Intersecting experiences, motivating beliefs: The joint roles of class and race/ethnicity in the development of youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation

Amanda L. Roy[1]

Marbella Uriostegui[1]

Melissa Uribe[1]

[1]University of Illinois - Chicago
Department of Psychology
1007 W. Harrison Rm 1046D
Chicago, IL 60607

Address all correspondence to the first author, Amanda L. Roy, Phone: 312-413-0992; Email: alroy28@uic.edu; Fax: 312-413-4122

Citation:
Roy, A. L., Uriostegui, M., & Uribe, M. (2019). Intersecting experiences, motivating beliefs: The joint roles of class and race/ethnicity in the development of youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior, 57,* 169-194.

Funded by:
Institute of Education Sciences and the U.S. Department of Education (Grant R305B140035)

Abstract:

Positioning our analyses within two theoretical frameworks, system justification (SJ) theory and critical consciousness (CC), we examine relationships between social class and endorsement of SJ and CC beliefs and behaviors within a sample of low-income, Latinx and Black youth living in Chicago. We operationalize social class using five indicators: income-to-needs ratio (INR), subjective social status (SSS), financial strain, violence exposure, and neighborhood income. We find that for Black youth, higher INR is related to a greater likelihood of rejecting the status quo. Comparatively, living in a higher income neighborhood is negatively related to and being exposed to violence is positively related to the likelihood of engaging in social change behaviors. A different pattern emerged for Latinx youth where, higher perceived status was positively associated with accepting the status quo and greater exposure to violence was negatively related to youths' perceived ability to make a difference in the world around them.

Keywords: critical consciousness, system justification, social class, youth, Black, Latinx

[Chapter Starts Here]

Researchers have long been dedicated to understanding and supporting child and youth development in the context of poverty. However, too often this work positions youth as passive victims, while failing to recognize them as aware, agentic, future citizens. In recent years, there has been increasing attention paid to the important role that youth, particularly those who have been marginalized because of class or race/ethnicity, play in determining their own future and the futures of their communities (e.g. Cammarota, 2011; Ginwright, & James 2002; Gutiérrez, 2008; Kirshner, 2007; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). A burgeoning body of evidence suggests that the same circumstances that produce marginalization may also act to shape how youth see the world and subsequently motivate their desire to change it (e.g. Roy, Raver, Masucci, & DeJoseph, 2019). Moreover, sociopolitical beliefs and actions have been shown to be related to various facets of positive youth development including educational aspirations, occupational attainment (Rapa, Diemer, & Bañales, 2018), life satisfaction, and civic participation (Chan, Ou, & Reynolds, 2014; Diemer & Li, 2011). However, additional work is needed to better understand which specific experiences associated with economic marginalization work to shape youths' societal perceptions and participation. This work fills this gap by examining the complex ways that aspects of class are related to youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation and how these relationships differ across racial/ethnic groups among a sample of low-income, Black and Latinx youth living in Chicago.

We conceptualize youths' societal perceptions and participation using two theoretical frameworks that have been used to describe the ways that youth make sense of the world around them: system justification theory and critical consciousness. System justification (SJ) theory, or "the process by which existing social arrangements are legitimized, even at the expense of the

personal or group interest" (Jost & Banaji, 1994) provides a framework for understanding why members of disadvantaged groups may become accepting of their disadvantaged position. System justification captures social and psychological needs to support the status quo and see it as good, fair, natural, desirable and even inevitable. Critical consciousness (CC), described by some as a counterpoint to SJ, provides a framework for understanding the process by which marginalized individuals come to critically reflect on the sociopolitical systems that perpetuate structures of inequality and engage in action to change them (Freire, 1973).

Acknowledging that low-income youth of color are embedded in intersecting systems of oppression (Santos & Toomey, 2018), we take a broad approach to the operationalization of class and examine the joint roles of class and race/ethnicity on youth outcomes. The majority of research on poverty and child and youth development has focused on objective indicators of socioeconomic status (SES), such as income, education, and employment. However, an increasing number of scholars have called for conceptualizations of economic standing that move beyond this narrow focus to include measures of financial strain, subjective perceptions of social standing, contextual resources, and stressors that co-occur with poverty (Roy & Raver, 2014; Raver, Roy, & Pressler, 2015). We heed this call by leveraging rich, multi-source, longitudinal data to operationalize youths' experiences of class across these multiple domains. We then examine relationships between these multi-faceted aspects of class and youths' reports of system justification and critical consciousness to consider how experiences of economic deprivation and inequality may shape sociopolitical perceptions and participation. Finally, we consider whether these relationships are the same for Black and Latinx youth, recognizing that unique histories of discrimination and oppression may differentially shape how youth see the world.

Social Class and Societal Perceptions

The phrase ‘social class’ has been used interchangeably by researchers with terms like stratification, economic status, and socioeconomic position (Diemer, Mistry, Wadsworth, López, & Reimers, 2013). Social class can be defined as denoting power, control, and advantage over resources present in society. Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to an individuals’ position within the power hierarchy via objective factors like income, wealth, educational attainment, and occupational prestige (Diemer & Ali, 2009). However, an increasing number of researchers have called for the use of more nuanced, multi-faceted measures of social class that better capture the complexity of the construct. This includes the use of measures like the MacArthur Subjective Social Status (SSS) measure, which captures an individuals’ perception of his/her social class relative to others in society (Liu, Ali, Soleck, Hopps, & Pickett, 2004), measures of financial strain which assess the extent to which a lack of resources produces psychological distress, stressors that co-occur with experiences of poverty such as violence, and contextual measures of SES (e.g. neighborhood, school) which capture the broader contexts in which poverty is experienced (Roy et al., 2015).

In this study we operationalize social class using five measures that capture this diversity of experience. These include a measure of lifetime household income-to-needs ratio, youth-reported SSS, youth-perceived family-level financial strain, youth experienced violence, and an objective measure of neighborhood income. These indicators vary in the degree to which they capture objective versus subjective experiences of class, tap into stress-related experiences, and reflect the economic level of the contexts that youth are embedded in. It may be that these unique nuances of class have different implications for how youth see the world around them.

Theories of Youth Sociopolitical Perception and Participation

System justification. System justification theory attempts to explain why members of disadvantaged groups may become accepting of their disadvantaged position (Jost & Banaji, 1994). It captures social and psychological needs to support the status quo and see it as good, fair, natural, desirable and even inevitable. Jost and Hunyady (2002) explain that rationalization of the status quo, internalization of inequality, relations among ego, group, and system justification motives, and reduction of ideological dissonance are some of the underpinnings of system justification among members of a disadvantaged group.

Several hypotheses exist as to *how* or *why* members of disadvantaged groups come to rationalize the status quo. One such hypothesis poses that people will rationalize the status quo by judging likely events to be more desirable than unlikely events, regardless if the events are initially defined as attractive or unattractive (Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002). In addition, Haines and Jost (2000) argue that members of a marginalized group are likely to rationalize the status quo by providing pseudo-explanations for power differences between groups that will (1) increase the use of stereotypes to rationalize differences, and (2) lead members of disadvantaged groups to express more positive affect concerning their situation. This hypothesis stresses that system justification serves as a way for members of disadvantaged groups to cope with and feel better about their social standing. Similarly, others have demonstrated the role of perceived powerlessness as a factor underlying system justifying beliefs among the disadvantaged (van der Toorn et al., 2015).

Critical consciousness. Theory and research on critical consciousness (CC) provides a second framework for understanding youths' societal perceptions. CC can be defined as the ability of marginalized individuals to critically reflect on the sociopolitical systems that perpetuate structures of inequality (Freire, 1973). CC or sociopolitical development facilitates

the capacity to overcome sociopolitical oppression and combat inequitable distribution of resources and access to opportunity (Freire, 1993), which in turn leads to healthier mental outcomes (Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

CC is composed of three mechanisms: critical reflection (e.g, carefully analyzing structures of inequality), political efficacy (e.g., the perceived ability to effect social and political change), and critical action (e.g., individual or collective action to alter the system). Critical reflection is further comprised by two subcomponents: perceived inequality and egalitarianism. Perceived inequality refers to the critical examination of social inequities, such as ethnic-racial, gendered, and socioeconomic limitations on educational as well as occupational opportunity (Diemer & Rapa, 2016). Egalitarianism refers to the belief that all social groups are equal, and deserve equal opportunity to advancement. Similarly, political efficacy also encompasses two subcomponents: internal and external political efficacy (Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011). Internal political efficacy is the perceived capacity to effect sociopolitical change through individual or collective action, while external political efficacy refers to the perception that sociopolitical agencies are responsive to one's interests and needs (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006). Finally, critical action refers to engaging in specific behaviors or activities, either individually or collectively, with the goal of changing perceived injustice.

Class and Racial/Ethnic Differences in Youths' Perceptions and Participation

Prior theory and empirical work offer some insight into how youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation may vary by class and race/ethnicity. System justification theory posits that members of disadvantaged groups internalize cultural values and stereotypes that oppress them, and has been associated with outgroup favoritism (Jost & Burgess, 2000), identification with the aggressor (Wyer & Srull, 2014) and false consciousness (i.e., holding false

beliefs against oneself and/or collective interest) (Neville, Coleman, Falconer, & Homes, 2005). System justification is associated with members of a marginalized group ignoring or minimizing underlying systems of social oppression (e.g., racism) or blaming members of their same group for social injustices (Shedd, 2015). Research by Jost and colleagues (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Ni, 2003) reports some evidence supporting a dissonance-based argument that marginalized groups are the least likely to question, challenge, reject or change the systems that marginalize them. Four key findings emerged in this study : (1) low-income and African American respondents were more likely than others to support hindrances on citizens' rights to criticize the government; (2) low-income Latinx youth were more likely to trust the U.S government than high-income Latinx youth; (3) low-income participants were more likely than high-income participants to believe that large differences in income are necessary to foster motivation; and (4) low-income and African American participants were more likely than others to believe that economic inequality is legitimate.

Class and racial/ethnic differences in CC development have also begun to be examined. Recent work has found higher levels of county-level income inequality (Godfrey & Cherng, 2016) and youths' reports of exposure to violence (Roy et al., 2018) to be linked with higher rates of critical action behaviors among low-SES and racial/ethnic minority youth. Diemer and Rapa (2016) examined the patterns by which distinct dimensions of CC may lead minority youth toward distinct forms of political action. Egalitarianism was found to be a predictor of expected voting for Latinx adolescents, but not for African Americans. Moreover, egalitarianism was found to be negatively correlated with critical action (e.g., protests) for Latinx youth such that Latinx youth who reported higher levels of egalitarianism reported lower participation in protests. Perceived inequality (i.e., critical reflection) was found to be a significant predictor of

critical action for both groups, in addition to predicting expected voting for the Latinx group only. Perceived inequality was predictive of expected social action for both groups, and generally more predictive of disparate forms of political action for African American youth than for Latinx youth. That is, holding egalitarian beliefs was generally more predictive of conventional political behavior (e.g., voting) for Latinx youth than for African American youth. The negative relationship between perceived inequality and expected voting for the Latinx group may be explained by issues of citizenship and disenfranchisement, as Latinx youth are more likely to be first- or second-generation immigrants than African Americans.

Although African American and Latinx youth both struggle with societal inequities and uneven distribution of resources, it may be that perceptions of inequality may stem from different contextual experiences and exposures that, in turn, motivate different forms of sociopolitical activism. For example, generations of disenfranchisement may influence African American youth to turn to elected officials, or social activism , rather than voting to promote change (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). In contrast, issues of citizenship within the Latinx community may have a significant cultural and social influence in how Latinx youth perceive society and act to produce change. Latinx youth are more likely than African American youth to be first- or second-generation immigrants and, as such, are more likely to hold beliefs in the "American Dream" and equal opportunity, which have been linked to more conventional forms of sociopolitical participation like voting (American Political Science Association, Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004). These ethno-racial differences highlight the need of present studies to analyze how historical and cultural beliefs influence sociopolitical beliefs and actions among marginalized adolescents.

The Current Study

Grounded in intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Santos & Toomey, 2018) and diverse perspectives on social class (Diemer et al., 2013), the current study contributes to a growing body of research by examining relationships between social class, broadly defined, and youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation among a sample of low-income, African American and Latinx youth living in Chicago. Moreover, we test whether these relationships differ for African American and Latinx youth. Given the growing body of evidence that sociopolitical perceptions and participation play an important role in positive youth development, particularly among racial/ethnic minority and/or low income youth (e.g. Rapa, Diemer, & Bañales, 2018), understanding how the complex, intersecting experiences of race and class shape the way that youth perceive and participate in the world offers an important strategy for fostering the healthy development of the next generation of engaged citizens.

This work contributes to the existing literature in several key ways. First, we take a broad approach to the operationalization of social class using longitudinal, multi-modal measures that capture multiple aspects of class. Specifically, we include measures of lifetime household income-to-needs ratio and neighborhood income averaged across five prior waves of data and youths' reports of subjective social status, exposure to violence, and financial strain collected the year before outcomes were assessed. This approach acknowledges the nuanced, intersecting ways that class shapes individual experience and allows us to examine which of these experiences is the most salient for the development of youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation. Second, bridging two theoretical frameworks, we consider multiple dimensions of youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation as outcomes thus allowing us to consider interrelationships between them and yet recognizing them as distinct constructs. Finally, this work was conducted in the city of Chicago, a particularly salient context for exploring these

issues given its high rates of racial/ethnic segregation and unequal distribution of poverty (Quillan, 2012).

Although our analyses are somewhat exploratory, we put forth specific hypotheses based on the existing body of literature. First, we anticipate that objective measures of social class (e.g. income-to-needs ratio) will be more predictive of societal perceptions than subjective measures. Specifically, in keeping with findings from prior work, we anticipate that youth from families with higher income-to-needs ratios will report fewer system justifying and more perceived inequality beliefs (Jost et al., 2003). In addition, based on prior work (Godfrey & Cherng, 2016; Roy et al., 2019), we predict that contextual experiences of social class (e.g. violence exposure, neighborhood income) may be powerful predictors of sociopolitical action. It could be that experiencing inequity in multiple facets of one's lived experience is a powerful motivator towards facilitating social change. Finally, we anticipate that predictors of sociopolitical action will be stronger for African American than Latinx youth. This hypothesis is in keeping with prior work which has found that African American youth to be more likely to engage in non-traditional change strategies such as social activism to promote change (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

Method

Sample and Procedures

We capitalize on longitudinal data (collected at six waves between 2004 and 2017) from a sample of predominantly African American and Latinx adolescents living largely in high-poverty, Chicago neighborhoods. Youth were originally recruited into the Chicago School Readiness Project (CSRP) as part of a socioemotional intervention trial implemented in Chicago Head Start preschool programs in two cohorts between 2004 and 2006 (Raver et al., 2009; Raver et al., 2011). Children and families were assessed when children were in preschool (Wave 1,

N=602), kindergarten (Wave 2, N=398), third (Wave 3, N=505), fifth (Wave 4, N=491), ninth/tenth (Wave 5, N=469), and tenth/eleventh (Wave 6, N = 437) grades. In waves 1-4, data collection spanned a two-year period so that the two cohorts of youth were assessed when they were in the same grade; in waves 5-6 data collection took place at one point in time when the two cohorts of youth were in different grades. At waves 5 and 6 all measures were collected using computerized assessments and delivered to participants in their schools.

The analytic sample for this study consists of 396 youth who identified as either African American or Latinx and had valid data on at least one of the four outcome measures collected at wave 6. The majority of youth in the study sample were female (56%) and African American (73%; Latinx = 27%). On average, youth were 16 years old (*SD* = .84) at the wave 6 assessment. Averaging across all waves of data, the average income-to-needs ratio (INR) for the sample was 0.83 (*SD* = 0.65), indicating that the majority of youth lived in households whose income and family size placed them below the national poverty line (defined as having an income-to-needs ratio equal to or less than 1) for the majority of their lives.

Measures

All outcome measures of sociopolitical perceptions and participation were collected from youth at the wave 6 assessment. Three measures of social class, SSS, financial strain, and exposure to violence, were collected from youth at wave 5. Income-to-needs and neighborhood income were calculated at each wave and averaged across waves 1-5 for these analyses.

Sociopolitical perceptions and participation. We used four measures of sociopolitical perceptions and participation in these analyses: *system justification, perceived inequality, political efficacy, critical action.* Perceived inequality, political efficacy, and critical action are all elements of critical consciousness.

System Justification. Youth indicated their endorsement of system justifying beliefs by indicating their agreement or disagreement with nine items used by Kay and Jost (2003) to measure system justification (α = .89). Items were rated from 0= "Strongly Disagree" to 5= "Strongly Agree." Example items include "In general, American society is fair," "The U.S is the best country to live in" and "Most laws and policies in the U.S benefit most people." Item responses were averaged.

Perceived inequality. Three items taken from the Perceived Inequality subscale of the Critical Consciousness Scale (α =.87; CCS; Diemer, McWhirter, Ozer, & Rapa, 2015) were used. The CCS is used to measure youths' critical awareness and analysis of societal inequalities, including race, gender, and/or class-based discrimination in access to quality education and opportunities. Questions were rated on a Likert scale from 1-5 (e.g., 1= "Strongly Disagree" 5= "Strongly Agree"), and include the following: "Poor children have fewer chances to get a good high school education," "Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get ahead," and "Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead." Item responses were averaged.

Political efficacy. Four items were taken from the Political Efficacy sub-scale of the Critical Consciousness Scale (α = .83; Diemer et al., 2015). Youth responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 5= "Strongly Agree." Example items included "It is important to fight against social and economic inequality" and "I can make a difference in my community." Item responses were averaged.

Critical action. Youth responded to five yes/no items taken from the Sociopolitical Action subscale of the Critical Consciousness Scale (Diemer et al., 2015). Some items were altered slightly to make them relevant to adolescents' experiences with social media. These questions were chosen to reflect a range of sociopolitical involvement (e.g. "Have you posted on

social media about a social justice or political issue?" to "Have you worked on a political campaign?") and content that was germane to current events covered on local and national news media at that time (e.g. "Have you participated in a gay rights, pro-environment or social justice group?"). Additional items included "Have you participated in a discussion about a social or political issue, such as immigration or climate change?" and "Have you joined in a protest march, political demonstration, or political meeting?". Questions reflected behaviors engaged in during the prior six months. Responses were averaged to create a measure of the average number of behaviors engaged in.

Social class. We include five measures of social class in these analyses.

Lifetime income-to-needs ratio. Income-to-needs ratio (INR; Moore, Daniel, Gauvin, & Dubé; 2009; Noss, 2012) compares a family's income to the minimal economic resources required for a family of that size. The INR is computed by dividing the total family income by the Federal Poverty Threshold for a given year and family size. The INR is a more precise measure of SES in that it accounts for family members requiring economic resources. An INR of .50 or lower reflects that the family is experiencing extreme poverty, an INR between 1 and 2 reflects low-income to near-poor, and an INR greater than 4 is reflective of affluence. Our measure is based on caregivers' reports of family income and household size collected at waves 1 through 5. INR was calculated at each wave and then averaged across waves for individuals who had at least four waves of valid data (Full sample: M =.83, SD=.65, Range 0-3.82; Black: M =.78, SD=.63, Range 0-3.82; Latinx: M =.95, SD=.67, Range 0-3.71).

Subjective social status. At wave five youth completed the MacArthur Subjective Social Status-Youth version (Goodman, et al., 2000). Like its adult counterpart, this instrument includes a visual depiction of a ladder with ten rungs. Youth were directed to "Imagine that this ladder

pictures how American society is set up. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off – they have the most money, the highest amount of schooling, and the jobs that bring the most respect. At the bottom of the ladder are the people who are the worst off – they have the least money, little or no education, no job or jobs that no one wants or respects. Now think about your family. Please tell us where you think your family would be on the ladder." Youths responses range from one to ten. (Full sample: *M* =6.00, *SD*=1.71, Range 1-10; Black: *M* =6.19, *SD*=1.73, Range 1-10; Latinx: *M* =5.48, *SD*=1.53, Range 1-10).

Financial strain. At wave 5 youth responded to four yes/no items taken from the Child Food Security Survey Module (Connell, Nord, Lofton, & Yadrick, 2004) and a measure of adolescents' perceptions of economic stress (Mistry, Benner, Tan, & Kim, 2009). Items included, "Did your family not have enough money to buy things your family needed or wanted?" and "Were your parents upset or worried because they did not have enough money to pay for things?". Item responses were averaged (Full sample: *M* =.19, *SD*=.26, Range 0-1; Black: *M* =.18, *SD*=.25, Range 0-1; Latinx: *M* =.22, *SD*=.29, Range 0-1).

Lifetime neighborhood income. Youths' residential census tracts from waves 1 through 5 were matched with measures of median household income within a census tract obtained from the American Community Survey 2006-2010 (for waves 1, 2, 3, and 4) and 2011-2015 (for wave 5) five-year estimates (American Community Survey, 2006-2010; American Community Survey, 2011-2015). Measures of neighborhood income at each time point were then averaged across waves for youth with a minimum of four waves of valid data. The measure was divided by 10 to avoid small estimates (Full sample: *M* =3.18, *SD*=.91, Range 1.42-8.28; Black: *M* =2.94, *SD*=.76, Range 1.42-8.28; Latinx: *M* =3.85, *SD*=.99, Range 1.61-6.78).

Violence exposure. Youth completed a version of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Brener, Collins, Kann, Wareen & Williams, 1995) which assesses challenges and strengths more likely to be experienced by adolescents. Youth responded to seven items on a "yes" "no" dichotomy that examined exposure to violence. Some examples include "Have you watched or heard fights between adults in your home?", "Have you been hit, kicked, or hurt by another kid?", and "Have you been in a physical fight." (Full sample: M =.29, SD=.26, Range 0-1; Black: M =.29, SD=.25, Range 0-1; Latinx: M =.26, SD=.28, Range 0-1).

Covariates. Demographic variables were collected from primary caregivers at baseline and were used in path models. Youth gender was dummy coded such that females were coded as 1 and males were coded as 0. Age is reported in years. Race/ethnicity was coded so that African-American/Black is 1 and Latinx is 0. The majority of youth and their parents were born in the U.S., only 14.4% of parents or youth were born outside the U.S. Because of the relatively low rates we chose not to use this indicator as a variable in our analyses.

Analytic Plan

Our primary questions were addressed by estimating a series of path models run in MPlus. To examine relationships between indicators of social class and youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation, a model was fit in which directional paths led from each of the five indicators of social class to each of the four outcomes. Youth gender and age were included as covariates in the model. Model fit was assessed using traditional fit indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999), including the comparative fit index (CFI; with good fit indicated by values > .95), the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; with good fit indicated by values < .08), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; with good fit indicated by values < .08).

In order to test whether the estimated paths were equivalent for African American and Latinx youth, a multiple-group path analysis was run where race/ethnicity was used as a grouping variable so that the model was estimated separately for African American and Latinx youth. In the initial iteration all paths were estimated freely and no constraints were specified. In a second model all paths were constrained to be equivalent across groups and nested models were compared using a chi-square test.

Missingness ranged from 0-7% across all variables with the exception of neighborhood income where 16% of cases were missing. Analyses used full information maximum likelihood (FIML) to estimate statistical parameters from data with missing values, allowing retention of the complete sample.

Results

As a first step, we ran correlations between all predictors and outcomes to examine relationships within and between constructs separately for African American and Latinx youth (Table 1). Interestingly, although some statistically significant correlations did emerge, none of the correlations between indicators *within* a construct were particularly large. In fact, the largest correlations were found in the Latinx sub-sample between financial strain and exposure to violence (r = .36) and political efficacy and critical action (r = .38).

[Insert Table 1 here]

The path model for the full sample fit the data well, [($\chi^2(6, N=396) = 12.64$); RMSEA = .05 (90% CI= [.003, .094]); CFI = .93; SRMR = .03] (Figure 1). Income-to-needs ratio was negatively related to system justification ($\beta = -.10$, $p < .05$) but positively related to perceived inequality ($\beta = .19$, $p < .01$). SSS was positively related to system justification ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$).

Violence exposure was positively related to critical action ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$) and neighborhood income was negatively related to critical action ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$).

[Insert Figure 1 here]

The unconstrained, sub-group analyses also provided an adequate fit to the data [($\chi^2(12, N=396) = 25.39$); RMSEA = .08 (90% CI= [.03, .12]); CFI = .87; SRMR = .03]. Constraining the paths to be equivalent across Latinx and African American youth resulted in a statistically significant worsening of model fit ($\Delta\chi^2(34) = 50.47$, $p < .05$.), indicating that the paths are not equivalent across the two groups. Figures 2 and 3 depict significant paths for Latinx and African American youth respectively. Among Latinx youth, higher SSS was related to more system justifying beliefs ($\beta = .38$, $p < .01$) while higher levels of exposure to violence was related to lower political efficacy ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .01$). In contrast, among African American youth, income-to-needs ratio was negatively related to system justification ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$) but positively related to perceived inequality ($\beta = .23$, $p < .01$). At the same time, neighborhood income was negatively related to critical action ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$) and violence exposure was positively related to critical action ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$).

[Insert Figures 2 and 3 here]

Discussion

The evidence presented here contributes to a growing body of work demonstrating that the same intersecting systems of marginalization that low-income youth of color are embedded in can also shape the ways they perceive society and subsequently motivate their desire to change it (Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2005; Cammarota, 2011; Ginwright, & James 2002; Gutiérrez, 2008). Two major theories on marginalized communities and societal perceptions suggest that disadvantaged youth either justify social inequality (i.e., system justification) or

critically analyze the distribution of power and act to change their economic and social conditions (i.e., critical consciousness). However, because few studies have quantitatively examined aspects of each theory simultaneously, questions remain regarding whether these perspectives are opposite poles of the same construct or instead are mutually-exclusive beliefs that can be held simultaneously within individuals. Additionally, the contextual precursors related to youths' societal perspectives and participation are largely unknown. By examining relationships between social class, broadly defined, and youths' system justifying and critical consciousness beliefs and behaviors among a sample of low-income Black and Latinx youth we make several important contributions to the literature demonstrating that (1) system justifying and critical consciousness perceptions are not equivalent, (2) experiences of social class also vary within this predominantly disadvantaged sample, (3) experiences of social class do shape youths' societal perceptions and participation, and (4) these relationships differ for Latinx and Black youth.

Correlations among indicators of SJ and CC reveal that these constructs are not equivalent and the relationships between them differ for Latinx and Black youth. Among Latinx youth, the only significant relationship among societal perceptions is between political efficacy and critical action. Youth who felt empowered to make a difference in their community were more likely to be engaged in critical action behaviors. Although we see a similar pattern among Black youth, additional relationships also emerge. Specifically, we see that Black youth with more SJ beliefs are less likely to perceive inequality or espouse critical action beliefs. In addition, Black youth who report higher levels of perceived inequality also report more political efficacy. It may be that for Black youth, dimensions of SJ and CC are capturing a common underlying construct of societal perceptions and participation where rejecting the status quo,

perceiving inequality, and engaging in critical action are all common elements. For Latinx youth, endorsing one set of beliefs seems to be less related to other perceptions or behaviors, potentially suggesting that intersections between these dimensions may be more complex or contextually-bound. Although none of these correlations are particularly large, additional work should continue to explore these complexities.

Correlations between indicators of social class paint a similarly complex picture. Interestingly, although these are all conceptually-related indicators, we find that they are largely distinct rather than interrelated. However, some statistically significant, albeit relatively modest, correlations did emerge, and for the most part, these relationships differ for Black and Latinx youth. The one relationship between indicators of social class that was similar for both Black and Latinx youth was between violence exposure and financial strain; reports of higher violence exposure were associated with more financial strain. This finding fits with our assumption that these two indicators both capture stressful experiences associated with disadvantage. Among Black youth, financial strain was also associated with lower subjective social status; this suggests that for Black youth, seeing your family struggle financially informs how you position yourself within the larger socioeconomic distribution. Tellingly, among Black youth, we also found positive correlations between violence exposure and both income-to-needs ratio and neighborhood income. This result supports previous research that finds Black youth report witnessing violence in their schools, neighborhood or home, and receiving physical abuse at a higher rate than Latinx and White youth across each level of income (Crouch, Hanson, Saunders, Kilpatrick, & Resnick, 2000).

Unique correlations between indicators of social class were also seen among the Latinx sub-sample. Notably, among Latinx youth, we find that several of our multi-dimensional

indicators of social class correlate in expected directions. That is, our objective measure of lifetime household income-to-needs ratio is positively correlated with lifetime neighborhood income (at the census tract level) and youth-reported SSS. Youth who have lived in higher-income households throughout their lives have also, on average, lived in higher-income neighborhoods, and perceive their socioeconomic status as higher. However, we also find that Latinx youth who live in higher-income neighborhoods also report *lower* subjective social status and *more* financial strain. It could be that, among Latinx youth, neighborhood income is capturing a dimension of *relative* economic standing as youth compare themselves to those around them. Latinx youth and their families may face additional barriers due to citizenship and immigration status that is not captured in more objective forms of social class. Many immigrant and first-generation Latinx parents take on lower-paying jobs (even if they have advanced degrees in their home countries) (Catanzarite, 2000), which consequently may not afford them stability and other necessities such as health insurance. Hence, Latinx youth living in higher-income neighborhoods may be more likely to interpret their own situations in relation to those around them and perceive increased strain in their families or position themselves lower in the economic distribution.

Our primary analyses tested relationships between indicators of social class and youths' sociopolitical perceptions and participation. Importantly, we find that these relationships differ for Latinx and Black youth. This is not surprising given that differential experiences with discrimination and oppression may shape how youth experience social class and see the world. Focusing our attention first on the sample of Black youth, we found that among this largely disadvantaged sample, higher income-to-needs ratio was associated with lower system justification and higher perceived inequality. Consistent with prior work that finds higher-income

Black Americans report less faith in societal fairness and less trust in social institutions compared to lower income Black American (Cole & Omari, 2003; Harris, 2008), we find that more affluent Black youth are less likely to justify the system and more likely to perceive inequality. In this case, it may be that having greater income may also be tied to unique racialized experiences. Research consistently finds Black individuals report high levels of discrimination in the workplace (Deithc, Barsky, Butz, Chan, Brief, & Bradley, 2003) and having a higher income does not insulate Black youth from being subjected to racist and discriminatory behaviors and attitudes (Comer, 1995). Given that the items for system justification ask about "laws and policies," it may be that inter-racial experiences associated with having a higher income (e.g., living in predominantly White neighborhoods, attending diverse schools) may also lead to greater exposure to discriminatory experiences in one's life and awareness of discriminatory experiences in the larger Black community (Chaney & Robertson, 2013), experiences which may raise critical awareness of inequities in the world around them. Indeed, ethnographic and survey results show that higher-income Black American adults report more perceived discrimination that their lower-income Black counterparts (Cole & Amari, 2003; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Krieger et al., 2011).

We also found that Black youth who had higher neighborhood incomes reported engaging in less critical action, while higher violence exposure was associated with more critical action behaviors. It may be that for Black youth living in higher income communities, the need to engage in critical action may not feel as salient because the lived consequences of inequality may not be as proximal. In fact, previous research suggests that as African American's quality of neighborhood increases, their belief that their individual fate is closely linked to the fate of Blacks as a group declines (Gay, 2004). Moreover, Sharon and colleagues (2012) found that

higher group consciousness predicted increased likelihood of engaging in political action (e.g., attendance at rallies, volunteering activities). Thus, it may be that youth who report higher neighborhood income may engage in less critical action due to a decreased group consciousness. Additionally, the fact that higher income youth are more likely to perceive inequality but those living in higher income communities are less likely to act fits with prior research that has found inconsistencies between critical thought and action (Diemer & Li, 2011). Similarly, Gay (2004) found that while college-educated Blacks were more likely to report discrimination as a barrier to Blacks' social mobility, their engagement with other college-educated Black did not increase their perceptions of collective or group fate. Thus, people's perceptions of social inequality may not always coincide with their engagement in changing the status quo via political participation. Another possibility may be that, as some scholars argue, inaction in part by youth of color may in actuality be an endorsement of healthy cynicism (i.e., distrust and critical analysis) towards the government (Gordon & Taft, 2011; Taft, 2006). A qualitative study with youth activists found that working-class and poor youth of color report an "internalized hopelessness and cynicism" as they are already aware of the chronic structural issues caused by living in impoverished, racially isolated conditions such as violence (Gordon & Taft, 2011, pg. 1509). However, our results indicate that violence exposure was a catalyst for critical action. It may be that violence exposure may engender higher critical engagement because of the immediate and dangerous effect it may have on youth and their communities.

We found a different pattern of results among our Latinx sample. In contrast with our Black sample where we found that youth with higher income-to-needs reported lower levels of SJ, we found that Latinx youth with higher levels of subjective social status reported higher levels of SJ. Cultural differences may explain, in part, why Latinx youth endorse system

justifying ideologies while Black youth do not. Some work has found that Latinx mothers tend to attribute income inequality to individual responsibility (Godrey & Wolf, 2016), a perspective that may be passed from parents to youth (Henry & Saul, 2006). It is also important to note that these findings differ not only across racial/ethnic group but also by objective versus subjective experiences of class. For Latinx youth, whose families may face additional barriers due to citizenship and immigration status, perceived status may be a more robust predictor of youths' societal perceptions.

Additionally, we found that for Latinx youth, higher violence exposure was associated with lower political efficacy, or belief in one's ability to make a difference in the world around them. Again, this is in contrast with findings from our Black sample which revealed that youth were more likely to engage in community-based critical action when faced with *higher* levels of violence. It is possible that cultural factors such as citizenship status, nativity, and time spent in the U.S. may contribute to the contradictory results between sub-groups. That is, where Black youth and their families have more established lives in the U.S. and their racialized history and tradition of collective action (e.g. civil rights movement) may be communicated by parents via racial socialization and in schools as part of U.S. history, many Latinx first- and second-generation youth may not have a shared history with other Latinxs in the U.S. It is plausible that a lower sense of collective identity due to disparate ethnic identities and cultural factors may play a role in youth's low political efficacy in the context of community violence. In support of this result, previous research finds that time spent in the U.S. and nativity (foreign-born or U.S. born) cultural factors were associated with Latinx political attitudes (Sanchez, 2006). At the same time, Sanchez (2006) found that group consciousness, specifically perceived group-based discrimination but not commonality, was also associated with Latinx public opinion. Latinx

diminished linked fate perspective may be attributed to their low collectivism with other ethnically different Latinx groups which may explain why Latinx youth are less likely to feel as though they are capable of creating change through political measures. Moreover, some scholars have suggested that lower political efficacy among Latinx youth may be attributed to their citizenship status and limited ability to partake in these behaviors (i.e., voting) (Diemer & Rapa, 2016) due to fear of being detected by immigration authorities. Indeed, this concern has been associated with immigrant parents limited social service uptake (Vargas & Pirog, 2016). For these reasons, Latinx youth who experience violence in their families and communities may experience this stressor as disempowering when experienced in this broader context of race and citizenship. In contrast, for Black youth, who in some ways issues of race and oppression are more explicitly a part of the cultural narrative, experiences of violence may be a catalyst for action.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to consider when interpreting these results. First, our ability to draw conclusions about causality is limited. Although we do capitalize on longitudinal data and, as such, are confident that our indicators of social class precede our measures of societal perceptions, we were not able to assess youths' societal perceptions at earlier waves. Future studies should capitalize on longitudinal or experimental research designs to better estimate causal relationships between indicators of social class and societal perceptions over time. Second, although we explored varied indicators of social class and social perceptions, we cannot ignore that other unmeasured factors undoubtedly play a role in the relationship between youths' social class and development of societal perceptions. Future research should explore other individual, cultural, and contextual factors that may influence societal perceptions and

consider potential mediating processes such as psychological well-being. Third, we test these relationships among a sample of Black and Latinx youth living in high-poverty households in Chicago. This greatly limits the generalizability of our results. Future studies should continue to explore these relationships in different contexts and among more economically diverse samples to better understand the antecedents and consequences associated with youths' development of societal perceptions. Finally, although we use multiple indicators to better reflect the complexity of social class, our measures are not exhaustive and are limited by differences in sampling strategy. For example, we fail to capture families' access to non-material goods and services (i.e., familial support or cultural wealth) which may play a critical role in informing social class. Scholars investigating how poverty is experienced should pay greater attention to asset- or strengths-based processes and resources found in family practices and in underserved communities to better understand the lived reality of families living on the margins.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the noted limitations, our analysis of social class and societal perceptions among Black and Latinx youth addresses several critical gaps in the literature. First, our analysis of varied indicators of social class highlights that these experiences, although often related, are also distinct and should not be equated in research. Future research should continue to consider how poverty is perceived, felt, and analyzed by marginalized youth. In the same vein, researchers should continue to integrate both subjective and objective indicators of class. Second, this study examined the ways that social class may shape the way that marginalized youth come to see the world. Whereas many of the studies on youths' societal perceptions have investigated how perceptions shape youth outcomes, comparatively few have examined factors that may foster societal perceptions among marginalized youth. Thus, our study provides important insight

into relationships between class, race, and youths' societal perceptions. Finally, our exploration of complementary theories on societal perception across different racial/ethnic and social class groups revealed a clearer picture of differences among African American and Latinx youth and how they understand the role of social structures and their responsibility in changing or maintaining oppressive systems. Given today's sociopolitical context, including recent trends of youths' leading roles in social justice movements (i.e., Black Lives Matter; DACA), understanding how youth come to understand society and become empowered to play an active role in shaping it is paramount to the promotion of both youth and societal well-being.

Chapter References:

American Political Science Association, Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy. (2004). *American democracy in an age of rising inequality*. Washington, DC: APSA.

Brener, N. D., Collins, J. L., Kann, L., Warren, C. W., & Williams, B. I. (1995). Reliability of the youth risk behavior survey questionnaire. *American Journal of Epidemiology, 141*(6), 575-580. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a117473

Cammarota, J. (2011). From hopelessness to hope: Social justice pedagogy in urban education and youth development. *Urban Education*, *46*(4), 828-844. doi: 10.1177/0042085911399931

Catanzarite, L. (2000). Brown-collar jobs: Occupational segregation and earnings of recent-immigrant Latinos. *Sociological Perspectives*, *43*(1), 45-75.

Chaney, C., & Robertson, R. V. (2013). Racism and police brutality in America. *Journal of African American Studies*, *17*(4), 480-505.

Cole, E. R., & Omari, S. R. (2003). Race, class and the dilemmas of upward mobility for African Americans. *Journal of Social Issues, 59,* 785-802. doi:10.1046/j.0022-4537.2003.00090.x

Comer JP (1995) Racism and African American adolescent development. In: Willie CV, Rieker PP, Kramer BM, Brown BS (eds) Mental health, racism, and sexism. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA, pp. 151–170

Connell, C. L., Nord, M., Lofton, K. L., & Yadrick, K. (2004). Food security of older children can be assessed using a standardized survey instrument. *The Journal of Nutrition, 134*(10), 2566-2572. https://doi.org/10.3945/jn.111.139378

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139-167.

Crouch, J. L., Hanson, R. F., Saunders, B. E., Kilpatrick, D. G., & Resnick, H. S. (2000). Income, race/ethnicity, and exposure to violence in youth: Results from the national survey of adolescents. *Journal of Community Psychology, 28*(6), 625-641. doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629(200011)28:6<625::AID-JCOP6>3.0.CO;2-R

Deitch, E. A., Barsky, A., Butz, R. M., Chan, S., Brief, A. P., & Bradley, J. C. (2003). Subtle yet significant: The existence and impact of everyday racial discrimination in the workplace. *Human Relations, 56*(11), 1299-1324.

Diemer, M. A., & Ali, R. S. (2009). Integrating social class into vocational psychology: Theory and practice implications. *Journal of Career Assessment, 17*(3), 247-265. doi.org/10.1177/1069072708330462

Diemer, M. A., & Li, C. H. (2011). Critical consciousness development and political participation among marginalized youth. *Child Development, 82*(6), 1815-1833.

Diemer, M. A., Mistry, R. S., Wadsworth, M. E., López, I., & Reimers, F. (2013). Best practices in conceptualizing and measuring social class in psychological research. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 13*(1), 77-113. doi.org/10.1111/asap.12001

Diemer, M. A., McWhirter, E. H., Ozer, E. J., & Rapa, L. J. (2015). Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of critical consciousness. *The Urban Review, 47*(5), 809-823. doi: 10.1007/s11256-015-0336-7

Diemer, M. A., & Rapa, L. J. (2016). Unraveling the complexity of critical consciousness, political efficacy, and political action among marginalized adolescents. *Child Development, 87*(1), 221-238. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12446

Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness.* New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Ginwright, S., Cammarota, J., & Noguera, P. (2005). Youth, social justice, and communities: Toward a theory of urban youth policy. *Social Justice, 32*(3), 24-40.

Ginwright, S., & James, T. (2002). From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development. *New Directions for Student Leadership, 2002*(96), 27-46. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.25

Godfrey, E. B., & Cherng, H. Y. S. (2016). The Kids are All Right? Income Inequality and Civic Engagement among Our Nation's Youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 45*(11), 2218-2232. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0557-4

Godfrey, E. B., & Wolf, S. (2016). Developing critical consciousness or justifying the system? A qualitative analysis of attributions for poverty and wealth among low-income racial/ethnic minority and immigrant women. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 22*(1), 93.

Goodman, E., Adler, N. E., Kawachi, I., Frazier, A. L., Huang, B., & Colditz, G. A. (2001). Adolescents Perceptions of Social Status: Development and Evaluation of a New Indicator. *Pediatrics*, *108*(2), e31-e31.

Gordon, H. R., & Taft, J. K. (2011). Rethinking youth political socialization: Teenage activists talk back. *Youth & Society*, *43*(4), 1499-1527.

Gutiérrez, K. D. (2008). Developing a sociocritical literacy in the third space. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *43*(2), 148-164. https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.43.2.3

Haines, E. L., & Jost, J. T. (2000). Placating the powerless: Effects of legitimate and illegitimate explanation on affect, memory, and stereotyping. *Social Justice Research*, *13*(3), 219-236. doi.org/10.1023/A:1026481205719

Harris, 2008

Henry, P. J., & Saul, A. (2006). The development of system justification in the developing world. *Social Justice Research*, *19*(3), 365-378.

Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural equation modeling: A multidisciplinary journal*, *6*(1), 1-55. doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118

Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *33*(1), 1-27. doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1994.tb01008.x

Jost, J. T., & Burgess, D. (2000). Attitudinal ambivalence and the conflict between group and system justification motives in low status groups. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*, 293–305. doi.org/10.1177/0146167200265003

Jost, J., & Hunyady, O. (2003). The psychology of system justification and the palliative function of ideology. *European Review of Social Psychology, 13*(1), 111-153. doi.org/10.1080/10463280240000046

Jost, J. T., Pelham, B. W., Sheldon, O., & Ni Sullivan, B. (2003). Social inequality and the reduction of ideological dissonance on behalf of the system: Evidence of enhanced system justification among the disadvantaged. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *33*(1), 13-36. doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.127

Kay, A. C., Jimenez, M. C., & Jost, J. T. (2002). Sour grapes, sweet lemons, and the anticipatory rationalization of the status quo. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28*(9), 1300-1312. doi.org/10.1177/01461672022812014

Kay, A. C., & Jost, J. T. (2003). Complementary justice: effects of" poor but happy" and" poor but honest" stereotype exemplars on system justification and implicit activation of the justice motive. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*(5), 823-837. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.85.5.823

Kahne, J., & Westheimer, J. (2006). The limits of political efficacy: Educating citizens for a democratic society. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 39,* 289–296. doi.org/10.1017/S1049096506060471

Kirshner, B. (2007). Introduction: Youth activism as a context for learning and development. *American Behavioral Scientist, 51*(3), 367-379. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207306065

Liu, W. M., Ali, S. R., Soleck, G., Hopps, J., & Pickett Jr, T. (2004). Using social class in counseling psychology research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 51*(1), 3.

Mistry, R. S., Benner, A. D., Tan, C. S., & Kim, S. Y. (2009). Family economic stress and academic well-being among Chinese-American youth: The influence of adolescents' perceptions of economic strain. *Journal of Family Psychology, 23*(3), 279. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015403

Moore, S., Daniel, M., Gauvin, L., & Dubé, L. (2009). Not all social capital is good capital. *Health & Place, 15*(4), 1071-1077. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2009.05.005

Neville, H. A., Coleman, M. N., Falconer, J. W., & Holmes, D. (2005). Color-blind racial ideology and psychological false consciousness among African Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology, 31*(1), 27-45. doi.org/10.1177/0095798404268287

Noss, A. (2013). Household income: 2012. *United States Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce, 12*(2).

Quillian, L. (2012). Segregation and poverty concentration: The role of three segregations. American Sociological Review, 77(3), 354-379. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122412447793

Rapa, L. J., Diemer, M. A., & Bañales, J. (2018). Critical action as a pathway to social mobility among marginalized youth. *Developmental Psychology, 54*(1), 127.

Raver, C. C., Jones, S. M., Li-Grining, C., Zhai, F., Metzger, M. W., & Solomon, B. (2009). Targeting children's behavior problems in preschool classrooms: A cluster-randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 77*(2), 302-316. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0015302

Raver, C. C., Jones, S. M., Li-Grining, C., Zhai, F., Bub, K., & Pressler, E. (2011). CSRP's impact on low-income preschoolers' preacademic skills: self-regulation as a mediating

mechanism. *Child Development*, *82*(1), 362-378. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01561.x

Raver, C.C., Roy, A.L., & Pressler, E. (2015). Struggling to stay afloat: Dynamic models of poverty related adversity and child outcomes. In P. Amato, A. Booth, S. McHale, & J. Van Hook (Eds.), *Diverging destinies: Families in an era of increasing inequality*. New York: Springer.

Rivas-Drake, D., Seaton, E. K., Markstrom, C., Quintana, S., Syed, M., Lee, R. M., ... & Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group. (2014). Ethnic and racial identity in adolescence: Implications for psychosocial, academic, and health outcomes. *Child development*, *85*(1), 40-57.

Roy, A. L., & Raver, C. C. (2014). Are all risks equal? Early experiences of poverty-related risk and children's functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *28*(3), 391-400. DOI: 10.1037/a0036683

Roy, A.L., Raver, C.C., Masucci, M.D., & DeJoseph, D. (in press). If they focus on giving us a chance in life we can actually do something in this world: Poverty, inequality and youths' critical consciousness.

Sanchez, G. R. (2006). The role of group consciousness in Latino public opinion. *Political Research Quarterly*, *59*(3), 435-446.

Santos, C.E., & Toomey, R.B. (2018). Integrating an Intersectionality Lens in Theory and Research in Developmental Science. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 161,* 7-15. doi.org/10.1002/cad.20245

Shedd, C. (2015). *Unequal city: Race, schools, and perceptions of injustice*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Taft, J. (2006). I'm not a politics person: Teenage girls, oppositional consciousness, and the meaning of politics. *Politics & Gender, 2*, 329-352.

Van der Toorn, J., Feinberg, M., Jost, J. T., Kay, A. C., Tyler, T. R., Willer, R., & Wilmuth, C. (2015). A sense of powerlessness fosters system justification: Implications for the legitimation of authority, hierarchy, and government. *Political Psychology*, *36*(1), 93-110. doi.org/10.1111/pops.12183

Watts, R. J., Diemer, M. A., & Voight, A. M. (2011). Critical consciousness: Current status and future directions. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *2011*(134), 43-57. https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.310

Watts, R. J., & Flanagan, C. (2007). Pushing the envelope on youth civic engagement: A developmental and liberation psychology perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*(6), 779-792. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20178

Wyer Jr, R. S., & Srull, T. K. (Eds.). (2014). *The Content, Structure, and Operation of Thought Systems: Advances in Social Cognition* (Vol. 4). Psychology Press.

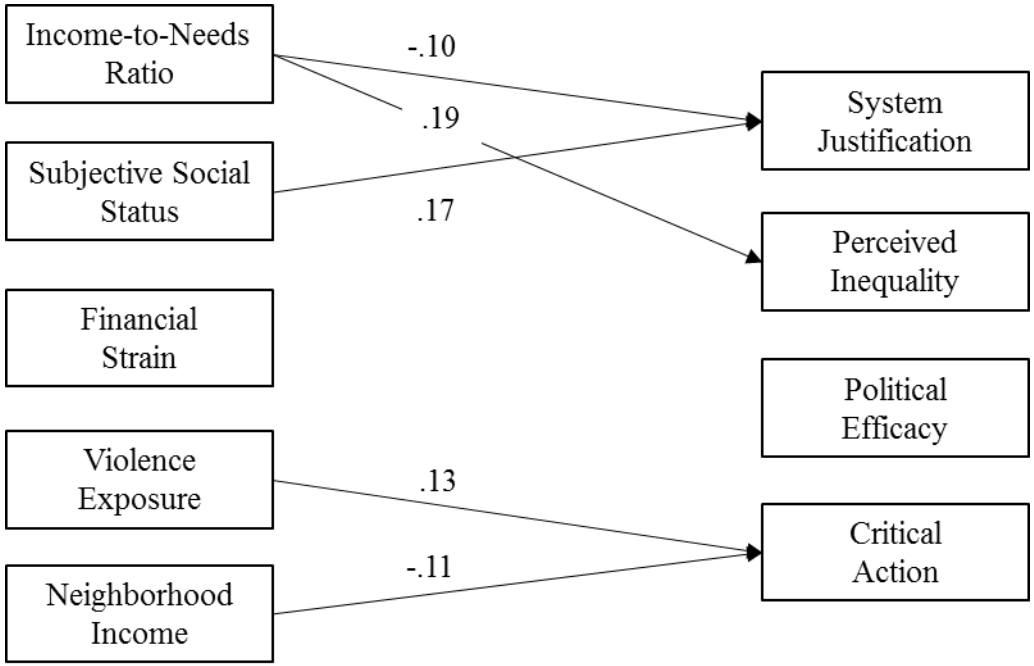
Zimmerman, M. A., Ramirez-Valles, J., & Maton, K. I. (1999). Resilience among urban African American male adolescents: A study of the protective effects of sociopolitical control on their mental health. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 27(6),* 733–751.

Table 1.*Correlations between indicators of class and sociopolitical opinions and behaviors for Latinx and Black youth*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
					Latinx (N = 106)					
1	Income-to-needs	1.00								
2	SSS	.180*	1.00							
3	Financial strain	-.155	-.117	1.00						
4	Violence exposure	.015	.068	.357**	1.00					
5	NB income	.236**	-.213*	.189*	.033	1.00				
6	System justification	-.004	.307**	.018	-.094	.072	1.00			
7	Perceived inequality	.013	.036	-.203*	-.005	-.226**	-.098	1.00		
8	Political efficacy	-.069	.029	.011	-.240**	.055	.051	.091	1.00	
9	Critical action	.003	-.071	.025	-.016	-.086	-.115	.088	.383**	1.00
					Black (N = 290)					
1	Income-to-needs	1.00								
2	SSS	.036	1.00							
3	Financial strain	-.038	-.169**	1.00						
4	Violence exposure	.203**	-.050	.226**	1.00					
5	NB income	.038	.029	-.040	.103*	1.00				
6	System justification	-.114*	.136*	-.131*	-.144**	.034	1.00			
7	Perceived inequality	.218**	-.088	.071	.053	.014	-.261**	1.00		
8	Political efficacy	.051	-.041	-.030	.020	-.031	-.029	.121*	1.00	
9	Critical action	-.037	-.056	-.025	.145**	-.108*	-.114*	.071	.238**	1.00

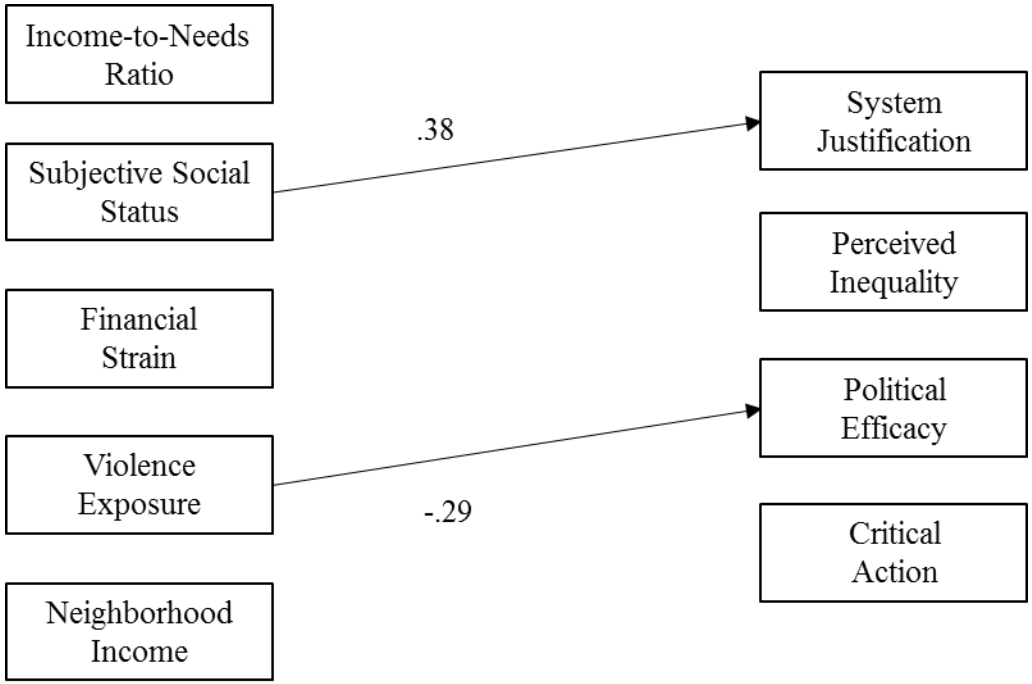
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Figure 1. *Path model for full sample (N = 396)*



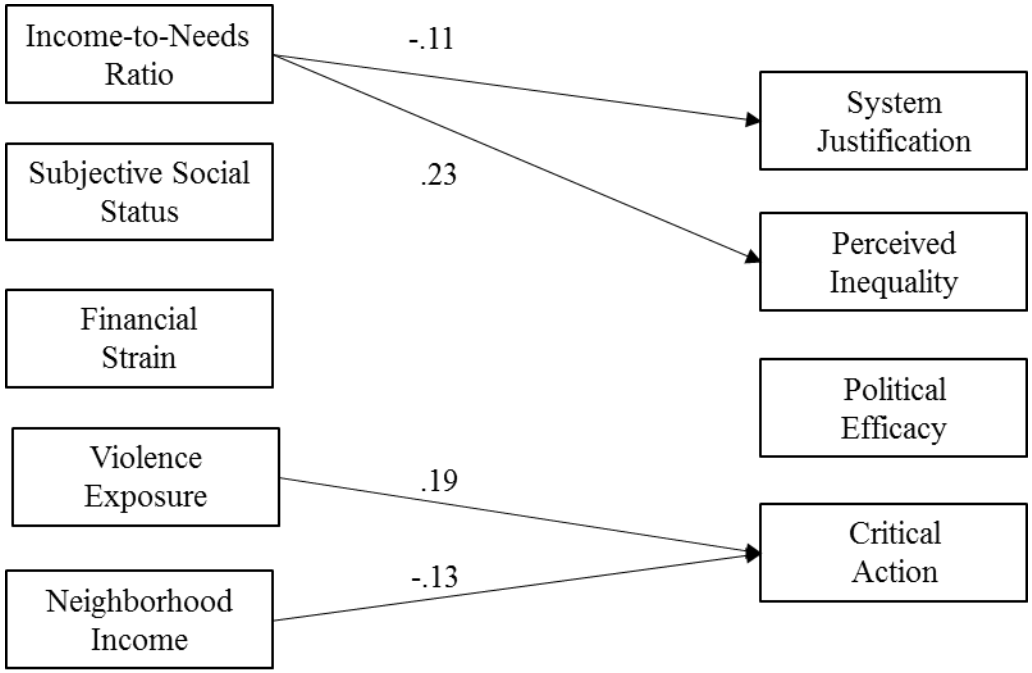
Note: All paths adjust for youth gender and age; Only statistically significant paths ($p < .05$) are depicted; Standardized estimates are presented

Figure 2. *Path model for Latinx sub-sample (N = 106)*



Note: All paths adjust for youth gender and age; Only statistically significant paths ($p < .05$) are depicted; Standardized estimates are presented

Figure 3. *Path model for Black sub-sample (N = 290)*



Note: All paths adjust for youth gender and age; Only statistically significant paths ($p < .05$) are depicted; Standardized estimates are presented