = .001$) and received more familial racial socialization ($\beta = .26$, $p = .001$), tended to engage in more low-risk activism. Lastly, girls perceived as angry more often tended to engage in more low-risk activism ($\beta = .25$, $p = .002$). (See Table 4 for full regression results.)

High-risk activism

In both steps, there were significant differences between gender ($F(14, 238) = 4.76$, $p = .001$), such that gender-expansive youth engaged in more high-risk activism ($\beta = .14$, $p = .02$.) Youth with a recent personal or familial history of migration engaged in less high-risk activism ($\beta = .12$, $p = .05$) than those who have been in the United States for more than two generations. Youth who received subsidized lunch participated in more activism ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .001$) than those who paid full price for lunch. Lastly, there was a significant interaction between perceptions of being angry and familial racial socialization ($\beta = .17$, $p = .04$). Specifically, when girls experienced fewer stereotypes of being angry, there were no significant differences in high-risk activism regardless of their familial racial socialization messages. However, girls who were perceived as angry more often and received more familial racial socialization engaged in the most high-risk activism; contrarily girls who were perceived as angrier and received less familial racial socialization engaged in the least high-risk activism. Simple slopes analysis revealed a

significant slope for those who received more familial racial socialization messages (B = .24, t = 2.56, p = .01; See Figure 1.) (See Table 5 for full regression results.)

Formal political activism

In Step 2, I found ethnic-racial identity exploration significantly predicted formal political activism such that more ethnic-racial identity exploration was associated with more activism (β = .28, p = .001), (F(14, 238) = 5.22, p = .001). Youth who received more familial racial socialization also engaged in significantly more formal political activism (β = .18, p = .011.) (See Table 6 for full regression results.)

Discussion

Previous research has documented the role of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness in promoting adaptive and healthy coping responses to racial discrimination among Black and Latinx youth (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Mathews et al., 2020). Familial racial socialization may work in tandem with youth's ethnic-racial identity beliefs and their critical action because youth rely on these familial messages about race and racism to process their experiences and determine how to respond (Ayón et al., 2019; Bañales et al., 2021; Glover et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2022; Pinetta et al., 2020). These findings build upon this literature by examining how familial racial socialization informs the relationship between gendered racism and critical action among Black and Latina adolescent girls. Moreover, I nuance current studies on adolescents' critical action by assessing the risk associated with different types of community activism and considering how Black and Latina girls' intersectional identities and experiences inform critical consciousness processes.

Across both racial groups, girls who experienced more gendered racism – particularly being perceived as angry - engaged in more community activism. Girls who received more

familial racial socialization tended to engage in more of each type of community activism. For high-risk activism specifically, familial racial socialization moderated the association between girls' experiences of gendered racism and their critical action, such that girls who received more messages from their family about race tended to be more involved in political engagement and high-risk activism. These findings offer more insight into how girls' experiences of family socialization experiences and gendered racism inform their critical action. These findings underscore the importance of engaging in intersectional and familial-focused approaches to expand our conceptualization of Black and Latina girls' critical and community action.

Fueling the Fire: How Stereotypes of Anger Contribute to Community Activism

Girls who were perceived as angry more frequently engaged in greater low and high-risk activism as compared to girls who were perceived as angry less frequently. It is worth noting that Black girls in our sample reported being stereotyped as angry more often than Latina and Afro-Latina girls. This may relate to specific racialized and gendered stereotypes specific to Black women and girls as being aggressive, angry, and domineering (Gadson & Lewis, 2022). While similar racist and sexist stereotypes exist about Latina women and girl's 'spicy' nature (Lopez, 2023; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014), it is possible that being perceived as angry was less salient for the Latina and Afro-Latina girls in the current sample. We offer two interpretations of these findings. It is possible that Black and Latina girls who speak up for themselves and others in contexts like their schools may be interpreted as "aggressive," thus misinterpreting leadership and critical self-advocacy as anger (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Kelly, 2018a; Kiyama et al., 2016). In this case, girls may not initially be angry, and something like challenging their teacher about the lack of diversity in the school curriculum could be perceived as "sassy" or "defiant." It is also possible that sometimes girls are angry about the discrimination or inequalities they experience,

and adults may feel threatened by their response. For example, girls may resist a dress code infraction that feels racially motivated, feel angry about it, and a school administrator could see that as defiance. This finding is especially important to consider because of previous literature emphasizing the importance of Black and Latina girls speaking up and not losing their voice during times of injustice (Flores, 2021.; Kelly, 2018a, 2020; Kiyama et al., 2016). By invoking stereotypes of anger, individuals may seek to silence Black and Latina women and girls by invalidating their experiences and writing them off as reactionary. It is unfair that girls of color must filter their reactions because their emotions can be politicized by others and weaponized to silence them (Lozada et al., 2022). In future studies, scholars should consider how adults working with youth can honor anger as a valid response to gendered racism and systemic oppression and how they can help girls utilize their anger in personally productive capacities (Lorde, 1981).

It is also important to consider why other types of gendered racism like microaggressions related to assumptions of strength, appearance and beauty, and instances where girls feel silenced and marginalized did not predict community activism. For many Black and Latina girls, being strong and resilient is not only a cultural value but a part of their self-definition (Okello, 2018; Quiles et al., in prep). Thus, when girls are stereotyped as strong or independent, they may not necessarily view the microaggression as negative, but instead as an indicator of resilience and resistance. However, scholars have demonstrated how perceptions of being strong can lead to a lack of support, mentorship, and positive guidance due to adultification bias (Epstein et al., 2017; Gadson & Lewis, 2022). Adultification is harmful, because it frames girls as more adult-like than their peers and may prevent some girls from seeking help when they need it. Contrarily, stereotypes about girls' appearance, and experiences of marginalization may make girls feel like

they are not important or that their voices do not matter. Experiences of sexual violence (APA, 2021), exoticism (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014, 2014), and gatekeeping in academic and professional spaces (Rogers et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022) may inhibit girls from engaging in critical action because they may be focused on coping or surviving in other ways. Adults working with youth should be cautious of how these stereotypes are impacting Black and Latina girls' well-being, access to resources, and ability to practice critical action.

Ethnic-Racial Identity and Familial Racial Socialization as a Critical Component of Critical Consciousness and Wellbeing

Consistently across both racial groups, girls who engaged in more ethnic-racial identity exploration engaged in more low-risk, high-risk, and formal political activism. This finding supports the associations found in prior studies between ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness development, such that events inciting ethnic-racial identity exploration are also likely to contribute to critical reflection and action (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Mathews et al., 2020). For Black and Latinx girls, having a strong ethnic-racial identity is important for their health and wellbeing because these identities are often central to their sense of self, and shape the way they build community. In the current study, I expanded on previous findings about ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness by considering whether familial racial socialization played a role in these processes. Familial racial socialization may provide youth with critical perspectives about how others, like their parents, are navigating racially systemic inequities (Ayón et al., 2019; Glover et al., 2022). Furthermore, as youth discuss issues of racism and/or gendered racism with their family members, they may come to recognize the importance of community support, resources, and activism.

I found that familial racial socialization contributed to girls' participation in all three types of community activism. Specifically, familial racial socialization contributed to low-risk activism. Additionally, familial racial socialization informed the relationship between perceptions of being angry and high-risk activism; there was the same trending relationship with formal political activism (see Figure 2.) For high-risk and formal political activism, girls who experienced more stereotypes and received less familial racial socialization, engaged in less activism. Contrarily if they received more familial messages, they engaged in more activism, suggesting that familial racial socialization may serve as a protective factor against experiences of discrimination, and contribute to transforming experiences of discrimination into action. These findings aligned with empirical literature demonstrating that familial conversations about racial discrimination inform Black and Latinx youths' decisions about how to take action (Ayón et al., 2019; Bañales et al., 2021; Glover et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2022; Pinetta et al., 2020). Thus, our findings offer additional insight into the integrative model of ethnic racial identity and critical consciousness by emphasizing the role of familial racial socialization in Black and Latina girls' critical consciousness development.

Expanding Conceptualizations of "Girlhood": Exploring Gender-expansive Youths' Community Activism

I anticipated that girls' engagement in different types of community activism would be informed by their ethnic-racial and gender identities. These findings highlight significant gender differences in low-risk and high-risk activism, such that gender-expansive youth (i.e., those who identified their girlhood as butch, femme, genderqueer) engaged in more of these types of activism than those who identified as girls. Black and Latinx gender-expansive youths' experiences of discrimination related to defying gender expectations may contribute to their

intersectional awareness of systemic oppression which encourages their activism (Shaheed et al., 2022; Pender et al., 2019; Terriquez, 2015). Navigating unique concerns like being silenced and marginalized by medical professionals (Puckett et al., 2018), or perceiving that others value more masculine traits (Rogers et al., 2022), may inform their critical awareness of how their intersectional identities might impact their access to resources later on in life. While beyond the scope of the current study, these findings may speak to Black and Latinx gender-expansive youths' heightened sense of urgency to take action related to current and anticipated gendered-racial discrimination. It is possible that I did not find significant differences in formal political activism because youth's opportunities to engage with the formal political system and public officials are often limited until they reach the age of 18. Future work focused on gender-expansive youths' activism must take into consideration the distinct and undue threats gender-expansive youth face when engaging in critical action, such as: being outed, physical harm due to other's prejudice, lack of resources, and potential dangers in the medical or criminal-legal system (Montagno et al., 2021).

Limitations & Considerations

While this study makes several notable contributions to extant literature, there are some limitations and considerations worth mentioning. Although I intentionally recruited Afro-Latina girls, I did not have sufficient power to make meaningful comparisons to Black or Latina girls. Therefore, I combined the Afro-Latina and Latina samples based on their similar ancestral relationship to colonization in Latina America as opposed to chattel slavery in the United States. However, it is important to note that Latina and Afro-Latina girls' experiences of marginalization also vary, often due to colorism (Araujo Dawson et al., 2023; Uzogara, 2019). Afro-Latina girls may face different types of stereotypes and are racialized differently in the United States. For

instance, many Afro-Latina girls have darker skin tones and experience colorism and criticism of their hair. Additionally, others may try to force Afro-Latinx people to "choose" an identity as either Black or Latinx and reject one side of them; this may result in feeling like their identities are invisible in different contexts within the Latinx community (Hordge-Freeman & Veras, 2020). By combining these groups, I may have lost important information about Afro-Latina girls' experiences of gendered racism.

Similarly, while I included gender-expansive youth in our analyses, I recognize that our findings are limited because of the small sample size. Gender-expansive youth continue to expand scholarly designations and definitions of gender identities in ways that may not be captured through our survey selections. Furthermore, by combining butch, femmes, and genderqueer youth, I may have lost additional insight into how these youths' experiences of marginalization varied by gender. Additionally, no trans girls participated in our study, and so our results are not inclusive of their experiences of gendered racism. Research shows youth who do not conform to their sex assigned at birth experience greater harassment and bullying; this may be particularly true for youth of color (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). Although our statistical power was limited in the types of analyses we could run, we included these gender-expansive youths' experiences to provide a more accurate representation of the adolescent youth who participated in our study. Scholars must find more ways to be intentionally inclusive in sample design rather than opting to exclude certain populations based on low numerical representation. Without doing so, the field will continue to miss out on critical developmental knowledge about gender-expansive youth, for instance.

Another consideration is that we used the Black Community Activism Orientation Scale (Hope et al., 2019) and the Gender Racial Microaggressions Scale for Black women (Lewis &

Neville, 2015) to measure Black and Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' experiences. Both of these scales have advanced the field by offering more ecologically valid measures of Black peoples' experiences. However, since the Black Activism Orientation Scale focuses generally on Black adolescents and young adults, we may have missed some activist behaviors specific to Latina girls. We addressed this concern by tailoring our measure to be racially specific and did not find any significant racial differences in these girls' community activism. This measure also does not focus on girlhood. It is possible that there may be types of activism, specific to girls, that may not be captured in this measure. For instance, one subtle way that girls choose to resist gendered racism daily is through self-expression via fashion, hair, and make-up[15]. Other literature demonstrates how Black and Latina girls may also leverage art, or service (e.g., mutual aid) as part of their community activism (Flores, 2021; Kelly, 2020; Suzuki et al., 2023). Therefore, future measures of critical action must be more expansive to not only better incorporate the ways girls show up in their activism, but also capture these moments of micro-resistance that are often overlooked, and devalued in the current literature. Similarly, I adapted the Gendered Racial Microaggression Scale to be age-specific by including more youth-specific contexts in the items. I did see some significant differences in terms of the experiences of gendered racism Black girls faced compared to Latina and Afro-Latina girls. It is possible I did not capture microaggressions that Latina or Afro-Latina girls face. These measures were not adapted to show participant's gender in the item. So, there may also be ways that gender-expansive youth are discriminated against that are not captured by our measure.

Implications

This study has important implications for parents, educators, and youth practitioners, as well as scholars studying identity and critical consciousness development among adolescents.

The results indicate that familial racial socialization can encourage Black and Latina girls to respond to gendered racial discrimination through critical action. Researchers have demonstrated that racial socialization processes inform youths' racial understandings and beliefs about the world, which can then inform their perceived ability to cope with instances of racial discrimination (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Anyiwo et al., 2018). I build on this work by demonstrating that familial racial socialization plays a role in Black and Latina girls' responses to gendered racial discrimination, in part, by influencing their beliefs and actions about affecting positive change in their communities. Thus, I suggest that in addition to offering messages about preparation for discrimination, parents might also offer concrete ways for girls to feel involved and important within their local communities. This might include volunteering with a local youth organization, getting involved in a youth participatory research project, or facilitating other ways that nurture their activist spirit and desire to improve social conditions. To date, culturally relevant family-based programs have often focused specifically on preparing parents to discuss race and racism with their children (Stein et al., 2021). Our results suggest that, when possible, these programs might also incorporate opportunities for families to learn more about how to translate Black and Latina girls' ideas and experiences of injustice into different forms of critical community activism.

Similarly, the results should encourage educators to develop and incorporate curriculum, programming, and organizational practices that address Black and Latina girls' cultural and social realities and support their critical consciousness development. While some culturally relevant curricula allow students of color to explore their intersectional identities, like ethnic studies (Cabrera et al., 2013), the majority of schools struggle to integrate discussions of race, ethnicity, and culture and are explicitly instructed to avoid talking with students about 'racially

charged' sociopolitical events that may impact Black and Latinx girls' gendered and racialized realities. Given the nationwide pushback against students learning accurate information about racism in school (Ray & Gibbons, 2021; Schwartz, 2021), as well as gender-affirming care for gender-expansive and diverse youth (Peele, 2023), this will likely be more difficult or impossible for educators who work within schools and districts that do not adopt anti-bias and discrimination policies (Woo et al., 2022). Youth in our study, who were being educated in the Southern region of the United States, may be particularly impacted by the movement to ban Critical Race Theory (CRT) from schools; currently, 10 out of 15 states from which I recruited have banned historically accurate discussions of race and racism in the classroom (Caputo & Allen, 2022; Schwartz, 2021; Ray & Gibbons, 2021; Bakarat & Rankin, 2022). At the minimum, I hope educators will use these findings and consider the importance of finding books or materials that address gendered racial stereotypes of Black and Latinx girls (e.g., *Piecing Me Together* by R. Watson, or *Juliet Takes a Breath* by Gabby Rivera) and encourages girls to tap into peers, caregivers, and youth mentors who can provide a web of support and care (Rose et al., 2019). Additionally, I encourage educators facing barriers to discussing racism in the classroom, to continue to get creative about how they may choose to connect girls to youth organizations in their communities (e.g., Girls for Gender Equity or Radical Monarchs) and service opportunities that relate to youths' interests. If the curriculum and programming cannot occur within the classroom, educators can still serve as advocates for Black and Latina girls to find ways to reflect on, and consider actions to address the sociopolitical events impacting their lives.

Our results offer a few main points of departure for scholars who study identity development, family socialization processes, and critical consciousness development. First, researchers should interrogate how familial messages (i.e., talking about a time when they

encountered discrimination) and modeling (i.e., seeing the adults in their lives attend protests or take care of others in their communities) encourage girls to take action against gendered racism and social inequities in their communities. In moving forward, scholars could examine the type of gendered and racialized messages that Black and Latinx girls receive from different family members in their lives, especially in thinking about how family members' own social identities and positioning may inform the conversations they have with these girls. Finally, more studies must assess the multidimensional nature of familial socialization on gendered and racialized systemic barriers, as well as the mechanisms that underlie the connection between familial socialization and youth action. In particular, scholars should explore how families are especially impactful in incorporating culturally relevant values, traditions, and knowledge within their messages to Black and Latina girls about taking action within their communities.

Lastly, I call for scholars and educators to consider the complexities of what it means to support Black and Latina girls' decisions to engage in critical action in their communities. Although scholars generally consider critical action an adaptive and healthy coping response to racism, we still need more empirical evidence on how cultural values (e.g., communalism and familismo) (Gray et al., 2020), structural barriers (e.g., institutional support and insufficient activist development in schools) (García Coll et al., 1996; Murray, 2018), and risk (e.g., physical harm or threats to self and family) (Hope et al., 2019; Suzuki et al., 2023) inform Black and Latina girls' critical consciousness development. Most current attempts to quantitatively measure critical action lack community focus, and do not consider the various risks youth face when they engage in critical actions like attending protests, organizing events in their communities, and drawing attention to social inequities. Youth engaging in critical action may encounter discrimination or experience physical, psychological, and legal costs that vary based on their

intersectional identities (i.e., gender, sexuality, and nationality status) (Diemer et al., 2021). Girls who take action within their schools may find themselves hyper-surveilled, punished, and even at risk of being pushed into the carceral system (Gadson & Lewis, 2022; Kelly, 2018a; Kiyama et al., 2016). Ergo, adults must be prepared to support youth after they commit to taking action and encounter these types of risks.

At a baseline, parents, educators, and scholars can have open and honest conversations about how youth can determine their own comfortability with certain forms of critical action and the potential consequences. This may include discussions on how youth can mitigate risk when engaging in high-risk activism, such as providing a checklist on how youth can prepare for a protest (e.g., what to bring, how to establish a home base, and how to respond if police become involved) (MoveOn, 2020). Scholars and educators might also consider accompanying youth as co-conspirators when youth share concerns about how their activism may impact their safety; for allies joining Black and Latinx youth, this means a willingness to risk your safety. Another way scholars can support youth could be developing long-term collaborations through youth participatory action research that can provide a space for youth to lead activism around issues that are important to them. Youth participatory action research fosters trusting, youth-adult partnerships that can support youth in stepping up or seeking support when they need it. All in all, scholars and educators must honor the risk that comes with Black and Latinx youths' decisions to engage in critical action, and support these youth to take action in ways that feel right to them.

Conclusions

In the current study, I integrated intersectionality theory (Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991) and the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness

(Mathews et al., 2020) to examine how familial racial socialization and gendered racism inform Black and Latina girls' critical action and community involvement. I found that both ethnic-racial identity and familial socialization processes inform Black and Latinx youths' healthy development by promoting particular forms of critical action. Experiences of gendered racism – specifically, Black and Latina girls' being perceived as angry– related to increased low-risk, high-risk, and formal political activism. Girls who received more familial racial socialization participated in more high-risk activism when faced with gendered racism. Considering the pivotal role that Black and Latinx families have on their girls' adaptive coping from discrimination, I hope this study reminds scholars of the importance of supporting Black and Latinx families in how they talk with their daughters and gender-expansive youth about not only racism, but gendered racism. While many parents unknowingly engage in gendered socialization messages with their youth, taking a more intentional approach that critically considers the unique struggles of their daughters can better prepare girls to navigate gendered racism throughout their lifetime. These findings also offer novel intervention points to support Black and Latina girls' sociopolitical development that can be incorporated at the interpersonal (e.g., connecting girls with opportunities for community involvement) and macro level (e.g., changing school policies that reinforce exclusionary discipline practices in response to student behaviors). As scholars continue to engage in conversations about what it means to support Black and Latina girls' sociopolitical development, adults working with youth must identify how they can support and amplify the innovative and intentional ways they seek to create system change.

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Table 1.

T-test results comparing Black and Latina girls regarding key study variables.

	Black Girls		**Latina and Afro-Latina Girls**		**T(310)**	***p***
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**		
Ethnic–Racial Identity Exploration	2.32	0.83	2.49	0.85	−1.73	0.09
Familial Racial Socialization	3.33	0.98	3.72	0.90	−3.66	0.001 **
Beauty and Objectification	2.43	0.99	2.32	0.96	0.92	0.36
Strong	2.42	1.07	2.60	1.16	−1.41	0.16
Angry	2.69	1.21	3.13	1.36	−3.02	0.003 **
Silenced and Marginalized	2.71	1.09	2.67	1.11	0.34	0.74
Low-Risk Activism	3.53	0.85	3.48	0.83	0.53	0.60
High-Risk Activism	2.85	0.95	−0.07	2.71	1.18	0.24
Formal Political Activism	3.31	0.86	3.23	0.98	0.68	0.50

Note: I provide raw means and standard deviations in this table for ease of interpretation, but used mean centered data for analysis. ** $p < 0.01$

Table 2.

T-test results comparing girls and gender-expansive youth on key study variables

	Girls		Gender-expansive youth		T(310)	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration	2.42	.84	2.32	.97	.57	.57
Familial Racial Socialization	3.56	.95	3.25	.92	1.66	.10
Beauty & Objectification	2.37	.97	2.51	1.08	-.72	.47
Strong	2.53	1.12	2.38	1.03	.69	.25
Angry	2.93	1.30	2.94	1.34	-.03	.98
Silenced and Marginalized	2.67	1.09	2.97	1.30	-1.33	.187
Low-Risk Activism	3.48	.84	3.85	.73	-2.19	.03*
High-Risk Activism	2.74	1.04	3.32	.78	-2.83	.002**
Formal Political Activism	3.26	.92	3.48	.87	-1.18	.24

Note: I provide raw means and standard deviations in this table for ease of interpretation, but used mean centered data for analysis. ** $p < 0.01$

Table 3.

Key Study Correlations

	M(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Exploration	2.40(.85)								
2.Familial Socialization	3.52(.96)	.53**							
3.Beauty & Objectification	2.37(.98)	.10	.03						
4. Silenced and Marginalized	2.69(1.10)	.07	-.03	.69*					
5. Angry	2.91(1.30)	.16**	.14*	.56*	.56*				
6. Strong	2.51(1.11)	.18**	.34*	.68*	.66*	.68*			
7. Low-Risk	3.50(.84)	.37**	.36*	.16**	.12*	.25**	.15**		
8. High-Risk	2.78(1.03)	.22**	.19*	.22**	.16**	.22**	.19*	.51**	
9. Formal Political	3.27(.92)	.37**	.31*	.15*	.14*	.21*	.17*	.78**	.57**

Note: I provide raw means and standard deviations in this table for ease of interpretation, but used mean centered data for analysis. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4.

Hierarchical Linear Regression with Gendered Racism and Familial Racial Socialization Predicting Low-Risk Activism

	b	*SE*	β
Step 1: Covariates & Key Study Variables			
Race	-.19	.10	-.11†
Gender	.42	.17	.14*
Migration Status	.09	.10	.05
Socioeconomic Status	.03	.11	.02
Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration	.22	.07	.22***
Familial Racial Socialization	.23	.06	.26***
Beauty and Objectification	.07	.07	.08
Strong	-.10	.07	-.13
Angry	.16	.05	.24**
Silenced and Marginalized	-.01	.07	-.02
R^2	.25		
F	8.00***		
Step 2: Interactions between Familial Racial Socialization and Gendered Racial Microaggressions			
Race	-.19	.10	-.11†
Gender	.42	.17	.14*
Migration Status	.09	.10	.05
Socioeconomic Status	.04	.11	.02
Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration	.22	.07	.23***
Familial Racial Socialization	.23	.06	.26***
Beauty and Objectification	.07	.08	.08
Strong	-.11	.07	-.15
Angry	.16	.05	.25**
Silenced and Marginalized	.23	.06	.26
Socialization X Objectification	-.06	.08	-.07
Socialization X Strong	-.00	.07	-.00
Socialization X Angry	.05	.06	.07
Socialization X Silenced	-.07	.06	-.09
ΔR	.01		
R^2	.26		
F	6.03**		

All standardized regression coefficients for Low-Risk Activism come from the second step in analysis—$n = 315$ † $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 5.

Hierarchical Linear Regression with Gendered Racism and Familial Racial Socialization Predicting High-Risk Activism

	b	*SE*	β
Step 1: Covariates & Key Study Variables			
Race	-.12	.13	-.06
Gender	.52	.21	.14*
Migration Status	.25	.13	.12†
Socioeconomic Status	-.50	.14	-.21***
Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration	.17	.08	.14*
Familial Racial Socialization	.16	.07	.15*
Beauty and Sexual Objectification	.14	.09	.11
Strong	.01	.09	.01
Angry	.09	.06	.12
Silenced and Marginalized	-.00	.08	-.00
R^2	.20		
F	5.60***		
Step 2: Interactions between Familial Racial Socialization and Gendered Racial Microaggressions			
Race	-.13	.13	-.06
Gender	.50	.21	.14*
Migration Status	.26	.13	.12*
Socioeconomic Status	-.48	.14	-.20***
Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration	.18	.08	.15*
Familial Racial Socialization	.15	.08	.14*
Beauty and Sexual Objectification	.12	.10	.11
Strong	-.02	.09	-.02
Angry	.10	.07	.13
Silenced and Marginalized	.01	.08	.01
Socialization X Objectification	-.13	.10	-.12
Socialization X Strong	-.01	.09	-.01
Socialization X Angry	.14	.07	.17*
Socialization X Silenced	-.04	.08	-.04
ΔR	.02		
R^2	.22		
F	4.76***		

All standardized regression coefficients for High-Risk Activism come from the second step in analysis—$n = 315$. † $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 1.

Interaction between Perceptions of Being Angry and Familial Racial Socialization Predicting High-Risk Activism, reported in standard deviations.

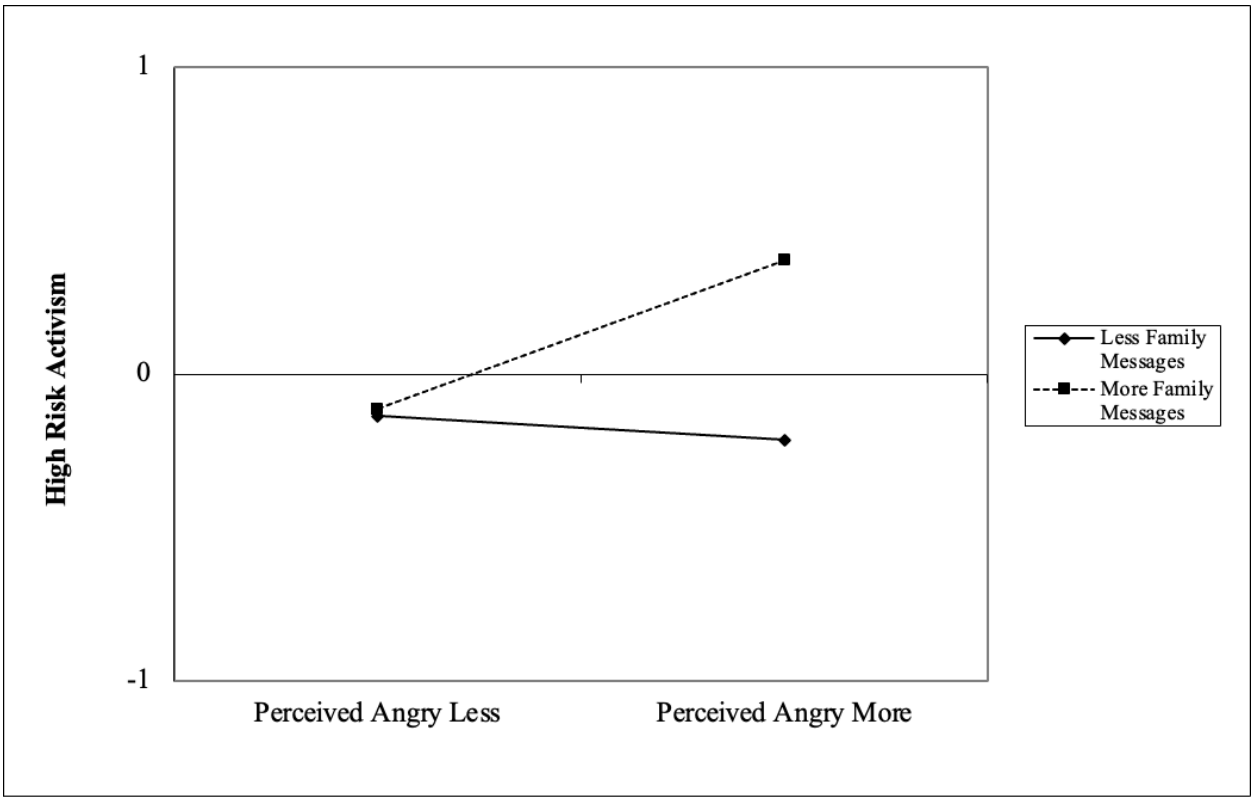


Table 6.

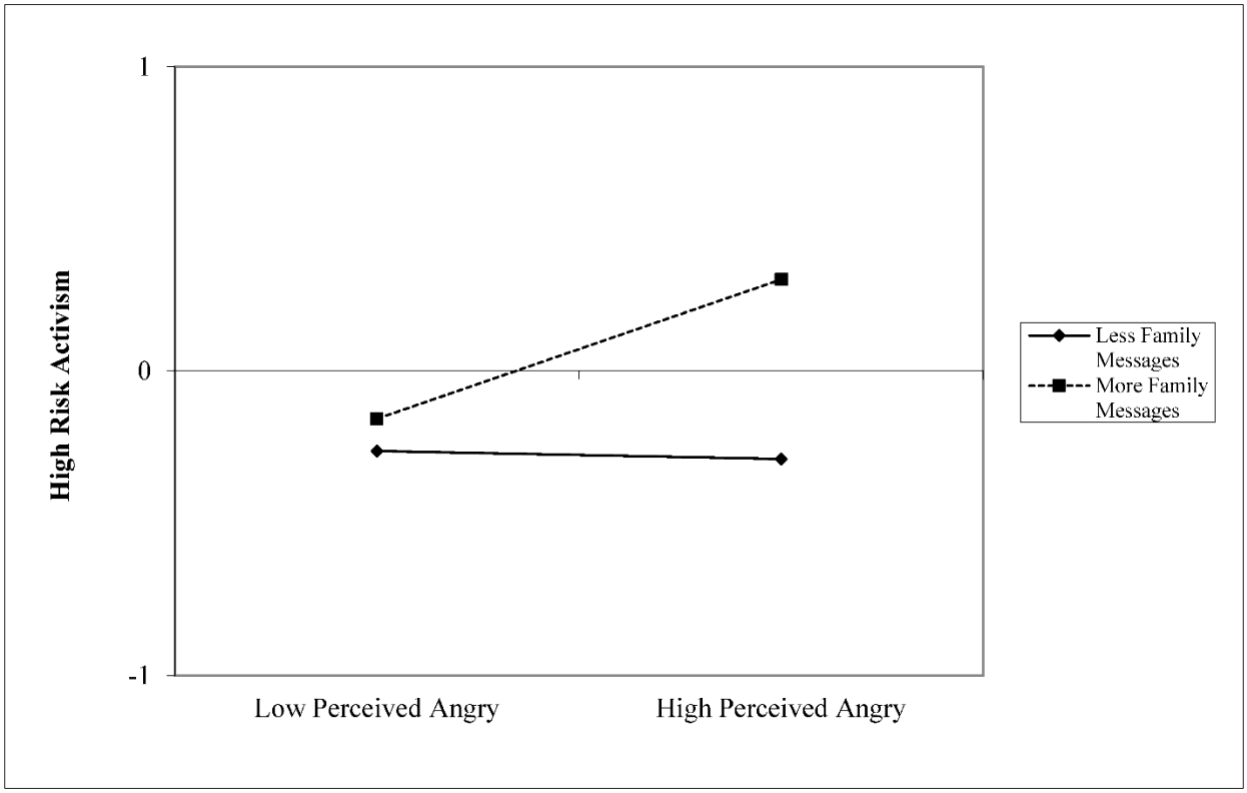
Hierarchical Linear Regression with Gendered Racism and Familial Racial Socialization Predicting Political Engagement

	b	*SE*	β
Step 1: Covariates & Key Study Variables			
Race	-.17	.12	-.09
Gender	.24	.19	.07
Migration Status	.15	.11	.08
Socioeconomic Status	-.08	.12	-.04
Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration	.29	.07	.27***
Familial Racial Socialization	.18	.07	.19**
Beauty and Sexual Objectification	.01	.08	.01
Strong Black/Latina women	-.04	.08	-.04
Angry Black/Latina women	.10	.06	.14†
Silenced and Marginalized	.05	.07	.06
R^2	.21		
F	6.25***		
Step 2: Interactions between Familial Racial Socialization and Gendered Racial Microaggressions			
Race	-.17	.12	-.09
Gender	.24	.19	.07
Migration Status	.15	.11	.08
Socioeconomic Status	-.07	.12	-.03
Ethnic-Racial Identity Exploration	.30	.07	.28***
Familial Racial Socialization	.17	.07	.18*
Beauty and Sexual Objectification	-.01	.08	-.01
Strong	-.05	.08	-.06
Angry	.11	.06	.15†
Silenced and Marginalized	.07	.07	.08
Socialization X Objectification	-.02	.09	-.02
Socialization X Strong	-.08	.08	-.09
Socialization X Angry	.11	.06	.15†
Socialization X Silenced	-.12	.07	-.15†
ΔR	.03		
R^2	.24		
F	5.22***		

All standardized regression coefficients for Political Engagement come from the second step in analysis—$n = 315$. † $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Figure 2.

Interaction between Perceptions of Being Angry and Familial Racial Socialization predicting Formal Political Activism, reported in standard deviations.

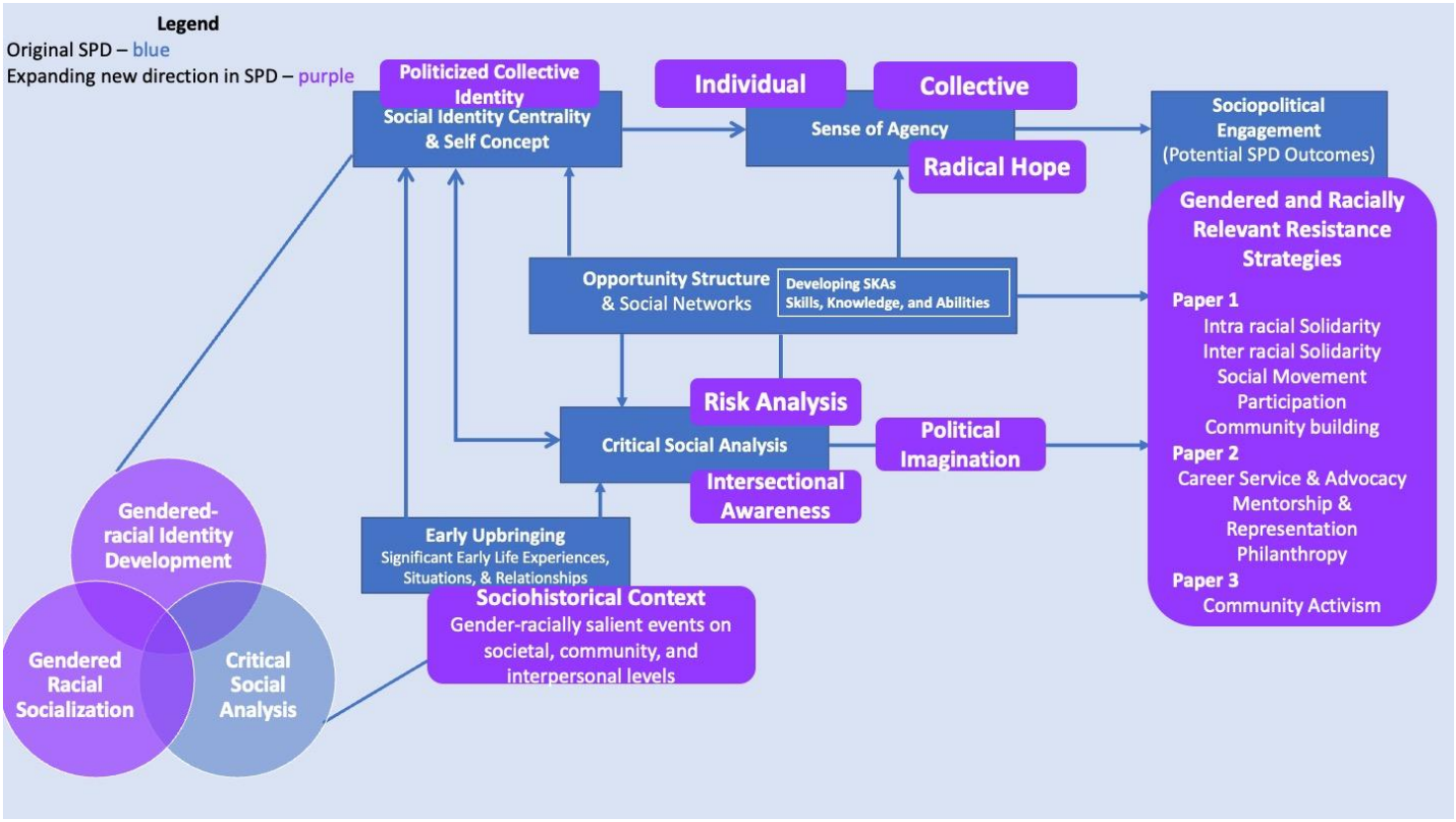


Concluding Document

Critical consciousness and sociopolitical development research have proliferated over the years, documenting how youth of color develop the skills, attitudes and beliefs to combat systemic injustices (Diemer et al., 2021; Watts et al., 2003; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). However, much of this work has focused on youths' responses to singular forms of oppression despite calls for future research to advance explorations of how youth navigate intersectional forms of oppression (Hope et al., 2023). My dissertation explores how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth develop an arsenal of tools to combat discrimination at the intersection of their gender and racial identities - gendered-racism. I integrated Black and Latina feminism (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 1990; Collins & Bilge, 2020) with sociopolitical development theories (Mathews et al., 2020; Watts et al., 2003) to illuminate the vast spectrum of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' resistance by investigating underexplored, culturally relevant forms of sociopolitical action like: interracial solidarity, political imagination, radical hope, and community activism (See Figure 5 below). Drawing from Black and Latina feminisms my dissertation: 1) contextualized Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' experiences of marginalization and resistance within the systems of power and privilege that shape their overall development; and 2) amplified these girls' experiences by centering youth voice in the data collection, analysis and dissemination processes. By studying resistance strategies during girlhood and young womanhood, scholars gain important insight for understanding how these youth are already shaping society, while learning more about the factors that can promote their sense of agency to effect change as women and gender-expansive adults.

Figure 5.

A Feminist Approach to Sociopolitical Development Theory – Contributions of the Dissertation



*Adapted from "Sociopolitical development and social identities" by R. J. Watts, A. Halkovic, 2022, Journal of Research on Adolescence, 34(4). Copyright by John Wiley & Sons - Books, INC. Reprinted with permission.

Summary of Key Findings

In Paper 1, I expanded the sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003; Watts & Halkovic, 2022) by integrating borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) to explore Black, Latina and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' reflections on inter-and-intra racial solidarity during the heightened racial violence of 2020. Using plática methodology (Fierros & Delgado, 2016) and a modified version of the Rapid and Rigorous Data Reduction technique (Watkins, 2017), I explored co-creators' discussions of their personal and observed allyship in: schools-based cultural affinity spaces, community organizations, and BLM on social media. Co-creators who proactively sought political community organizations (e.g., NAACP) were the most likely to

enact interracial solidarity in person through sociopolitical action. Social media and school-based organizations were complex sites supporting critical social analysis of sociopolitical events while sometimes eliciting inter-and-intra group tensions, mistrust, and conflict. BLM participation online made activism more accessible but not necessarily intentional, leaving Black girls skeptical about the heightened allyship that dissipated after the movements' resurgence in 2020. Further, school-based affinity groups and interracial social movements had the potential to be affirming spaces, but co-creators noted how more privileged members (e.g.., cis-het-men/boys) often perpetuated harm on less privileged members of their organization. This was particularly salient for Afro-Latina girls who experienced anti-Blackness in Latinx student organizations and felt a lack of belonging that left them confused about how to engage in the BLM movement.

An important tension that arose in Paper 1, was a misalignment between co-creators' criticism for interracial peers' BLM participation versus their lack of enacted interracial solidarity for one another. Specifically, Black girls were skeptical of the heightened participation in BLM because of the lack of intentional and sustained activism; they hoped that interracial allies would educate themselves about anti-Blackness and move beyond embodied solidarity to enacted solidarity. However, Black girls did not educate themselves or take action with regards to the heightened anti-Latinx xenophobia. Although Latina girls articulated a politicized collective identity with Black Americans, many did not take action - especially in person - for BLM. These findings highlight a distinction between embodied solidarity and enacted solidarity; co-creators in the study emphasized their preference for enacted solidarity as a criterion for determining who they considered an ally. Implications from this work underscore the need for youth to engage in political education and reflexivity across multiple contexts in order to foster their sense of agency and action. Specifically, research is needed that identifies the mechanisms

that support youth in enacting their feeling of solidarity. Further, more work is needed that explores how different opportunity structures can scaffolded opportunities for marginalized groups and allies to discuss roles and expectations for their advocacy.

In paper 2, I expand sociopolitical development theory (Watts et al., 2003) by exploring the role of political imagination (Scott et al., 2023) and radical hope (Christens et al., 2018; Mosley et al., 2020) in supporting girls' and gender-expansive youths' commitment to social change. I implemented intersectional qualitative and grounded theory inspired methodologies (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021) to explore how their visions for themselves, other Black and Latina girls, and community activists reflected sociopolitical developmental processes. Co-creators' political imaginings and radical hopes overlapped when they described visions for enacting social change through their careers as women; directly by taking positions to meet their communities' needs or indirectly through increasing representation or philanthropy. These political imaginings guided their actions by informing their educational choices like what majors they pursued. For many co-creators, their visions, hopes, and perceptions of themselves as change-makers and care-takers of their ethnic-racial community was a core part of their identity.

Co-creators also discussed political imaginings and radical hopes that community activists could mobilize others through interracial coalition building and applying intersectionality to amplify the voices of the most marginalized in their community. In describing their visions for community activism, co-creators noted how women, queer, and undocumented people are often left out of social movements despite being more systemically vulnerable than others. These visions demonstrated an intersectional awareness of how multiple systems overlap to inform theirs' and others' social locations. Structural attributions of systemic racism also

helped youth make connections about how racism created conditions that hindered interracial solidarity, thereby limiting their collective agency and power-building potential.

In Paper 3, I expanded the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness (Mathews et al., 2020) by integrating intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2020) to quantitatively explore the role of familial racial socialization as a moderator between gendered-racial microaggressions and community activism amongst 315 Black and Latina girls and gender-expansive youth (13-17) across the Southeastern U.S. Generally, girls experiencing more gendered racial microaggressions engaged in more low-risk, high-risk, and formal political activism. Girls and gender-expansive youth with greater ethnic-racial identity exploration and familial racial socialization tended to engage in more of each type of community activism. For high-risk activism specifically, familial racial socialization moderated the association between girls' experiences of gendered racism and their critical action, such that girls who received more messages from their family about race tended to engage in more high-risk activism if they were stereotyped as angry more often.

Aligned with the integrative model, this paper highlighted important interconnections between ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness processes. Girls and gender-expansive youth may be drawing on familial socialization to inform the decisions they make about how to respond to different forms of gendered-racial microaggressions. Therefore, supportive and critical familial gendered-racial socialization may be an important intervention point for fostering these girls' sociopolitical development. It is likely that familial socialization informs youths' sociopolitical action because their sociopolitical action is risky considering the hyper-surveillance and policing, they experience as girls of color.

Reflections on the Collective Findings

Reflecting upon the overarching corpus, there are three novel themes that expand our current understanding of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical development. Specifically, these co-creators demonstrated higher order critical social analysis skills often discussing social inequities through an intersectional lens (Papers 1 and 2). There were misalignments between what co-creators described as their ideal visions of large-scale interracial coalitions to promote racial justice, and their lack of enacted interracial solidarity during the racial reckoning of 2020 (Papers 1 and 2). Lastly, risk analysis and familial socialization are important factors informing these girls and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical action (Papers 1 and 3).

Intersectional Awareness

Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth are identifying and discussing gendered-racial discrimination and engaging in intersectional awareness about how their experiences differ from other marginalized groups, as early as adolescence. In papers 1 and 2, I highlighted co-creators' critical social analysis of gendered-racism during the heightened racial violence and even racial justice advocacy of 2020. On a personal level, harmful gendered-racial socialization messages from peers, teachers, family members, and broader society made them aware of stereotypes about their intelligence, appearance, and the possibilities available to them as women and young adults in their careers. These stereotypes were reflective of the Gendered-Racial Microaggression Scale used in Paper 3 (Lewis & Neville, 2015). Even the few youth who demonstrated a limited critical social analysis demonstrated an awareness of how their experiences related to larger systemic trends of marginalization experienced by women in their ethnic-racial community; these girls tended to be younger or had racially privileged identities (e.g., white Latina).

In addition to identifying gendered-racism in their personal lives, co-creators described how Black and Latina women's experiences of gendered-racial violence had often gone unnoticed and unchallenged despite their leadership in advocating for racial justice; immigrant origin youth even made connections about how gendered-racial violence against women was a global phenomenon. When describing the BLM or immigrants' rights advocacy they observed during 2020, or their visions for what grassroots activists could achieve, co-creators often named intersectionality as an important tool for coalition building. While a few of the young women who discussed intersectionality learned about the theory during college as a part of their social justice-oriented majors, even younger girls named the utility of this theory in amplifying the voices of the most marginalized in their ethnic-racial communities. These co-creators criticized how more privileged members of their ethnic-racial community (men, cis-gendered, heterosexual, documented immigrants, and/or citizens) perpetuated harm against more systemically vulnerable members. These findings show that Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls are thinking about social injustices as intersectional issues, recognizing how systems impact marginalized people differently. Aligned with Black feminism, they theorized that by prioritizing the most marginalized members of their ethnic-racial community, they would be able to achieve justice for everyone (Collins, 1990; Combahee River Collective, 1997; Lorde, 1981).

Misalignments between the Visions for and Engagement in Interracial Solidarity

There was a misalignment between how co-creators articulated their visions for grassroots activism and their own resistance during the heightened racial violence of 2020. Specifically, in Paper 2, several co-creators spontaneously mentioned the importance of interracial solidarity as a power-building tool to combat systemic racism. Aligned with borderlands, some co-creators even elaborated on how racism created barriers to interracial

solidarity and proposed solutions for how to build bridges across these marginalized groups (Anzaldúa, 1987). Specifically, they theorized that political education would support interracial peers in making connections about their experiences of discrimination and identifying how white supremacy was the source of their marginalization. In Paper 1 however, co-creators' awareness of the heightened racial violence of 2020, did not always translate to enacted interracial solidarity, unless it was online.

In both papers, co-creators described barriers to their interracial solidarity like competition between the Black and Latinx communities and skepticism about unintentional allyship. Those who lived in predominantly Black and Latinx cities made structural attributions about how racism limited resources available in their neighborhoods, causing interracial tensions. Girls and gender-expansive youth lived in cities or attended schools where they were one of only a few Black, Latinx, or Afro-Latina youth focused on how interracial peers perpetuated harm against them or others in their ethnic-racial community. These co-creators tended to focus more on intraracial solidarity efforts.

Girls and gender-expansive youth who feel a limited sense of agency or resources may feel torn between using their time and skills to combat an immediate threat to their ethnic-racial community and engaging in interracial solidarity, especially during periods of heightened violence like 2020. Additionally, youths' skepticism about allies who engaged on social media may relate to the historical legacy of how women of color have been ostracized, silenced, underappreciated, and discriminated against in racial justice and gender equity movements. This was reflected in some co-creators - especially Black girls' - beliefs that they needed to be the change they wanted to see in the world, because others have not stepped up on their behalf.

Risk Analysis and Familial Socialization as Moderators to Sociopolitical Action

Lastly, Papers 1 and 3 opens up conversations about how Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth engage in risk analysis, and draw on familial socialization when deciding to take sociopolitical action. By using the Black Community Activism Orientation Scale (Hope et al., 2019) in paper 3, I discussed how these girls and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical action is inherently risky due to hyper-surveillance from the criminal legal, immigration, and other systems. Additionally, adults like teachers or school truancy officers may also surveil these girls and gender-expansive youth. Sociopolitical actions vary in terms of risk depending on their visibility. However, even low-risk activism has potential consequences. For instance, while social media activism can be considered low risk, a Black, Latina, or Afro-Latina girl who is undocumented may be targeted by posting about her experiences online may be targeted by ICE and detained. Aligned with other research, decisions about when and how these girls and gender-expansive youth may take action may be informed by their sense of urgency about the discriminatory experiences (Quiles et al., 2023).

Papers 1 and 3 also emphasize the role of familial racial socialization informing co-creators' risk assessment and sociopolitical action. Paper 3 documented the important quantitative associations between ethnic-racial identity, socialization, and sociopolitical action. In fact, familial racial socialization moderated girls' and gender-expansive youths' high-risk activism, such that those who received more familial messages engaged in more high-risk activism when stereotyped as being angry. In paper 1, I was able to qualitatively explore how the content of youths' familial socialization informed co-creators' decision making around deciding on attending protests for BLM during 2020. A few girls discussed how their parents' concern about the potential violence at the protests caused them to prohibit their children from attending. For Black parents, this stemmed from their awareness of how police inflicted violence at BLM

protests. Latina girls also described receiving messages from their parents that recommended they prioritized their own safety and deprioritized highly visible activism that could be interpreted as perpetuating stereotypes of them as dangerous. Co-creators interpreted these messages within the context of the immigration and government trauma their parents experienced. While some heeded their family's warning, others chose not to, demonstrating their own sense of agency to make the right decisions for themselves.

Studies have also documented how Black and Latinx parents share the importance of standing up for themselves and others even at their own expense (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Ayón, 2016; Bañales et al., 2021; Martinez et al., 2022; Pinetta et al., 2020). This was reflected in some of our immigrant-origin co-creators' stories of how their parents emphasized that they moved to the U.S. so their children could live boldly. Their parents encouraged their children to standing up for themselves and others. For instance, one young woman described being heckled and harassed by white counter-protestors, as the only (white) Latina protesting Trump's racist immigration policies. She felt that using her privilege as a lighter skin Latina, and a citizen was worth the risk to ensure others in her ethnic-racial community were protected. In sum, my dissertation highlights how girls' and gender-expensive youths' assessment of risk pertaining to sociopolitical action may be part of their ways of knowing women develop about choosing when and how to respond to discrimination; these decisions are responsive to their families' and communities' needs and safety.

Implications and Future Directions

While my dissertation addresses important gaps in the literature pertaining to Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' sociopolitical development, there is still so much more to learn about the unique and subversive ways they are resisting gendered-

racism. As scholars continue to build upon this work, Black and Latina feminisms call us to: 1) contextualize girls' experiences and resistance within the intersectional systems that inform their social locations; 2) use critical and feminist methodologies that amplifying the wisdoms of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth to expand theory, practice, and advocacy; and 3) proactively advocate for the eradication of the gendered-racism that poses threats to their health, wellbeing, and opportunity. Below I provide suggestions for how these principles can be incorporated by scholars, educators, community leaders, and policy makers to support Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' overall development.

Contextualizing Youth Development – Learning more from Black and Latina Feminists

In addition to borderlands and intersectionality, there are so many other Black and Latina feminist theories that provide insight into the sociocultural factors that shape their resistance. For instance, scholars hoping to learn more about these youths' ethnic-racial identity development and socialization experiences may consider exploring Patricia Hill Collins' self-definition theory (Collins, 1986, 1990). Collins describes self-definition as the process by which Black women learn to critically reflect on and challenge harmful gendered racial messages; Black women and girls may take this one step further by engaging in self-valuation, where they self-author authentic understandings of their personal and collective identities as Black women. Similarly, Anzaldúa has developed a seven staged model demonstrating the interconnections between Chicana/Latina women and girls' identity and sociopolitical development called conocimiento (Anzaldua, 2015). This model is described as a non-linear journey from racial awakenings to spiritual activism. Both self-definition and conocimiento processes mirror some of the pathways described in the integrative model of ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness. Both are more gendered-racially specific ways of exploring how experiences of socialization serve as a

critical entry point into critical social analysis and can be considered a form of sociopolitical resistance (Quiles Pinetta et al., under review).

Additionally, aligned with recent expansions of sociopolitical development theory (Fernández & Watts, 2023), Black feminists have theorized on the role of emotions like anger and love in facilitating sociopolitical action (hooks, 2018; Lorde, 1981). For instance, Audre Lorde (1981) theorized that anger could be used as a catalyst for change if Black women used that emotion to incite their action; this theory recognized the negative outcomes associated with internalizing emotions related to gendered racism reflected in the literature. Likewise, belle hooks (2018) theorized that love has the potential to transform ourselves and others when enacted. She argued that love is an action reflected in communal care, learning more about ourselves and others, and intentionally working with others towards radical healing from systemic inequities. These theories describe the importance of activists' self-awareness, reflexivity, and emotional regulation that may be important components to maintaining sociopolitical action throughout the lifespan.

Critical and Feminist Methodologies - Amplifying Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' Wisdoms

In the name of science, much of psychology seeks to find the objective truths, and trends that can be generalized to explain human behavior (Ashton & McKenna, 2020; Harding, 1992). To do so, researchers often distance themselves from the communities they work with to be able to make 'unbiased' claims about their findings. This even shows up in more person-centered approaches, like qualitative interviewing methods that have strict structured or semi-structured interview protocols. However, Black and Latina feminists make clear that objective research is unrealistic and impossible as our lived experiences, positionalities, and commitments inform all

aspects of the research process. Research is inherently political. So as feminist scholars, there is an epistemological shift to intentionally engage in social justice-oriented work that advocates for the communities we work alongside. Integrating Black and Latina feminisms in our research requires scholars to engage as community members in the struggle for Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' radical healing. Using feminist methodologies not only improves the quality of our data, but also serves as sites for collective critical social analysis, radical healing and community building.

Traditional research methodologies, particularly ethnographies and surveys may be off-putting for Black and Latinx communities which value relationality with others and have historically been exploited by scientific communities (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). In addition to plática methodology, there are other culturally relevant methodologies designed by Black and Latina scholars like storytelling, testimonios, and endarkened story work that can be employed to qualitatively explore Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina youths' experiences and their activism. Storytelling, testimonios, and endarkened storytelling honors cultural traditions of how oratory histories, and subversive knowledge have been passed down between families - especially through mothers (Chioneso et al., 2020; Douglas et al., 2024; García-Díaz, 2024; Hernandez, 2018). Narrative forms of data collection provide Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youth greater agency in how share parts of themselves with us, and typically provide more nuanced and contextualized data.

Youth participatory research is another approach to feminist research that is a tool for scholarly activism. Participatory research can range from getting youths' input about study design to allowing youth to lead research projects. Generally, participatory action research can be critical sites for youths' sociopolitical development as they work with adults to critically

reflect on social and political forces that influence their lives (Diemer et al., 2016; Kornbluh et al., 2015; Ozer, 2016a). Scholars learn important insight regarding how current theories reflect youths' current realities. Further, youth and adults often collaborate on research driven advocacy, supporting youth in elevating their voices and connecting them with community stakeholders (Balazs & Morello-Frosch, 2013; Kornbluh et al., 2015; Ozer, 2016).

Advocating for Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and Gender-expansive youth Within and Beyond the Academy

Most importantly, Black and Latina feminists call us as scholars to use our research to actively engage in advocacy that addresses Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls' and gender-expansive youths' systemic vulnerability. Co-creators in the Hope Resilience Action Study envisioned the same type of systemic change their foremothers were advocating for during the civil rights movement of the 1960's: rights to an equitable education, opportunities for social mobility and job opportunities, eradication of the prison system, and an end to gender-based violence (Kelley, 2002). The fact that these girls and gender-expansive youth are still facing the same forms of oppression as their ancestors is abhorrent and demonstrative of the ways that white supremacy and patriarchy are still active today. While my dissertation highlights that these girls and gender-expansive youth use various tools to resist gendered-racism, it is our responsibility to use our privilege within the academy to elevate their voices and advocate within our different spheres of influence. While expanding scholarly understandings of Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls and gender-expansive youths' development is imperative to moving the field forward in a more accurate, inclusive, and equitable way, it is also important that researchers seek to collaborate and share our expertise beyond the ivory tower.

As community engaged scholars seek to work with community-partners, it is important to recognize the longstanding history of how communities of color have been exploited in the name of science, and gate-kept from the academy (Buchanan et al., 2021). For many college town communities, like Charlottesville which is home to the University of Virginia, scientists have often extracted 'data' from participants, who never actually benefit from their contributions that helped further science. As scientists, we need to have more accountability to the communities that support our work. That includes sharing what we learn with our participants/co-creators in accessible ways. This not only allows for participants to share how they feel our findings reflect their lived experiences (a practice referred to as member-checking), but also supports them taking care of themselves and investing in the broader community. Additionally, it is important we share our findings with the families, educators, and other adults that support these girls' development as well as the policy makers whose legislative decision-making has direct implications for their access to resources.

Methods for public facing scholarship continue to evolve. Many scholars have contributed to non-academic blogs, magazines, and articles that are more accessible to the general public and share information about how to improve their well-being. Social media can be a great tool for connecting with participants, community stakeholders, grant-funders, and other community-engaged scholars. For my dissertation project, I developed a social media account that allowed me to connect with community organizations that served Latinx and Latinx families and my co-creators. At the @hoperesilienceaction page, I have shared profiles of people who worked on the project, as well as preliminary findings for the different studies we have worked on. For each post, I disseminated our findings using non-academic language, breaking down some barriers to understanding research findings. Since some of my co-creators follow me on

Instagram, they have watched this project unfold. In a similar vein, researchers can also invite the community organizations they work with to hear updates on their project. This might look like presenting at local youth-serving community organization and having a conversation about the approaches you have found to be helpful in promoting their sociopolitical development. Scholars can also host an open house event from their lab, where they invite community partners to hear about their research and network with one another.

Importantly, as scholars, our access to institutional power grants us privilege and allows us to be in important spaces where we can share our expertise to inform policy on multiple levels. Staying informed on what is happening on the local, state, and national level allows us to better understand the context of youths' development as well as the policies we need to challenge to promote their well-being. On a small level, we can call or email our representatives when we want to support or challenge a policy coming up for vote. We can also speak directly with legislators at town hall meetings. In doing so, we could share how potential policies might inform youths' development and access based on our research. Developmental scientists have also worked on joint statements that are shared with academic societies, or legislators that provide research-based evidence as to how a policy may promote or hinder youth development. Whether it be public facing scholarship, participatory action research, or policy advocacy, it is important that scholars are intentional about how and why they take action.

Final words - The Dissertation as my own Scholarly Activism

As a graduate student, Black and Latina feminisms have shaped my scholarly activism, informing the questions I asked, my approaches to data collection and analysis, my decision to work in collectives of radical feminist scholars, and how I choose to disseminate this work.

I have thought of my dissertation as a love letter to Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina girls growing up during a time where political forces have tried to silence them. I began developing the Hope Resilience Action Study project my first year of graduate school - the racial reckoning of 2020. It felt particularly necessary and powerful to document these girls and gender-expansive youths' agency and active resistance to systemic gendered-racism. For the vast majority of co-creators in my study, being a change-maker was a core part of their identity, reflected in the ways they sought to take action in their current spheres of influence and enacted plans to pursue careers in service of their communities. There are so many ways scholars can learn from them. Their political visions illustrated a strategic plan for building interracial coalitions against white supremacy and using intersectionality to amplify the voices of the most marginalized in their communities. Their critiques of performative allyship demonstrated their understanding of praxis - the importance of sociopolitical action grounded and critical social awareness of systemic issues - and the need for more political education. Building upon the work of Black and Latina feminist foremothers has been an honor. Along the way, I have learned and grown, made mistakes and tried to keep myself accountable to my communities. As I move forward into the next chapter, I am ready to use my new found privilege as a Doctora to continue advocating for these girls, in ways I am sure will change across my lifespan.

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Appendix A

Interviewer Protocol for Black Girls

Before interview:

- Email your co-creator and send over their cocreator guide!

During Interview:

- Start off by taking some time to introduce yourself
  - Include a teen photo of you on zoom!!
    - Share what you thought activism was at that age and what your academic goals were.
  - Quickly review definitions on their guide.
- You can ask these girls if there is a particular section of the interview they would like to start with.
- Let the girls guide the conversations but use the probes we created if the conversation needs a boost/some momentum.
- Share parts of yourself you feel comfortable with
  - For example, you can share if you empathize/sympathize with what girls are saying
  - You can also share if you feel shocked/emotional about what they are sharing

DURING THE INTERVIEW

1) Start off by asking the girls how they are doing
2) Let them know you want to remind them what the study is about to make sure they are interested
   a) Example: Thanks so much for meeting with me today! Before we get started, I wanted to make sure you had all the information you needed to make sure you still want to participate. In this study we are interested in learning more about Black, Latina, and Afro-Latina women and girls' experience of racial socialization, coping with discrimination, taking action against racism, and also what they are hopeful for. So if you are interested, we will talk in a plática style interview for about an hour. Your participation is completely voluntary, so you can feel free to start or stop at any time. If you choose to participate, we will send you a $25 dollar Target gift card.
3) After consent, please hit record
   a) Record to computer (do not save on the cloud)
   b) Remind girls we record to make sure we accurately document their stories
4) Begin PowerPoint ppt
   a) Say something like: Before we get started on talking about your story, I want you to know a little more about who I am and why this research is important to me. My name is _____and I am working with a group of Black and Latina women scholars to learn about _____ because_____.
   b) Your ppt presentation should not exceed 5 minutes! We just want to make sure they
      i) Know who you are
      ii) Feel connected (that's why we talk about ourselves as teens)
      iii) Understand how plática is different from an interview
      iv) Are on the same page about what the definitions mean
5) Ask the girls to choose where to start!
   a) Ask them if they had time to review the co-creator guide
   b) Did any questions stick out to them?
6) Let the girls guide the convo and use the probes if there is a lull
   a) IF POSSIBLE: try to hit on questions regarding responses to police brutality and ICE detention as well as the activism that followed

7) Definitely (please please please) make sure to ask girls their definitions of activism, and the last questions about their hopes - this will be my dissertation work
8) When you are done, ask for feedback

After the interview:

- Ask for feedback on the process!
- Make sure to grab an email so we can send over their gift card.
    - Send an email to the girl with their gift card
    - Use this excel sheet to send a link to the girl
        - Make sure to highlight the link in green so we know it was used
- Take a few minutes to memo about the plática!
    - Write down some of the most memorable moments
    - Jot down any feelings you had
    - Note any emerging themes you are seeing
- Enjoy some TLC for yourself because you deserve it :)

Review consent

Before we get started, I just want to check in to see if you have any questions about the interview process.

Great- is it okay to record our conversation? We will just be using these recordings to make sure we are accurately portraying your words!

Thank you- Let's begin! Today is [insert date] and it is currently [insert time] am/pm. Hi - My name is _____ I identify as a _____ working with a group of Black and Latina researchers, as well as other girls like you to learn more about Black and Latina girls' use hope, resilience, and action in the face of the challenges they face. This work is super important to me because _____ .

Is there anything else you want to know about me before we start?

Section 1: Family and Cultural Socialization

First, we would love to get to know more about you. If you had to quickly describe yourself in three words, what would you say?

1. What does it mean to you to be a Black girl?
2. How important is being a Black girl to you?
    a. Can you describe a time when you've felt a sense of pride about being a Black girl?
    b. Is there a time you ever felt ashamed of being a Black girl?
3. Have you ever had conversations at home or with your family about what it means to be a Black girl? Who have you had these conversations with specifically?
    a. [make sure to document who the messages are coming from]
    b. [conversations about what is appropriate behavior for a Black girl; Black girl magic; education & occupation attainment; type of Black woman they should strive to be]
4. What did you think about the messages [*insert person they said here*] shared with you?

5. Why do you think [*insert person they said here*] shared these messages with you?
6. Have you ever tried to find out more about the history of Black people in the United States? Or history related to Black women in the United States?
7. What do you think people in the United States think about Black girls?

Section 2: Agency and Academic Goals

Thanks for sharing your experiences about your home and identity. Now we want to know more about your experiences in school.

1. What kind of school do you attend? How would you describe your school? [Depending on their answer, try to probe about components of the school, such as: student and teacher racial composition; school setting - urban / rural / small town; type of school - public / private / charter; academic tracking - AP / IB]
    a. How do you feel when you attend your school?
2. What kinds of messages do you get in your school about what it means to be a Black girl?
    a. Who are you hearing these messages from?
    b. Do you think these messages are related to how they think of you as a student?
3. Can you tell me a bit about what your goals are for your future job or career?
    a. Why do you want to pursue [insert goal or career]?
    b. Do you feel supported by people in your school in accomplishing these goals?

Thanks for telling me more about your future goals - those are exciting to hear. The last few questions in this section focus on what you think about education in the U.S. and whether you've had any challenges in school related to unfair treatment or discrimination.

1. Have you ever had to stand up for yourself or someone who was treated unfairly at your school?
    a. [If yes] How did you feel after you stood up for [insert yourself or person they mentioned]?
        i. What happened after you stood up for yourself? Did you find a resolution to the situation?
    b. [If no] Have you ever witnessed someone else stand up for themselves or someone else who was treated unfairly at your school? How did they stand up for [themselves or the other person?
        i. How did seeing them do this make you feel?
2. Has anyone ever stood up for you when you were being treated unfairly in school or needed something to accomplish a goal?
    a. Can you describe your relationship with that person?
    b. How did you feel when they stood up for you?

3. So first, do you think all students across the United States have the same types of opportunities at their schools? Why/why not?
    a. Are there certain groups that get more privileges like resources than other students?
    b. Are there certain groups of students that have less privileges like resources than other students?

Section 3: Resistance and Social Media

Thanks for sharing more about your academic goals and experiences! Now we want to know more about your experiences on social media.

1. People use social media for a ton of reasons. What types of social media platforms do you use? Why do you use them?
2. Have you ever experienced discrimination on social media?
    a. [if yes] What happened?
    b. [If no] Have you ever witnessed other Black girls being discriminated against in your news feed or in the media? This can include Black girls you know, or don't know.
3. Are there certain discriminatory experiences you have seen or witnessed on social media that you are concerned about experiencing yourself?
    a. [Examples: being profiled by police, being sent out of your classroom for something you are wearing, not being listened to at school or at the doctor, or being accused of being sexually promiscuous or asking for attention based on things you wear or do].
4. Have you witnessed police brutality, ICE raids/detention centers or other forms of violence toward Black and Latinx people on your social media?
    a. Did you see posts about the murder of Duane Wright or Mahkia Bryant on your news feed?
        i. How did seeing these posts make you feel?
        ii. What differences do you notice in the stories of violence against Black people on your feed based on their gender?
        iii. Did you speak with anyone about the posts which discussed the murders?
5. If you have witnessed ***protests*** against police brutality or ICE on your social media profiles, how did they make you feel?
    a. What did you think was working about the protestors approach?
    b. What do you think they could have done better?
6. How often do you use social media to comment on the unfair treatment of Black people by different communities, or systems. Some examples of these behaviors can include posting content which challenges stereotypes or prejudice, or posting something to amplify the voices of people who need to be heard in politics, or even trying to learn more about social justice through social media.
    a. [If they do] How do you feel before and after posting?
    b. [If they don't] Why did you choose not to post about discrimination?

Section 4: Critical Action & Activism

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about how you are using social media, and processing what you are seeing. In addition to seeing a lot of violence against Black and Latinx people on social media, we have also seen a lot of activism to protect them. Now we want to dig deeper into your thoughts about how you can make change in your community.

1. We shared our definition of activism with you earlier, but we want to know more about what you think. How do you define activism?
2. Have you done anything to help others in your community?

    a. [If yes] What types of things did you do in your community to help others?
        i. What motivated you to do that?
3. Do you know of other people who help out in your community?
    a. Can you tell us a little bit more about what kinds of things they are doing to help the community?
    b. Why do you think they try to help out?
4. Have you participated in protests or other community efforts to address violence towards Black or Latinx people?
5. What kinds of actions do you think are most useful for making change in your community?
6. What do you hope that the BLM movement can accomplish for your community?

Section 5: Hopes for the Future

Thank you for everything you've shared! We are wrapping up this interview. Before we go, we want to know more about your hopes for yourself and other Black people.

1. What are some of the hopes and dreams you have for yourself as you get older?
2. What are some of the hopes you have for other Black girls?

Okay! That was my last question. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today. I learned so much for you and really appreciated you sharing your experiences. Are there any last things you would like to share that you felt we did not cover in our time together?

Do you have any questions for me?

How was the platica for you? Do you have any feedback you would like to share with me?

We should be sending your $20.00 gift card within two business days, but feel free to follow up with us if you do not receive payment after that time. Also feel free to reach out if you have any other questions. Thanks again! Have a great rest of your day.

Appendix B

Co-creator Guide

What is plática methodology: Plática in Spanish means "talk". More specifically, pláticas are the kind of talk where we get really deep! It's a space to spill the tea. We want to talk with you about your experiences, but also feel free to ask us about our experiences too.

What are Co-creators: During our talk, we will be exchanging thoughts and ideas. Your ideas are helping us develop, create, and inform this study. So, we consider you to be our co-creator.

Definitions: Throughout our talk, we will use the following terms. Here are the definitions for how we are using the words. We will also ask you about how you think of these terms!

- **Discrimination:** Being treated unfairly because of a specific identity you have like being part of a specific race, or gender.
- **Critical Action:** Taking action to change an oppressive, or unfair context/system.
- **Activism:** Engaging in different activities to achieve political or social change.
- **Racial ethnic community:** A group of people who share the same race, and/or ethnicity as you do.

Core Questions: Here are the main questions we talk to talk to you about today! Which question are you most interested in talking about?

Racial Ethnic Identity:

- What does it mean to you to be a Latina girl?
- Have you ever had conversations at home or with your family about what it means to be a Latina girl? Who have you had these conversations with specifically?

Career Goals:

- Can you tell me a bit about what your goals are for your future job or career?
    - Why do you want to pursue?
    - Do you feel supported by people in your school in accomplishing these goals?
- Have you ever stood up for yourself or someone who was treated unfairly at your school?

Social Media Exposure:

- Have you witnessed ICE raids/detention centers, family separation, police brutality or other forms of violence toward Latinx and Black people on your social media?
    - How did seeing these posts on your news feed make you feel?
    - What differences do you notice in the stories of violence against Latinx people on your feed based on their gender?
    - Did you speak with anyone about the posts which discussed the ICE activities?
- If you have witnessed ***protests*** against police brutality or ICE on your social media profiles, how did they make you feel?
    - What did you think was working about the protestors approach?
    - What do you think they could have done better?

    - Have you participated in protests or other community efforts to address violence towards Latinx or Black people?
- How often do you use social media to comment on the unfair treatment of Latinx people by different communities, or systems. For example: posting content which challenges stereotypes or prejudice, or posting something to amplify the voices of people who need to be heard in politics, or even trying to learn more about social justice through social media.

Activism:

- Have you done anything to help others in your racial ethnic community?
- Have you participated in protests or other community efforts to address violence towards Latinx or Black people?
- What do you hope that the Latinx activism can accomplish for your community?

Hopes and Dreams:

- What are some of the hopes you have for yourself as you get older?
- What are some of the hopes you have for other Latina girls?