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## **California Elected City Council Women of Color: Building a Collaborative Vision With Inclusive Voice**

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California Elected City Council Women of Color: Building a  
Collaborative Vision With Inclusive Voice

A Dissertation by

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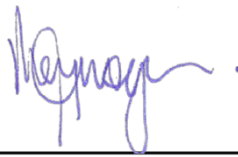
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December 2020

California Elected City Council Women of Color: Building a  
Collaborative Vision With Inclusive Voice

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

~~My~~ **OUR** Victory Speech

punished for speaking Spanish  
endless detentions and Saturday schools  
systemic push-out and eventual drop-out  
college remedial classes designed to dissuade  
perpetual economic obstacles and microaggressions  
And the impostor syndrome that overshadowed each degree

The **SYSTEM IS BROKEN**,  
but we are **NOT**.

This is **OUR** victory speech.

For the closing of the gap  
Representation  
The “Ganas”  
The “Sí Se Puede”

No one tells **US** otherwise

Now we tell other, wise

To all who helped close the gap. . . especially Laura Villa. . .

Gracias.

bv

## ABSTRACT

### California Elected City Council Women of Color: Building a Collaborative Vision With Inclusive Voice

by Beatriz T. Valencia

Following the U.S. presidential race of 2016, large numbers of women—particularly women of color—made the decision to run for political office for the first time at both the national and local levels. It is imperative that these women’s campaigns and victories are studied as a means to resist essentialism and honor the unique perspectives and histories of the voices of women of color in these political roles—roles highly underrepresented in literature and society at large. This dissertation focused on the victory speeches of 48, first-time, California city council, elected women of color (EWOC) with the aim of understanding their campaigns and their vision for the future of their cities. The findings were coded using qualitative content analysis to create emergent themes and then analyzed using the three components of the feminist of color multidimensional lens: (a) women of color as an identity formation, (b) the radical political project or the vision, and (c) the methodology or the enactment of the feminist of color political identity. Three main themes emerged from the analysis of victory speeches, which together revealed the EWOC’s campaigns were built with an inclusive voice that created a community vision for the future, bolstered by robust coalitional support systems. Through their victory speeches, the EWOC city council members in California demonstrated the need for representation as the driving force to enter politics, and the desire for community and collaboration to sustain their efforts. This dissertation concludes with a discussion of

implications for increasing civic engagement, how to grow participation in local organizing, incorporating global perspectives into educational leadership fields, and recommendations for future research.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The leadership and political aspirations of women of color<sup>1</sup> (WOC) have been largely erased or blurred throughout the history of the United States (Davis, 1983). The number of WOC running for, and winning, an elected office remains relatively low compared to white<sup>2</sup> women overall (Dittmar, 2018). Bringing WOC to the forefront of political leadership is imperative to sustaining and furthering representation in political spaces. Using a multiracial feminist theory lens, intersectionality, and a feminist of color multidimensional lens (Santa Cruz Feminist of Color Collective [SCFCC], 2014), this study was a qualitative content analysis conducted to understand the voices and visions of elected women of color (EWOC), first-time, city council office winners in the state of California. Forty-eight victory speeches of EWOC city council members were analyzed in this study to amplify and understand these voices.

### **Background of the Study: Contextual Underpinnings**

From the early colonial periods of U.S. history, women have adapted to the multiplicity of diverse conditions aimed at excluding and marginalizing their gender (Mays, 2004). Women of this early colonial period were encouraged to raise children, support their husbands, and very few women owned property (Mays, 2004; Weatherford, 2012). In some cases, women defied these roles by managing farms, engaging in business transactions, and working side by side with men (Mays, 2004). Mays (2004) noted the resiliency and adaptability of women in a variety of

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that WOC, in the mainstream, are often identified by racial and ethnic identities and categories. In this dissertation, using the work of the SCFCC (2014), I stretch the meaning of WOC into a collective political identity rather than individual categories. However, the introduction of this chapter speaks to WOC in a more mainstream way before moving toward a more inclusive, SCFCC-based definition in later sections and Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> Following the works of Aronsson (2020) and Laws (2020), the term “Black” will be capitalized to reflect a shared experience and oppression under a historical and ongoing system of white supremacy in this dissertation. As such, “white” will be intentionally kept lowercase. The decision to use the lowercase ‘w’ is meant to center Black experiences.

roles, such as farming and businesses, were some of the primary reasons the early pioneers succeeded and survived the challenges of the new territory, which included farming, building homes, and adapting to an unpredictable climate. The women and children of this era contributed alongside their male counterparts despite the fact they were rarely credited for their efforts. Gender roles were not prioritized over livelihoods (Mays, 2004; Weatherford, 2012).

The late 18th century brought the industrial revolution. Technology and manufacturing were instrumental in pushing women further into domesticated roles and actively out of public and political life (Mays, 2004). Many WOC in early U.S. history saw the disenfranchisement of other genders, classes, and races. Such disenfranchisement ranged from the inability to own land to the prohibition of the vote. Although women at this time were confined to traditional domestic roles, which did not stop them from stepping up and fighting for their rights (Mays, 2004).

Hence, women in the 19th century fought for the abolishment of slavery and for the right to vote (Mays, 2004). Although white women made significant contributions to advance women's rights, paradoxically WOC were left behind—both metaphorically and physically—by white women who prioritized gender over race (hooks, 2000). Once the suffrage movement was faced with the prospect of Black men having the right to vote before all women, gender superseded race and the choice to abandon Black women aligned the suffrage movement with white supremacy (hooks, 2000).

To avoid being left behind, white women prioritized their suffrage over Black women (Davis, 1983). White women sacrificed their Black abolitionist sisters, erasing race from the discussion, and Black women from the movement by default (N. E. Brown, 2014; hooks, 2000). Although Black women were experiencing freedom from slavery, the suffragette movement continued to oppress them by minimizing them from the women's movement. As women's

access to political participation increased, Black women continued to experience exclusion from the process and conversation—gender was no longer the unifying call, creating a larger political gap between white women and WOC (Davis, 1983).

N. E. Brown (2014) noted gender was not sufficient to unite the experiences of WOC in the suffragette movement. N. E. Brown (2014) underscored this point in stating gender was not a “homogenous category” (p. 318). As such, the experiences of WOC participating in the suffragette movement lacked the awareness of those lived experiences (N. E. Brown, 2014). The experiences of WOC were fundamentally different from white women (Davis, 1983). When allowed to speak, a speech given at the first Women’s Rights Convention of 1851 by Sojourner Truth, an ex-slave, transferred the experience of WOC from the margins to the center exposing the desire to “be free not only from racists oppression but also from sexist domination” (Davis, 1983, p. 60). The strength of voice and perspective was Truth’s well known “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech (Davis, 1983; Weatherford, 2012).

As the only Black woman attending the Akron Convention, Truth delivered a speech challenging the arguments that women were weaker, did not belong in political spaces, and exposed the “class-bias and racism of the new women’s movement” (Davis, 1983, p. 63). Truth’s voice was a first in this political space for both a woman and a woman of color, and many of the women in attendance disapprovingly listened to her words (Weatherford, 2012). However, the sound of a WOC and former slave speaking, challenging patriarchy and white supremacy in a historically segregated political space, inspired others of those in attendance beyond expectation (Davis, 1983; Weatherford, 2012). The act of exercising her reality in terms of gender and race during that time and in that political context made Sojourner Truth an exemplar of voice.

Some 40 years later, Anna J. Cooper (2000) also called for WOC's voices to be included and insisted women's experiences needed to be heard. Cooper (2000) wrote about Black women's struggles in her speech "Voices from the South":

The Colored Woman of today occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least ascertainable and definitive of all the forces which make for our civilization. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both. (p. 112)

Although the 19th amendment, which technically granted women the right to vote, passed on August 26, 1920, WOC continued to experience segregation from the political process through intimidation, prolonged endless waiting periods to register to vote, literacy tests, poll taxing, and outright disqualification based on color (Bobo et al., 2004).

Although the 1960s enfranchised WOC by removing the blatant barriers set to keep women from exercising their political voice through the vote (Briffault, 2002), WOC continued to struggle for full inclusion of the political process (Simien, 2006). This study sought to add to the current state of women's representation through a deep analysis of EWOC victory speeches in hopes enfranchising their political voice and perspectives as they exist today in the Trump era—an era where women continue to face vulgar and sexist rhetoric from the highest office in the nation (Hershkoff & Schenider, 2019).

## **Inclusion**

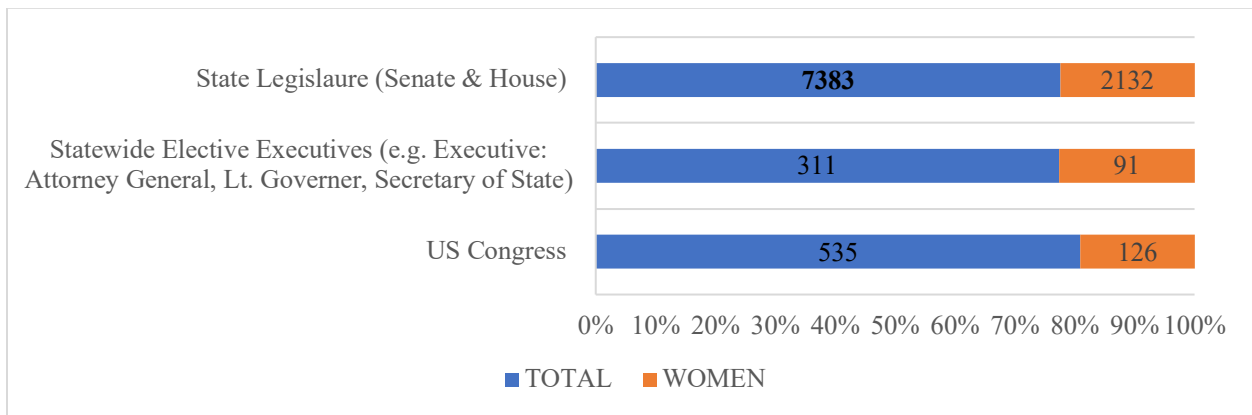
Much has changed in our representative democracy in terms of gender and color representation and inclusion; however, much has also stayed the same. In the current U.S. government, the leadership representation of women since the 1800s has increased, yet the



gender gap has not narrowed accordingly (Dittmar et al., 2018). Women in the U.S. Congress occupy 126 of the 535 seats, and, for statewide elective executive office, women hold 91 of the 311 positions, and have 2,132 seats in the state legislature (see Figure 1). For WOC, these figures are lower (Center for American Women and Politics [CAWP], 2019).

**Figure 0**

*Percentage of Women in Elective Office in 2019*



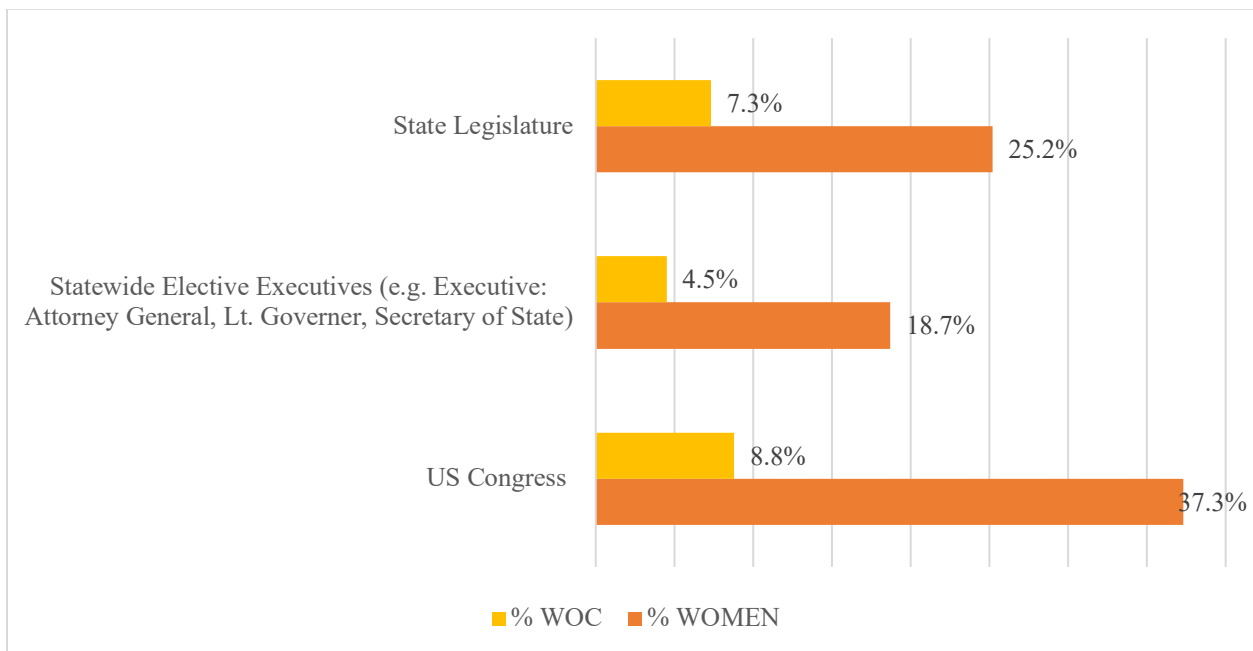
*Note.* Adapted from “Women in Elective Office 2019,” by the Center for American Women in Politics, 2019. <https://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-elective-office-2019>

WOC are far from reaching equitable representation compared to white men and women (CAWP, 2019; Dittmar et al., 2018). WOC in 2019 comprised 7.3% of 7,383 state legislature positions, 4.5% of 311 statewide elective positions, and 8.8% of 535 U.S. Congress seats (see Figure 2 for further evidence of the color gap). The fight to include women’s perspectives has advanced; however, those perspectives are still lacking the experiences and voices of women from the margins (Dittmar et al., 2018). Although white women have been bringing forth their own intersectional identities, Dittmar et al. (2018) made the point that the identities of WOC

whose “experiences differ from the intersection identities and perspectives of the white women” (p. 7) are still lagging in terms of including experiences of minority identities in the decision-making spaces of government. Although there has been advancement of gender representation in politics, the challenge of who is represented remains a work in progress. Dittmar et al. (2018) noted the importance of having the voices of WOC serve the need for diverse perspectives. These diverse perspectives help increase the ability to represent women who continue to be excluded from meaningful conversations (e.g., women’s issues like abortion; Dittmar et al., 2018). Including WOC in the actual conversation is one step, listening to the voices of women is another.

**Figure 1**

*Percentage of Women and WOC in Elected Office in 2019*



*Note.* Adapted from “Women in Elective Office 2019,” by the Center for American Women in Politics, 2019. <https://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-elective-office-2019>

For far too long, women have endured the challenges of being excluded. Harvey and Halverson (2000) clarified, “By ‘women’s struggles’ we mean the multiple ways in which women have identified and challenged relations of subordination within their families, communities, organizations and nation” (as cited in Howarth et al., 2000, p. 153). The voices and perspectives of those historically marginalized in the political process are missing and critically needed (Dittmar et al., 2018). Inclusion is about participating in the breaking of the bread. Inclusion is collaborating in the building of the house. A house where the “other” is part of the family and not an afterthought or token (Orelus, 2009). Harvey and Halverson (2000) elaborated on the notion that when systems are created as universal, by default the exclusion of others occurs. They asserted “any attempt to create a universal, to define what a category ‘is,’ to endow it with a ‘presence,’ necessarily excludes that which it is not” (Harvey & Halverson, as cited in Howarth et al., 2000, p. 154). As noted previously, enfranchisement was one form of inclusion for women. Voting allowed women to exercise their political muscle; yet, for WOC, their experiences, aspirations, voices, and urgency to participate in political spaces continued to be ignored. With gender and race as doubly oppressive forces, WOC had the added task of sustaining those identities in the women’s movements (Davis, 1983; hooks, 2000).

### **Statement of the Problem**

When the 45th president was elected, despite lacking the popular vote, allegations of sexual misconduct, attempts to ban Muslims, deport immigrants, and flagrant sexist and xenophobic statements, the 2016 election manifested a response that Sondel et al. (2018) described as political trauma. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC, 2016) immediately published the impacts of such trauma, calling it the *Trump effect*, in their November issue. The highlights of their article covered the adverse effects of the election occurring in schools,

whereby students and teachers experienced increased psychological challenges in dealing with rising acts of racism, hate speech, and overall increased anxiety, to name a few (SPLC, 2016). Challenges such as anxiety, depression, and overall hopelessness also increased for marginalized groups (Veldhuis et al., 2018).

Over 5 million individuals activated for the largest international mass demonstration advocating for women's rights and protesting the 2016 election on January 21, 2018 (K. M. Weber et al., 2018). Women spoke up, stood up, and led one of the greatest counter protests in U.S. history. Women took their disappointment from their homes to the streets (Just & Muhr, 2019; Leventis-Lourgos, 2017; Wilson, 2018). At this time, women also started to run for office in record numbers (Lawless & Fox, 2017). WOC, in 2018, joined the historic trailblazers who had opened space for their voices in previous years. Trailblazers like Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first Asian Pacific Islander woman elected to a state legislature in 1962, and Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress in 1968, serve to contrast and underscore the significance of the 2018 elections (CAWP, 2019).

The next set of firsts for WOC continue to emerge. The roar of WOC elected in November 2018 was heard nationwide. Sharice Davids and Deb Haaland became the first Native American women elected to congress. Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib became the first Muslim women elected to Congress (CAWP, 2019), and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez became the youngest WOC ever elected to Congress (Newberger, 2019). WOC were winning elections in record numbers (Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2018), and they had something to say. The percentage of WOC in elected positions today, however, remains relatively low compared to men and white women (see Table 1). Pearson (2010) noted the future of representation in

government is problematic in that it has not kept pace with electing individuals “closest to the people” (p. 235).

**Table 0**

*Women of Color Will Be the Majority of All Women in the United States by 2060*

	Percentage of total women in U.S. population (2018)	Percentage of total women in U.S. population (2060)
White (not Hispanic or Latina)	60.3%	44.3%
Hispanic or Latina	17.8%	27.0%
Black or African American	13.7%	15.2%
Asian	6.1%	9.5%

*Note.* Adapted from “Women of Color in the United States: Quick Take,” by Catalyst, 2020.

<https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-of-color-in-the-united-states/>

WOC (see Table 1), including Hispanic or Latina, Black or African American, and Asian women, will be the majority of all women in the United States, increasing from 37.6% total in 2018 to 51.7% in 2060 (Catalyst, 2020). WOC will increase in the labor force and obtain even more higher education degrees (Catalyst, 2018). Such an upward trend is promising; however, in the U.S. government, the voices representing these eventual racial majorities have not aligned (Carnes, 2012). There is a unique opportunity to harness the voices of today’s leaders. Michelle Obama’s message to WOC on this matter is clear:

Women of color know how to get things done for our families, our communities, and our country. When we use our voices, people listen. When we lead, people follow. And when we do it together, there is no telling what we can accomplish. (USOWomen, 2018)

The goal of this dissertation was to further inform our understanding of the vision and positionality of EWOC through their victory speeches during this iconic time in U.S. history.

The purpose was to amplify these voices—the voices that were more activated post Trump’s election.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to amplify and learn from the voices of EWOC. For WOC, the influential voices of those who represent disenfranchised populations can reflect a forgotten early era and help “decolonize our histories” (Perez, 2003, p. 123) through the “honoring of different voices” (p. 123). Such decolonizing actions can empower leaders, and help envision new histories with what Perez (2003) called “decolonial imagery” (p. 123). Perez (2003) used this term to illustrate a resistance to the continued erasure of the contributions WOC have made, and continue to make, all the while strengthening agency for our future leaders. The lens of feminism must be amplified. Systemic and intentional change as a vehicle for greater equity must be aimed at a wider audience, communicated as more than just a stance against patriarchy, and directed toward new information, histories, social changes, and political shifts (SCFCC, 2014).

Further, this study aimed to augment current voices that have been historically segregated through systemic oppression and self-suppression. Moane (2010) noted, “Oppression involves economic, political, and cultural forms in which power is concentrated in a largely male minority” (p. 522). WOC elected post 2016 continue to face overt racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and patriarchy. These leaders are fighting through political means for the future and hope of restoration and of strengthening lost voices. Their success can impact education, government, communities, the betterment of WOC, and society at large.

## **Research Question**

To increase participation and representation, WOC must not only be part of the conversation, but they must also continue to break political barriers (Dittmar et al., 2018). With this intention in mind, the following research question was formulated: In what ways do the victory speeches of EWOC city council, first-time office winners in California inform our understanding of their campaigns and vision for the future of their cities?

## **Significance of the Study**

Many speeches, book chapters, and media have included a phrase honoring the founding fathers of the United States (Boyd, 2009), and in doing so have continued to erase the historical contributions of women (Lawless & Fox, 2010). Lawless and Fox (2010) highlighted the falsehood that men, in general, have been acting and working independently of any assistance or input from women. Lawless and Fox (2010) noted, “Men have dominated the political sphere and U.S. political institutions throughout time” (p. 3), often on the backs of the work of women. Women have been at the center of the work required for men to have the privilege to act as representatives even when they neglected to speak in support of women’s issues (Lawless & Fox, 2010). The fight of the suffragettes, followed by the activism of the 1960s, underscored the importance of bringing women’s issues and private lives to the forefront of the conversation.

The following study was significant in recognizing it is not enough to have minimal participation in local politics. The goal of this research was to ask in what ways EWOC, and specifically city council members, inform our understanding of their visions for the future of their cities. Chandler and Taylor (1994) noted women in general have a difficult time expressing themselves, noting they do not “own even their own voices” (p. 108). This study elevated the voices of WOC, which is imperative for the leadership development of women and the youth of

color of tomorrow. The following dissertation includes literature on the gendered experiences of women, including WOC, in a variety of leadership positions ranging from organizational to local politics. Speeches of recent EWOC were studied using qualitative research. Results of the study will be discussed, as will future research recommendations in this dissertation.

### **Definitions of Terms**

Political speeches are part of the political process of running for office. Unlike speeches made during the campaign, a victory speech is one that ends the candidacy, and starts the official position. However, many of the terms mentioned in the speeches are not often used in daily discourse. For this reason, the following terms are defined for clarity and cohesion.

*At-large representation:* Candidates run for local office to represent their entire city, rather than a district or area. Therefore, candidates must run to garner the vote of the constituents in the entire city area (National League of Cities, 2016). At-large representation means a local office candidate represents the entire geographical city.

*Ballot:* A ballot is a paper that includes the names of all candidates running for office. A ballot may list all the names of candidates running for different offices, or in case of special elections, a few names running for one position. Ballots are provided in physical paper format (USAGov, 2019).

*Constituent:* A constituent refers to an individual who resides in the city. A constituent is represented by the elected official of a district or a city. Regardless of voting, the candidate is responsible to the constituents of their city or district (USAGov, 2019).

*Districts or wards:* The term districts refer to geographical areas. Wards and districts are interchangeable (USAGov, 2019). Candidates that run in district elections are representatives for a portion of the city.



*General election:* A general election occurs at all levels of government. Local, state, and national elections all fall under this process. General elections include the final candidates included on the ballot (USAGov, 2019).

*Inauguration:* Inauguration is the day an elected official takes an oath of office. Inaugurations are often part of a celebration of new leadership. An inauguration is performed at all levels of office, with a variety in attendance and size. Inaugurations may include celebratory speeches (USAGov, 2019).

*Incumbent:* Any current elected serving their term, or an elected official who is running for reelection is an incumbent. The holder of the elected position is also known as the incumbent (USAGov, 2019).

*Nonpartisan position:* A nonpartisan position is an election where candidates do not run on party labels (e.g., democrat, republican). Party labels are kept out of local elections like city or county offices. The majority of school boards and judges are nonpartisan (Ballotpedia, n.d.).

*Platform:* A platform is a series of issues a candidate campaigns for or against. A platform is also a set of issues or beliefs a candidate works on during their elected years. Parties also have their own set of platforms (USAGov, 2019).

*Political party:* A political party is a group that adopts a series of platforms or issues. A political party can often be identified by its platform (e.g., democrat/republican). Elected officials usually reference this platform when making decisions (USAGov, 2019).

*Term:* A term is the time an elected official is designated to serve. Different levels of government have different terms. For a presidential term, elected officials rerun every 4 years for a maximum of two terms. United States representatives run every 2 years, while senators rerun every 6 years (USAGov, 2019). Terms vary for local municipalities.

*Women:* Cisgender women are “people whose gender identity aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth” (Goldberg et al., 2019, p. 30) or identify as women (Stryker, 2008).

*Women of color (WOC):* A “political term ‘women of color’ surfaced in the violence against women movement in the late seventies to unify all women experiencing multiple layers of marginalization with race and ethnicity as a common issue” (The Women of Color Network, 2019). Additionally, civil rights activist, Loretta Ross, defined WOC as “a solidarity definition, a commitment to work in collaboration with other oppressed WOC who have been minoritized” (as cited in Wade, 2011, para. 4). This concept, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, was further defined by the SCFCC (2014) who spoke of WOC as being a political identity formation based on a collective identity. Being acutely aware of the preoccupation expressed with terms like people of color/students of color, the implication white people are void of any color (Lee, 2003), and the notion white people are “racially neutral, which has been claimed gives them power” (Western, 2019, p. 97), the SCFCC’s use of the term is intentionally used in this study to center voices of WOC. I contend the use of the term WOC for this particular research and for local city council elected officials is essential to highlight that this group of WOC will be uniquely situated to share experiences of being minoritized in positions of leadership. Because this study was specific to WOC who are also Californian, city council, first-time office winners, the term EWOC and acronym will be used to reference them.

### **Summary**

WOC have been present in the historic gains for women’s rights. Although WOC historically have been underrepresented and excluded by many, including white women, the emergence of new WOC leaders at all levels of office have continued to increase. Unfortunately, the gap of representation for WOC has not narrowed in conjunction with the increased numbers

of WOC who are projected to be majority in 2060 (see Table 1). For these reasons, the amplification and study of WOC in local political races is paramount to our support of future WOC. The research question for this study was: In what ways do the victory speeches of EWOC city council, first-time office winners in California inform our understanding of their campaigns and vision for the future of their cities? The aim of the study was to contribute to the increased participation of WOC in local races.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez shared, “We can’t knock on anybody’s doors; we have to build our own house” (as cited in Watkins, 2019, p. 5). Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s sentiment about women running for office is appropriate for the introduction to the following section. The role of leadership in politics and how these roles reflect WOC is an important topic. The goal of this review is to understand in what ways the victory speeches of first-time, EWOC city council office winners in the state of California inform our understanding of their visions for the future of their cities.

As a starting off point, the theoretical lens used to frame the research questions is described in detail. Feminism must be included in the discussion as a starting point of the movement, which has evolved from being centered around experiences of white women to an evolving and more critical framework (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996). Multiracial feminism moves away from pluralizing women and closer to conversations about the construction of gender, hierarchies, power, and understanding of WOC’s diverse experiences. These cross-weaving experiences are noted in Crenshaw’s (1989) work with intersectionality and the multiplicity of WOCs’ identities. Lastly, the feminist of color multidimensional lens, as presented by the SCFCC (2014), includes aspects that address the interconnectedness and coalitional identity development of WOC.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Although African American women and First Nation American women paved the way for mainstream or whitestream feminism’s rise in the 1800s, their contributions are often forgotten or erased from history (Grande, 2003; Kinser, 2004). As a framework, whitestream feminist theory (Grande, 2003) is unidimensional and the focus on gender and does not address

other aspects of WOC's identity. Feminist theory can serve to enhance understanding of the power structures that exist in society (Weedon, 1987); yet, the mainstream feminist canon, or whitestream feminism (Grande, 2003), lacks the voices and experiences of WOC. The historical oppression of WOC in feminist theory (Crenshaw, 2010) and the hegemony of gender within feminism at the exclusion of class and race analysis—repressing the voices of WOC (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996)—has reinforced the need for a more inclusive theoretical framework.

### **Whitestream Feminism: Excluding WOC**

Women have faced a continued challenge of breaking the vision long forged in the minds of U.S. citizens (hooks, 2000). A vision where white women were restricted to caregiving and marriage, while men exercised political and societal voice. A vision hooks (2000) described in further detail as “‘women’s liberation’ which capture[s] and still holds the public imagination was the one representing women as wanting what men had” (p. 4). WOC continue to face the challenges of this imagination, which all but erases the oppressive reality of race and class experience (Crenshaw, 1989).

Kimberly Crenshaw (2010) noted “feminism was built on the erasure of women of color” (p. 152). As bell hooks (2000) underscored, feminism is not about being anti-male; it is about a “movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (p. 1). Crenshaw (2010) and hooks (2000) both highlighted the challenges WOC encounter in facing exclusion of both race and gender. Similarly, Sojourner Truth and Anna J. Cooper in their time, called for antiracist feminism (Barrientos, 2015; Zackodnik, 2011), while Cho et al. (2013) highlighted the “multiple ways that race, and gender interact” (p. 785) in multiple spaces. From the words of Sojourner Truth (Davis, 1983; Weatherford, 2012), to the groundbreaking writings of Crenshaw (1989) on race and gender, women continue to build and work toward equitable representation. The work

of the suffragettes laid a foundation for current feminist work. The conversation continues to evolve and include the intersection of race and gender to lessen the hegemony of feminism for WOC.

### **Hegemony of Feminism**

In their criticism of the hegemony of feminism, Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) noted feminism was “constructed around the lives of white middle-class women” (p. 323). Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) expressed frustration with earlier forms of feminism that erased WOC and that grouped WOC as a singular group. Lugones (1991) also noted, historically, feminist theorizing completely ignored difference by speaking as “if all women as women were the same” (p. 38). Lugones (1991) expressed frustration with the lack of prioritizing difference in the normative view of feminism and felt white women failed to notice others or “notice us” (p. 40)—unable or unwilling to see difference as anything other than a problem. The lack of noticing difference, as Lugones (1991) wrote, stemmed from being more preoccupied with any potential negative influence on theory, such as moving away from “disclaimers about the universality of theoretical claims” (p. 38) about women to indications that difference has been recognized. The move then prioritized WOC by including what Lugones (1991) labeled as an “interactive step” (p. 39).

Further, Lugones (1991) wrote “racism played and plays a trick on white women theorists who theorize about difference or who theorize and are aware that they should attempt to overcome the alleged problem of difference in their theorizing” (p. 40). Lugones (1991) described how WOC inherently understand the difference between themselves and white women in terms of their daily experiences, and that white women realize they, too, are different from WOC. However, Lugones termed this difference a “trick,” where white women, although knowing about the difference, chose not to give it importance. Lugones noted white women, in

this case, continue to theorize as if all women are the same regardless of differences, ignoring or refusing to notice WOC. Noting race and gender are not mutually exclusive would move scholars away from prioritizing sexism as the highest form of oppression and toward recognizing the levels of oppression present in the lives of WOC.

Thompson (2002) also urged for a move away from a perspective where sexism is viewed as the highest form of oppression and where sexism is only seen through the eyes of white women. A more inclusive framework that incorporates and centers class and race is what Thompson reasoned led to the rise of multiracial feminism. Multiracial feminism was “spearheaded by women of color in the United States in the 1970s [and] was characterized by its international perspective, its attention to interlocking oppression, and its support of coalition politics” (Thompson, 2002, p. 337). Moving away from universalizing women’s experiences, noting difference as a reality for WOC, and incorporating the levels of oppression WOC experience are important tenets of multiracial feminism.

### **Multiracial Feminism**

Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) described multiracial feminism as “an evolving body of theory and practice informed by wide-ranging intellectual traditions” (p. 323). Multiracial feminism is a set of frameworks, as opposed to a “singular or unified feminism” (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 324), and these frameworks move toward a more expansive and inclusive view of the systems of domination that impact both men and women. According to Baca Zinn and Dill (1996):

U.S. multiracial feminism encompasses several emergent perspectives developed by women of color: African Americans, Latinas, Asian Americans, and Native American women whose analysis are shaped by their unique perspectives as “outsiders within”—

marginal intellectuals whose social locations provide them with a particular perspective on self and society. (p. 324)

Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) noted multiracial feminist theory opposes the pluralistic universalizing of women and the reduction of WOC as merely different, or in superficial ways where difference is used to spice up “new dishes to enhance the white plate” (hooks, 2012, p. 380), only to be eaten and then forgotten.

Harnois (2005) described multiracial feminism as going beyond the “additive model of oppression by theorizing the intersectionality of different systems of oppression and by refusing the temptation to privilege one dimension of oppression or identity over others” (p. 811). A multiracial feminist perspective underscores the variation in life experiences of women by noting racial and ethnic factors impact women differently (Harnois, 2005). In addition, Harnois (2005) explained both the adoption and understanding of feminism will vary across racial and ethnic groups. Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) purposefully and intentionally used the word multiracial as opposed to multicultural. They explained the focus of the framework must be on race and its interaction with a variety of systematic inequalities or power structures because race is a social construct used to categorize humans and, as such, trickle down to conceptualize gender.

Finally, Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) reinforced the need for a race-centered approach and expressed the urgency to offer a new theoretical link that adds to, not replaces, the variations of feminism focusing on “the centrality of race, of institutionalized racism, and of struggles against racial oppression” (p. 321). A multiracial feminist perspective, as addressed in the following six themes of the next section, helps move away from tokenism, or as hooks (2012) described, the exotic or added spice of difference, and tackles the concepts of how gender is theorized.



### *Multiracial Feminist Themes*

Multiracial feminism has six central themes appropriate for this research. First, multiracial feminism posits gender is constructed by “interlocking” (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 326) and “cross-cutting system of inequalities” (Mezey, 2005, p. 47) that impact women and men. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) termed this system of inequalities “matrix of domination” (p. 227). The matrix of domination, as described by Collins (2000), takes into account the system-wide intersecting practice of oppression and domination by institutions like schools, housing, employment, and government that continue to impact people of color disproportionately in U.S. society. Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) noted:

People of the same race will experience race differently depending upon their location in the class structure as working class, professional managerial class, or unemployed, in the gender structure as female or male, and in structures of sexuality as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. (p. 327)

For this research, WOC are entering positions in local government that have been historically dominated by white, male, middle class, republican men (Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2019). The first theme is helpful in the current research to examine how WOC situate themselves with these intersecting inequalities in their social and political location in the city council.

Second, multiracial feminist theorists note the same crosscutting hierarchies can be both oppressive and privileged (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996). In the case of women currently elected to the city council, women can experience the privilege of a leadership position at the same time as they experience the oppression of their race, class, gender, or sexuality. It is noted multiracial feminism does not only apply to “racial ethnic women but also to women and men of all races,

classes, and genders” (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 327) due to their location in the hierarchies of oppression.

The third multiracial feminist theme regards the centrality of power as a means of dominance and subordination (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996; Mezey, 2005). The connections between race, class, gender, and sexuality are rooted in power relations (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996). Mezey (2005) noted hierarchical systems are based on the power relations of one group’s privilege as dependent on the other group’s oppression. Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) illustrated the third theme as the existence of white women in the United States as having “been affected by the existence of subordinated women of color” (p. 327). In the case of local politics, most women have been impacted disproportionately by the continued occupation and domination of white men in local elected positions (Conway, 2001; Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2019). In other words, decisions that directly impact communities of color have been largely held by those outside of these communities disenfranchising further the constituents.

Fourth, women can act independently and assert their power despite the effects of a system that continues to constrain women (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996). WOC have withstood and pushed back on the systematic forces that continue to press against race, class, and gender. Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) noted “racial oppression has been a common focus of the dynamic of oppositional agency” (p. 328) of WOC. Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) noted women exercise “acts of quiet dignity and steadfast determination to involvement in revolt and rebellion, women struggle to shape their own lives” (p. 328). The EWOC city council members entered a location privileged and rooted in oppression by deciding to run, by asserting their agency in running for office, and by being elected to office.

Fifth, multiracial feminism incorporates diverse methodological approaches built on three principles of inclusive inquiry (Frankenberg & Mani, 1993). These three principles embrace (a) the complexity of analysis, (b) the focus on maintaining and working toward nonerasure of WOC, and (c) the importance of location (e.g., social location) of the researcher. Being a WOC, immigrant, queer woman, and a former city council candidate, I am situated in a location that is unique for this research.

The sixth and final theme of multiracial feminism is to “[bring] together understandings drawn from the lived experiences of diverse and continuously changing groups of women” (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 328). These researchers highlight how different cultural and ethnic groups from Asian Americans and Native Americans to Latinas and Blacks are engaged in continued experimentation, polishing, and reworking of identity categories to reflect their image (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996).

Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) reinforced the importance of maintaining a vigilant eye on studies of diversity to reflect both the “commonalities and differences” as a means of constant pressure to move away from universalization. For this particular research, the six themes are useful in noting the complexity of the hierarchy of identities and location within this political context. Crenshaw (1989) reinforced the problematic use of a “single-axis framework” (p. 140), or a view of disenfranchisement of WOC as a single identity, which virtually eliminated WOC and their experience in “conceptualization, identification, and remediation of race and sex discrimination” (p. 140). Intersectionality acknowledges the connection of sexism and racism, as barriers of power for WOC.

## **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality helps us understand the multiple forms of oppression WOC in politics face (Lien, 2015). Lien (2015) added to this body of literature by exploring the intersectionality of race, gender, and space of elected WOC. Focusing on subnational (i.e., local, elected office) politics, Lien (2015) argued WOC occupy “a paradoxical place in US society and politics” (p. 257), noting WOC “are considered to be at the margins of both race and gender” (p. 246). WOC candidates have the added pressure of strategically shifting in and out of multiple spaces (levels of office) to build coalitions of diverse constituents, which were noted as essential to winning elections. Although WOC face these added challenges in the U.S. political system, they continue to see a slow and steady move toward increased representation (Evans, 2016).

In the United States, there continues to be “structural and cultural power inequalities at work” (Evans, 2016, p. 582), and women’s underrepresentation in politics is a topic that continues to warrant attention. The increased awareness and willingness to speak about inclusion has not necessarily led to a higher representation of WOC but has been instrumental in the increased participation and representation of women in general. WOC will continue to be tasked with breaking social and political barriers to create spaces where new voices can be heard (Dittmar et al., 2018; Takash, 1993). These voices will require resiliency as they continue to encounter institutional structures that have historically granted power to white men, as is the case in political spaces (Dittmar et al., 2018). The challenges of existing in these political spaces and the intersection of WOC’s identities, which encompass race and gender, continue to perpetuate oppressive political spaces (Lien, 2015).

## **Feminist of Color Multidimensional Lens**

Further pushing the notions of multiracial feminism and intersectionality is the feminist of color multidimensional lens as laid out by the SCFCC (2014), which sees political identity as a “way of acknowledging our interconnections, reflecting upon our common contexts of struggle, and recognizing the different ways that structures impose violence, separation, and war on each of us” (p. 29). This multidimensional lens is a way to move the discussion of WOC away from essentialism and to resist the categorization of WOC as acted upon by mechanisms of power, and to understand the identity formation of WOC as both contextual and continuously forming or “becoming” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 25).

This multidimensional lens includes three aspects of *identity formation*, *the political project*, and *the methodology*, which will be used later in this dissertation as a guide to help understand the EWOC’s political stories. In this lens, the identity formation is the *who* of the EWOC, or the way they identify as WOC in political spaces. The political project aspect stems from the visions to which the EWOC are committed, or the *why* for running and serving in office. Finally, the EWOC’s coalitional work represents the methodology, or *how* they achieve their goals as informed by the *who* (SCFCC, 2014). This feminist of color multidimensional lens moves away from identity essentialism and subjectification to move toward a space where the relationship between identity, methodological practices, and political projects are acknowledged and “embrace[d] [for] contradictions” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 24). The next few sections will discuss the three areas at length.

### ***Identity Formation: Who***

The first aspect discussed by the SCFCC (2014) is identity formation. The political identity is the *who* of WOC feminism. The SCFCC (2014) noted identity is not a fixed construct,

but rather an aspect of how and with whom WOC identify. WOC's political identity is not static; but shifts as those aspects change and develop into what the SCFCC (2014) termed "becoming" (p. 25). The concept of becoming is part of the identity process dependent on context and the community that surrounds the individual. WOC's political identity development is a continuous exercise in opposition, or in active subjectivity to categorizing or subjectification (SCFCC, 2014). It is a continued push against visible categorical markers and a move toward seeing the whole person and all the dimensions embodied that are not outwardly visible (SCFCC, 2014). Thus, the default view of WOC seen in society as a category is a deficit view of the person's political identity and an example of diminishing or erasing individuals down to a shallow checkbox.

The SCFCC (2014) lens, therefore, expands the understanding of WOC as a political identity that embodies multiple histories and experiences. The framework moves away from essentialism, or where individuals are filtered down to binary options of white or non-white. This subjectification is created by oppressive institutions that have historically imposed violence, separation, war, and includes a "racialization process mark[ing] all of us" (SCFCC, 2014, p. 26). The SCFCC's (2014) ideas of WOC political identity move away or "exceed these fixed categories through the process of building coalitions" (p. 26) and exercise the *we* as a collective, sharing similar histories and experiences. This is a method of connecting to others and reclaiming power (Lorde, 1984), something that is "rooted in particulates and that is our greatest strength" (SCFCC, 2014, p. 28).

The *who* of WOC feminism political identity is not static and is dependent on context and the community that surrounds the individual. Active subjectivity is a push against categorizing and away from essentialism. The political identity of WOC is a move away from fixed categories

and a process of building coalitions. Finally, the political identity is a move away from the “I” and toward the “we” as a collective method of reclaiming power with others.

### ***The Radical Political Project: Why***

The second aspect of the feminist of color multidimensional lens is the radical political project, or the *why*. WOC foster and sustain a strong sense of community, while reinforcing commitment to the acknowledgment that differences among groups are both necessary and inherent in society. The differences, or multiplicity, is the strength of the collective. The radical political project connects globally, generationally, and historically. These histories of oppression and connections assist in illuminating the collective responsibilities and accountability probing deeper into antiracist and antisexist politics, which often are neglected by the dominant culture and are ever-present in the historical and geographical lives of WOC (Combahee River Collective, 2014; SCFCC, 2014).

The connections or community, which build the coalitions, are part of the resistance where accountability is prioritized in relation to the ongoing exploitation existing in the United States and around the world (SCFCC, 2014). Therefore, the radical political project is a formulation of a political identity that transcends categories along with the connections and coalitions, and informs the methodology of “how we move together and stand beside one another” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 32) in communion.

### ***Methodology: How***

The final aspect discussed by the SCFCC (2014) was the methodology, or the *how* of the feminist of color multidimensional lens. The *how* includes a commitment to coalitional work, which is collaborative in its efforts to promote true sisterhood across groups (Combahee River Collective, 2014; SCFCC, 2014). Additionally, working within these spaces, it is imperative to

balance the responsibilities of being part of a U.S. society that is contributing to global inequalities and operating under the continued oppression of “heteropatriarchy, capitalism, racism, and colonialism” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 33). Therefore, the feminist of color multidimensional lens maintains the links that exist in geographical spaces where power is exercised and experienced as a means to oppress and depress, which is the essence of what is termed intersectional work (Collins, 1998) or “the practice of recognizing the intersection of difference” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 32).

Feminists of color in the United States analyze these inequities and the power relations across geopolitics (e.g., geographical, political spaces) as ways of existing collaboratively with others at the margins and simultaneously consider the intersections of those connections that push further than race, class, and gender, alone, to the larger contexts (Combahee River Collective, 2014; SCFCC, 2014). The acknowledgment of such connections to the larger political spaces beyond the United States is the extended global coalitional work of WOC feminism.

The SCFCC (2014) discussed a Combahee River Collective statement, which highlighted intersectionality as a global connection for WOC to others as “collaborating across social positions, identity-formations, national allegiances, and lived experiences” (p. 32). Through this method or connection, the feminist of color multidimensional lens embodies the collaboration through the “anthologizing” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 32) or bringing together knowledge from the collaborative experiences of WOC globally. The coalitional identity and global connections that are part of the feminist of color multidimensional lens form coalitions to further the work of building a vision for a more just community (Combahee River Collective, 2014).



The leadership women exercise in these contexts are examples of a long history of women striving for an equitable place in society. The following sections highlight an array of literature that exists focusing on women in leadership as a broad group. The focus of research varies from organizational research to politics. Each of the following sections will cover research in the field of women in leadership first, followed by the more specific literature on WOC in leadership.

### **Women in Leadership**

“Evidence is clear that fostering full participation for women is important for promoting a prosperous and civil society” (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016, p. 387) and can be accomplished through effective and equitable leadership. Despite the advancements women have made in achieving higher leadership status/positions, a gender gap remains in comparison to men (Barnes & Casesse, 2016; Dolan & Hansen, 2018; Miller, 2019; Ondercin, 2017). Eagly (1987) highlighted the definitions of gender roles and sex differences as two separate constructs noting individual and collective applications. Eagly (1987) defined gender roles as “the shared expectations (about appropriate qualities and behaviors) that apply to individual on the basis of their socially identified gender” (p. 12), while sex differences are results of “social roles that regulate behavior” (p. 7). As noted by hooks (1981), the foundation of society in the United States was formed with gender differences in mind and “was an integral part of the social and political order White colonizers brought with them from their European homelands” (p. 15). It is no wonder institutions continue to tussle with gender constructs/roles when applied to leadership as extensions of a social structure aimed at uplifting one gender over the other, and why gender and biases have serious impacts for WOC, as will be discussed in later sections. The following section will address additional challenges to women in leadership, specifically, gender barriers or

biases that continue to exist in U.S. society for women in leadership positions (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

### **Gender Barriers and Bias to Leadership**

Historically, women have been guests at the table of leadership with binary stereotypes ranging from Machiavellian to sainthood (Chandler & Taylor, 1994). The binary notion of leadership (i.e., masculine versus feminine) contradicts the idea that an individual could possess a mixture of qualities, not gender specific, known as androgyny (Dewi, 2017; McPheron & Smith, 1981). Asplund (1988) highlighted the complexity of gender roles and the ability to embody complex identities:

The concept of psychological androgyny implies that it is possible for an individual to be both assertive and compassionate, both instrumental and expressive, both masculine and situational appropriateness of these various modalities; and it further implies that an individual may even blend these complementary modalities in a single act, being able, for example, to fire an employee if the circumstances warrant it but with sensitivity for the human emotion that such an act inevitably produces. (p. 196)

It is clear women can exercise the various roles, yet the rigidity of gender constructs continue to be pervasive.

Regardless of the ability for women to exercise fluid gender roles in leadership contexts as noted by Asplund (1988), women continue to face rigid binary stereotypes (Chandler & Taylor, 1994; Chin, 2011; Heilman, 2012), lack-of-fit notions impacting advancement and performance in organizations (Heilman & Caleo, 2018; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Lyness & Heilman, 2006), and questionnaires measuring leadership styles of transactional versus transformational styles of men and women (Burns, 1978; Eagly et al., 2003; Lowe et al., 1996).

Although WOC are not explicitly mentioned in these sections, it is worth noting the literature is focused on women in general and impact WOC in terms of gender as a common thread.

### **Gender Stereotypes**

Despite the ability to blend modalities, gender stereotypes continue to be pervasive. One need look no further than the stereotypes that saturate leadership literature (Chin, 2011; Duehr & Bono, 2006; Heilman, 2010; Spence & Buckner, 2000), as described in this section. Gender stereotypes can have multiple effects on the leadership of women. Chin (2011) indicated, “Stereotypic gender role expectations can constrain their leadership behavior” (p. 1). Heilman (2012) described stereotypes as “generalizations about groups that are applied to individual group members simply because they belong to that group” (p. 114). Heilman (2012) further explained, “Gender stereotypes are generalizations about the attributes of men and women” (p. 114). Duehr and Bono (2006) defined gender stereotypes as “categorical beliefs regarding the traits and behavioral characteristics ascribed to individuals on the basis of their gender” (p. 816). Another effect of stereotyping is the likelihood to self-association when it comes to gender traits and leadership attribution.

### ***Trait-Based Leadership***

Spence and Buckner (2000) investigated the attitudes of men and women’s gender stereotypes when assessing themselves and others. Spence and Buckner (2000) described the use of stereotypes as heavily relying on traits based on “gender differences in instrumentality and expressiveness” (p. 45), which are “largely due to life experiences rather than biology” (p. 45). Overall, results indicated stereotypes continue to be pervasive in both self-report and how others labeled their peers. Spence and Buckner (2000) noted when it comes to identity, gender identity

stays constant while further noting “gender-related attributes and beliefs” (p. 60) were a direct function of gender identity.

Embry et al. (2008) described the role of traits in assigning attributes or categories to people. Using a nongender-specific name (e.g., Pat), Embry et al. surveyed undergraduate business students and their perceptions and assignments of gender consistent and gender inconsistent leadership style of two different managerial narratives. The researchers hypothesized when the gender of the leader was not disclosed, the participants would assign gender congruent leadership stereotypical styles such as “instrumental (e.g., independent, competitive, decisive, aggressive, and dominant) and transactional to men” (Embry et al., 2008, p. 31), while “expressive traits (e.g., helpful, emotional, understanding, compassionate, and sensitive to others’ needs) and transformational to women” (Embry et al., 2008, p. 31).

Embry et al. (2008) predicted participants would rate their leader as more effective, more trustworthy, more motivational, and with higher satisfaction if the leader’s gender-specific traits aligned with the participant’s perception. Results concluded when participants viewed the leader as a woman using stereotypically inconsistent gender styles (i.e., transactional, instrumental traits) their overall rating was lower. On the contrary, when participants viewed the leader as a male using consistent nongender styles, the overall rating was positive. The inconsistency in ratings shows the ongoing challenge women face in organizational cultures.

Gender stereotypes continue to tether women to leadership roles in organizations where there is the impact of a “workforce experience of context that collides with patriarchal notions, cultures, industries, politics, and history” (Bierema, 2016, p. 120). Women have dealt with institutional cultures where gender stereotypes were attributed negatively in the workplace, such as women having the inability to make difficult decisions (Bierema, 2016; Eagly & Karau,

2002). These stereotypes have been shown to negatively impact women aspiring to leadership roles in the workplace (Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

### **Workplace Stereotypes**

Workplace gender stereotypes arise from “attributes which are imparted to individual men and women simply by virtue of their sex” (Heilman, 1997, p. 879). Porterfield and Kleiner (2005) noted “women have always had the capacity and desire for leadership; however, due to political, economic and societal restrictions, they were unable to advance in leadership positions” (p. 54). Although organizations and cultures have changed to increase inclusion of women in the workforce (Eagly & Carli, 2003), workplace stereotypes continue to slow advancement and opportunities for women (Bierema, 2016; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Women are at higher risk of being passed over for positions that have been traditionally occupied by men (Heilman & Caleo, 2018), leading to higher standards and expectations for women seeking promotions (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Women continue to confront lack of access in workplace leadership positions, a term Bierema (2016) called *gendered occupational segregation*. Organizations are becoming more aware of the gendered notions of leadership and the challenges to gender equality they face in these environments (Kossek & Buzzanell, 2018; Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005). Researchers stress the importance of diversity in organizations as a contributing factor to increase both access and rates of higher level promotions for women (Cook & Glass, 2014). However, the challenges of countering obstacles for advancement, such as lack of fit (Heilman, 1997), as discussed in the next section, continue to be prevalent.

### ***Lack of Fit***

The *lack of fit* model regards discrimination against women that occurs when gender stereotypes and job role expectations collide or are incongruent with the expected gender role

performance (Heilman & Caleo, 2018). Hoyt and Murphy (2016) highlighted socially embedded images of leaders favor men over women. Because of this preference, women continue to face the ongoing challenges of having to forcibly fit these masculine stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Sex stereotypes (or sex typing) further negatively impacted women, according to Heilman (1997), when the ability to make difficult decisions were attributed to a male-specific quality. Heilman and Caleo (2018) noted, “According to the model, outcomes that are discriminatory against women stem from a mismatch between the attributes that women are thought to possess and the attributes seen as necessary for success in male-typed positions and fields” (p. 727). Stereotypes that describe leaders in terms associated with masculinity tend to create problems for women where the perception is a lack of fit between a women’s attributes and the attributes believed to be required to succeed in certain organizational positions. A consequence of this lack of fit is lower performance evaluations (Heilman & Caleo, 2018).

Women also continue to receive disproportionately lower performance evaluations in managerial positions (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Although there have been advances in research to highlight women’s leadership advantage (Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005), the workplace continues to espouse “prejudicial evaluations of their competence as leaders, primarily in masculine organizational contexts” (Eagly & Carli, 2003, p. 807). These lack of fit notions and their impact on women’s lives can be further understood through the theoretical lens of social role theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

### ***Social Role Theory***

According to Lemoine et al. (2016), “Social stereotypes about traditionally gendered roles of men and women in society give rise to expectations regarding the roles that men and women occupy and the attributes they possess for performing such roles” (p. 472). Eagly (1987)

posited social role theory illustrates how the social behaviors of men and women linked to social roles and are instrumental in how men and women are expected to behave in society (e.g., family and work life). Social role theorists have asserted “people’s own attitudes and values have the stamp of societal gender roles on them” (Eagly, 1987, p. 18). Internalized roles lead individuals to expect similar role expectations of others. Communal qualities that show concern for others continue to be attributed to women, while being assertive and providing for a family are seen as masculine qualities (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2003). Duehr and Bono (2006) examined the impact of these social role expectations as expressed by managers and students. Results showed gender-rigid roles declined in the 21st century (Duehr & Bono, 2006). The researchers noted the move toward a more consistent view of women in leadership roles by male managers, while male students reported more rigid gender roles (Duehr & Bono, 2006). Although Duehr and Bono’s results showed improvement for women aspiring to leadership roles in their organizations as positive, the emergence of women as leaders continues to be stifled in other contexts where “think leader, think male” (Lemoine et al., 2016, p. 482) may still be prominent.

Building on social role theory, Lemoine et al. (2016) analyzed gender on an individual and group level that included contexts of higher extraversion and the increased propensity of leader emergence for women. Lemoine et al. sought to identify the emergence of women as leaders. Leadership emergence was defined as “the extent to which a person is regarded as being leader-like by other group members” (Lemoine et al., 2016, p. 471). In this study, a sample of 498 MBA students and 484 undergraduate students, found context played a significant role in overall emergence of women as leaders in groups composed of more men and groups with higher extraversion (Lemoine et al., 2016). Although extroversion was seen as an indicator for women

to rise to leadership roles, and context impacting that emergence, social roles are yet another layer of challenges women face.

### ***Role Congruity Theory***

Role congruity theory provides one explanation of why women face prejudice when their gender is incongruent with the role of a leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Women who possess characteristics that differ from the expected social roles are likely to experience some form of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Role congruity theory helps researchers address the tensions between an individual's expected gender role in conjunction with expected social roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Enacting roles that are consistent with the expectations of gender *and of* leadership are essential for leadership emergence for women (Ritter & Yoder, 2004). Ritter and Yoder (2004) noted role congruity theory had the ability to predict when incongruency lead to an opposite effect stating, "women will be less likely than men to emerge as leaders when expectations for the leader role are incongruent with gender stereotypes" (p. 187). Ritter and Yoder (2004) noted women continue to be described as communal and with less agentic traits, which are not attributed to male leaders. Compared to women, male leaders were afforded the relationship of being both agentic and of higher status. The construct of associating status and leadership to male qualities is what Schein (2001) referred to as *think manager-think male*.

Schein (2001) noted think manager-think male is "a psychological barrier to the advancement of women in management" (p. 676) and is a phenomenon that "can foster bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions" (p. 676). Women continue to be evaluated more harshly and stifled in their potential to emerge as leaders (Heilman & Caleo, 2018). Biases against women are not the only factors affecting women's leadership. Fulfillment of gender roles can lead to women finding themselves in situations where



neither of their actions result in positive outcomes. Lyness and Heilman (2006) called this dilemma a *double bind*.

### ***Double Bind***

Lyness and Heilman (2006) noted women continue to be “held to a stricter standard than men” (p. 784). Once a woman reaches a higher-level position, Bierema (2016) outlined the disabling effects of stereotypes preventing women from making decisions without the consequence of expectancy violations. Women encounter this double bind when leadership attributes like competence, self-confidence, and respect are associated specifically with males (Ibarra et al., 2013), and are thus judged harshly for espousing “traditionally valued masculine behavior such as assertiveness” (Bierema, 2016, p. 127). This tension creates a double standard (i.e., double bind) for women who aspire to reach higher positions, and WOC face an additional double disadvantage of gender and race (Clayton, 2003) as noted and discussed in future sections.

### ***Glass Ceiling***

Higher positions in the workplace are conduits for women on the pathway needed to break through the glass ceiling. Carli and Eagly (2001) described the glass ceiling as “a metaphor for prejudice and discrimination” (p. 631). Although the representation of women in leadership positions have increased across many sectors, it has been a slow and difficult climb (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Men still fare better in overall leadership opportunities compared to women. An increase in “female leaders has been accompanied by changes in theories and practices of leadership” (Eagly & Carli, 2003, p. 809), moving away from the leaders as a boss to thinking of leaders as a coach. Leadership roles change as industries demand new ways of managing and workers continue to demand new expectations of their leaders, shifting from archaic views of

leading to more interactive leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2003). However, women continue to experience expectations of higher rigor in their work than men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). If performance evaluations continue to default to a “person-job fit” (Lyness & Heilman, 2006, p. 777), women will continue to face obstacles when trying to break through the corporate glass ceiling.

Lyness and Heilman (2006), in their study of 489 U.S. middle and upper level office managers and their raters, concluded women in line jobs (e.g., sales) were disadvantaged compared to men. Because line jobs were ascribed to males, women managers were seen as not fitting the stereotype of the position, which led to lower performance evaluations. The researchers concluded women would “have to work harder to get to the same place, doing more and doing it better than men in similar positions” (Lyness & Heilman, 2006, p. 783). WOC have the added pressure of trying to break through concrete barriers as discussed in later sections. In addition to working harder, women in higher level positions face having to demonstrate gender-attributed styles of leadership, such as transformational or transactional leadership, when it comes to inspiring, motivating, managing, or directing subordinates (Eagly et al., 2003; Lowe et al., 1996; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003).

### **Transformational/Transactional Women’s Leadership**

Burns (1978) identified transformational and transactional types of leadership as two styles that contradict the notion that leaders possess sole power over others: “[Transactional] leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies or campaign contributions” (p. 4), and a transformational leader “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower”

(p. 4). Since Burns' identification of transactional and transformational leaders, researchers continue to unravel the characteristics of these two styles of leadership.

Lowe et al. (1996) presented surprising results of the literature on this topic with their meta-analysis of transformational leaders. The researchers hypothesized leaders in the private sector with higher positions would be more effective in their transformational and transactional leadership styles; however, results indicated otherwise. Leaders in public, low-level leadership positions were more active and transformational with their subordinates. One possible explanation Lowe et al. noted was the likelihood that lower-level leaders impacted their followers' work life through increased daily direct contact.

Mandell and Pherwani (2003) explored the predictive relationship between emotional intelligence, gender, and transformational leadership. Results showed women scored higher on emotional intelligence, while no gender differences emerged in the measurements of transformational leaders. The researchers further noted:

If women score higher in emotional intelligence than their male counterparts, and if emotional intelligence is considered a most needed ability for effective leadership, especially useful as organizations go through transformations, then women may possess a unique and timely leadership quality. (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003, p. 400)

The results demonstrated women are not viewed as more transformational than men; however, they do possess the characteristics of transformational leaders (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003).

Taken together, the results show more effective leadership by those who interact more directly with subordinates (Lowe et al., 1996), and the predictive relationship between emotional intelligence indicate directly connecting with followers requires a leader also to be emotionally

savvy (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). Further research supports the challenge women face in being identified as transformational leaders (Eagly et al., 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2003).

In their review of the research, Eagly et al. (2003) noted women have certain advantages when identified as transformational leaders. Attributes associated with transformational leaders, such as compassionate and supportive, were seen as positive side effects of gender role association (Eagly et al., 2003), while masculinized associations in line with transactional leadership led to women having lower evaluations as effective leaders. Eagly et al. (2003), in their meta-analysis of 45 studies, underscored the results of “relatively stable patterns of behavior displayed by leaders” (p. 569). Further, the researchers noted men “were generally more likely to manifest the other aspects of transactional leadership (active and passive management by exception) and laissez-faire leadership” (Eagly et al., 2003, p. 585), whereas women were more transformational and scored higher on transactional contingent rewards (i.e., reward to subordinates) and were overall more competent.

Overall, women in leadership positions face many challenges and barriers. It is evident from the research that organizations continue to rely on gendered traits and stereotypes in the evaluation of women’s roles (Eagly, 2003; Lowe et al., 1996; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). The impacts for women are significant in the workplace where a perceived lack of fit often results in lower overall evaluations. Although some traits can have positive outcomes on women’s leadership positions, such as transformational styles, other such characteristics can be incongruent with women’s ability to exercise transactional leadership. As noted in the sections previously, women continue to face a multiplicity of challenges when aspiring to leadership positions at all levels and in many contexts. The previous sections addressed an array of topics

specific to women. The following sections add to this body of literature with research specifically on WOC and the added challenges these women encounter.

### **WOC in Leadership**

Research on leadership has widely covered the singular experiences of white women while continuing to exclude WOC in fields from organizational leadership (Bierema, 2016; Cook & Glass, 2014; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 1997; Heilman & Caleo, 2018; Kossek & Buzzanell, 2018; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005) to politics (Dittmar et al., 2018; Frederick, 2014; Lawless & Pearson, 2008; Lien, 2015; Takash, 1993). Research continues to reinforce the point that WOC are left behind. Bowleg (2008) noted leadership research covering obstacles white women face continues to lack the varied experience of WOC. The glass ceiling continues to be widely included as an overarching umbrella all women face as noted in prior sections. Although the glass ceiling effect has been seductive to researchers (Benschop & Brouns, 2009) and continues to be studied vigorously, less common is the concept of a concrete ceiling, which WOC experience in these contexts (Barnes, 2017; Hayes, 2006).

### **Concrete Ceiling**

WOC face the added pressure of managing multiple oppressive experiences of gender and race (Bowleg, 2008; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010) with barriers that block upward mobility to top leadership positions (Reynolds-Dobbs & Harrison, 2008). Metaphors like the concrete ceiling for African Americans (Hayes, 2006), adobe ceiling for Hispanics (Blancero & DelCampo, 2005), and the bamboo ceiling for Asians (Curry, 2006) all describe the substantial barriers each minoritized group faces—and the differences in the everyday experiences of

minorities. Further, Bowleg (2008) noted the methodological intricacies of intersectional research.

### **Intersectional Approach**

Both in qualitative and quantitative research, Bowleg (2008) noted an intersectional approach where WOC's experiences are centered intentionally and not just as added demographic data is essential to conducting intersectional research. Pressing further, Bowleg (2008) encouraged researchers to start from the "perspectives of ordinary people who live in the crux of structural inequalities based on intersections of race, class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, and disability" (p. 323) rather than "traditional top-down approaches" (p. 323). Researchers should strive to move away from the mainstream leadership focus and toward WOC's experiences as double minorities where gender and race intersect and bring to the forefront the multiplicity of challenges from a researcher's point of view (Barnes, 2017; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

Still lacking in leadership research are the ways minorities excel compared to the barriers faced (Cook & Glass, 2013). Cook and Glass (2013) called attention to the vast body of research that exists and continues to focus on the obstacle's minorities experience in excelling leadership positions rather than the contexts in which minorities excel. Whether it is an intersectional, methodological challenge (Bowleg, 2008) or the deficit focus when researching minority groups (Cook & Glass, 2013), one thing is clear, the research conducted in this study is necessary to the success of WOC in leadership attainment, specifically in politics. The challenges faced by women in leadership positions previously noted are similarly faced by women in politics. Stereotypes are equally invasive for women in politics (Dolan & Lynch, 2014). The following

sections review literature specific to women in political spaces and conclude with the addition of WOC's specific challenges that are encountered in politics.

### **Women in Politics**

Women aspire to leadership positions in politics (Lawless & Fox, 2010) yet continue to face many challenges in the acquisition of political office (Lien, 2015). Women are underrepresented in the political world (Preece & Stoddard, 2015), but women's status and power continue to increase (Carli & Eagly, 2001). E. R. Brown et al. (2018) noted women face both gender challenges and that of being a politician, with stereotypes playing a significant role. Even though some barriers for women politicians have declined, stereotypes in politics continue to persist (Dolan & Lynch, 2014), as does the gender gap (Dolan & Hansen, 2018). E. R. Brown and Diekman (2013) discussed the various ways a false sense of equity for women has been perpetuated through limited representation. In the following section, additional factors women addressed prior in their decision to run for office (e.g., Fox & Lawless, 2004, 2014; Fulton et al., 2006) are discussed.

### **Stereotypes in Politics**

Stereotypes cross over to the political world for both men and women. Dolan and Lynch (2014) reviewed the data of voters surveyed for a 2010 U.S. house race and noted stereotyping had declined in overall voter choice. The study further recognized the use of stereotypes as transitory in political elections and as "context-bound and episodic" (Dolan & Lynch, 2014, p. 672), depending on the type of race and candidate running. In this particular study, the results showed a slow but steady move away from gender stereotypes in media. Dolan and Lynch urged those in the media to move further away from the use of stereotypes in their continued coverage. The framing and use of stereotypes can lead voters to extend the assumptions of candidates to the

“real world” (Dolan & Lynch, 2014, p. 659). Voters “draw on traditional political criteria in making vote-choice decision” (Dolan & Lynch, 2014, p. 671), and, in the absence of context, those voters’ decisions rely heavily on the gender of the candidate to cast their support, which can increase the gap in representation, as noted in the next section.

### **Gender Gap**

In a more recent study, Dolan and Hansen (2018) researched women candidates and the gap that continues to exist in representation. One explanation pointed to women directly as the cause of the gap with 73% of respondents signaling to women’s lack of interest in running, while 48% indicated men had more interest in politics. The second, more general possibility reflected the political system in general, with women “more likely than men to see discrimination in public life” (Dolan & Hansen, 2018, p. 672). Dolan and Hansen used blame attrition to differentiate the faulting of the gap. Politically proficient participants blamed the system for the gender gap, whereas those with less political background blamed women directly. Dolan and Hansen employed the blame attrition framework and noted individuals who faulted the system for the existing gender gap were more likely to have positive attitudes toward the benefits of having women in those political positions, even though the same attitude did not seem to show an impact on voting actions.

On the other hand, Barnes and Cassese (2017) contended men and women directly create the gender gap through party sorting. Party sorting “suggests that women and men sort themselves into the party that best represents their views such that the gender gap occurs primarily across parties and gender gaps within parties are minimized” (Barnes & Cassese, 2017, p. 127). Studying the most current polarization of the political system, Barnes and Cassese noted higher engaged individuals led to less partisanship in the party.



In the Republican Party, for example, gender gaps continue to increase due to strong attachments to the party. The researchers further noted party attachment kept women to the party even when women's issues were unlikely to advance (Barnes & Cassesse, 2017). The researchers explained partisanship was influential in the formation of strong bonds with a particular party. For example, strong bonds for women were more important than advancement of women's issues. Consequently, the researchers noted women often found themselves assimilating to the conservative men in the party, rather than leaving the party (Barnes & Cassesse, 2017).

In addition to party attachment, changing partisanship with the aim of acquiring better representation from specific parties contributes further to the gender gap (Ondercin, 2017). This shift in partisanship affiliation moves away from women's individual behavioral political lens to a systemic cause of the gap. Ondercin (2007) contended "the gender gap is a function of men and women changing their partisanship as they seek the best representation of their gendered racial identity from the political parties" (p. 749). Using different survey data from the previous 70 years, Ondercin (2017) noted men's democratic partisanship had declined, while women's partnership increased in the democratic party. The party sorting resulted in a notable gender gap within the actual party.

Miller (2019) offered yet another explanation of the gap and points to research itself. Miller noted the role of the research methods as potentially increasing gender gaps in politics. Miller posited questionnaires that equate political knowledge to the naming of the nationally elected officials, and the use of multiple-choice answers like "do not know" disproportionately resulted in women's rating as less politically knowledgeable. When the answer choice "do not know" was removed, women demonstrated equal or superior national political knowledge. Miller argued the continued methods of measurement may be problematic more so for women than men

and have contributed to the present gender gap that continues to afflict gender equity in politics. Whether blaming the current makeup of the U.S. political system, partisanship, or party sorting, the conclusion remains: the gap is constant and achieving higher leadership positions in politics is a challenge.

### **Glass Ceiling Politics**

Another barrier for women who have political aspiration is the political glass ceiling (Guyot, 2008). Similar to Eagly's (2001) definition of a glass ceiling noted previously, this "glass ceiling is a political term used to describe the unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements" (as cited in Folke & Rickne, 2016, p. 567). Guyot (2008) expanded the notion of the glass ceiling metaphor noting "glass implies a smooth surface" (p. 529), while the reality of government for women was more varied "uneven, as wavy as a fun-house mirror" (p. 529). The glass ceiling variation is a term Guyot (2008) used to describe the practice of women's appointments to higher political offices, rather than winning elections. Women have been appointed at higher rates for state-level positions compared to men; however, in elected positions to Congress and state legislature, elections do not favor women. As Guyot (2008) described, "Members of Congress or a state legislature partake more of market-like competition" (p. 530), and voters have the freedom to "discriminate in the privacy of the voting booth" (p. 530) compared to appointments by the sitting president.

Another glass ceiling variation is brought forth through the work of Curiale (2010) and the practice of free labor. Curiale found unpaid internships created an additional variation of a glass ceiling. Candidates are filtered out by the ability to spend the time and be financially stable to fulfill the responsibilities of the job. These conditions continue to create a pipeline. By default,

this pipeline fosters accessibility issues for those who cannot afford to work without pay and contribute to higher unemployment figures (Curiale, 2010). Although the article is not specific to women, it can be argued women would continue to be in high supply to the pipeline of politics, because “the overwhelming majority of undergraduates are female” (Curiale, 2010, p. 531). More women graduating will create another unique glass ceiling situation, according to Curiale. More women graduating does not necessarily increase women in office, especially if the same women lack internship opportunities.

Curiale (2010) described the common practice of using interns in a variety of sectors noting “most interns are not paid in ‘glamorous fields’ such as politics or entertainment” (p. 3). Interns who are offered positions in high profile campaigns or political offices have the added opportunity of moving up in the political world through connections and experience. Unfortunately, for many students, unpaid labor is not an option. Students who do not have the financial resources to volunteer will miss out on these important opportunities causing another “glass ceiling preventing them from upward mobility” (Curiale, 2010, p. 22), and further excluding or creating barriers for women. Another barrier to obtaining positions in politics can be understood with the use of system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

### **System-Justification Theory**

System-justification theory is the “psychological process by which existing social arrangements are legitimized, even at the expense of personal and group interest” (Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 2). E. R. Brown and Diekmann (2013) presented students with information on male and female candidates running for office in a laboratory setting. Responses for the likelihood of support and further vote for the specific candidate were measured. Respondents who supported a female candidate were shown to have a higher probability to believe the system was both just

and fair in comparison to those who supported male candidates. These results supported the system-justification theory (E. R. Brown & Diekman, 2013).

E. R. Brown and Diekman (2013) furthered their argument by outlining the presence of nontraditional female candidates as potentially fostering a false sense of gender equity in that “merely placing a woman ‘on the ballot’ was sufficient to foster system justification” (p. 304) without the known result of an actual election. E. R. Brown and Diekman (2013) noted the danger of voters’ perception of a just system and the propensity for voters to refrain from supporting nontraditional women candidates. E. R. Brown and Diekman further described the presence of the traditional white male candidate as a reminder of the continued inequalities in the political system for women. E. R. Brown and Diekman highlighted the impact of justification theory on “outsiders” or “nontraditional” candidates. The possible result of the lack of support is likely due to the maintenance of the status quo (E. R. Brown & Diekman, 2013). With the status quo being sustained, women must weigh a variety of factors when deciding to run for office (Fox & Lawless, 2004).

### **Decisions to Run for Office**

Women consider the factors carefully before making the initial decision to run for office (Fox & Lawless, 2004). Fox and Lawless (2004) stressed the unique factors women must consider when entering politics, and one of those factors was situational. Fox and Lawless noted women who grew up in cities where politics were engaging and citizens were encouraged to participate, aided in having more women emerge as candidates. Living in areas that promote this type of civic engagement benefited women. Although these benefits did increase the likelihood of women running, women still considered additional factors carefully before deciding to run for office.

Family responsibilities were another guiding force for women. Fox and Lawless (2004) noted “women who live with a spouse or partner are approximately seven times more likely than men to be responsible for more of the household tasks” (p. 270), and further underscored that the “numbers are similar for childcare arrangements” (p. 270), or what is often called the second shift. Balancing family responsibilities often precludes women from obtaining careers, which often serve as pipelines into politics (Fox & Lawless, 2014). Because of the differences in responsibilities and role expectations, women often feel unprepared and not willing to sacrifice responsibilities and thus decline from running for office. The decision to run for office was something women strategically planned and executed (Fox & Lawless, 2004). Women were methodical in their consideration of running for office (Fox & Lawless, 2004), and were highly driven (Fulton et al., 2006).

Fulton et al. (2006) sought to understand women’s ambition to run for office, and the impacts of gender directly, indirectly, or interactively, known as “the three pathways for the influence of gender” (p. 238). Survey results showed a direct effect between women’s lower ambitions leading to the increased likelihood not to run for office. Indirectly, women’s ambitions increased when the potential benefits were considered. The indirect effect led women to consider running for higher office. Once in office, women who experienced the benefits of the position were noted as having higher ambition to run for Congress. An interactive effect showed women with children had lower ambition yet were just as likely as men to run for office. Researchers noted women considered carefully the benefits of the positions before making the initial decision to run, making them more strategic than their male counterparts (Fulton et al., 2006).

The sections prior provided clear indications of the vast hurdles women continue to encounter in politics. Although the literature is readily available and encompasses an array of

issues facing women, they do not specifically address WOC or the issues faced as gender minorities. The reviewed literature has the overwhelming emphasis on a “single-axis” (Crenshaw, 1989) framework in theory and research, where white women continue to be at the center of both the focus of research and experiences shared (Bowleg, 2008; Crenshaw, 1989). WOC face the barriers and struggles already listed when discussing women in general, plus the added struggles that exist when the intersections of WOC’s identities are included. The sections to follow will address specific areas for WOC to help expand the overall picture of women in politics and the added challenges WOC continue to experience.

### **WOC in Politics**

As previously mentioned, women have historically been underrepresented in politics (Frederick, 2014; Lawless & Pearson, 2008). Frederick (2014) further underscored the “standard of femininity, overlooking how gender values are varied and deeply racialized” (p. 301). Women running for office have the added task of managing the intersectionality of their gender, identity, sexual orientation, and race. Interestingly, in politics, white women have a disadvantage when it comes to expectations of femininity compared to WOC and lose more elections than WOC (Frederick, 2014). As Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2007) explained, “The dominant society has never viewed Black women as sympathetic or normatively feminine figures” (p. 30). This lack of social expectation of femininity has afforded WOC the ability to work outside of the “southern bell” (Frederick, 2014, p. 303) archetype of a quiet and submissive woman, thus having more options to exercise their voice.

### **WOC, First-Time Candidates**

As candidates, WOC face continued challenges both in the electoral process and societal expectations. Reviewing the election results of the 2000 congressional race in Louisville,

Kentucky's third district, Clayton (2003) noted the continued racial and gender bias in the U.S. electoral process—a phenomenon Clayton termed a “double disadvantage” (p. 355) for WOC. Clayton (2003) acknowledged “black female candidates running for office still face the difficult task of being seen as politically viable candidates” (p. 380). It is worth repeating Lien's (2015) observation that WOC “occupy a paradoxical place in U.S.” (p. 257), partly due to being seen as having political capital by virtue of their elected position, yet belonging to a disenfranchised group. Lien (2015) further described “Women of Color may be perceived as powerful by virtue of their positions as lawmakers, yet the intersection of race and gender within legislatures may produce marginalization that is not experienced by either men of color or white” (p. 245). This paradox Lien (2015) noted is quite present in the experiences of WOC seeking positions in politics. Being elected to a political office does not preclude WOC from being minoritized. Similarly, WOC activists that seek political positions are met with the same challenges.

Takash (1993) conducted a study in Watsonville, California looking at the unique experiences of local activists that funneled into elected office. Takash (1993) highlighted the continued “barriers of race, class, gender, and culture” (p. 325) for Latinas and WOC in general. Survey results underscored the challenges women face due to gender and race barriers. Takash (1993) further noted Latina women continued to challenge the “gender relationships as well as racial inequality between non-white and white women” (p. 353), and this was a necessary challenge for increased inclusion in the political world.

Kaba and Ward (2009) noted the presence of Black women in U.S. politics had increased compared to men. Data compiled through previous election results, voting rates, electoral participation, and party affiliation, showed stronger election results in the southern United States for democratic Black women. In conjunction with the aforementioned statistics, these researchers

attributed the increase of Black elected women to be the result of: (a) more women of voting age participating, (b) higher education attainment for Black women, (c) active involvement in churches and communities by women, (d) more women as head of households, and (e) the social reaction to a high rate of mass incarceration and deaths of Black men prohibited from participation in the political process (Kaba & Ward, 2009). With these results, the researchers concluded Black women in the future are in a “position to win more seats to Congress” (Kaba & Ward, 2009, p. 33); however, local elections present another set of challenges for WOC (Hajnal & Truionstine, 2005).

### ***WOC, First-Time Candidates: Local Office***

Hajnal and Trounstine (2005) focused on local city council races and emphasized the importance of minority voter turnout. “Uneven turnout across racial and ethnic groups affects winners and losers” (Hajnal & Truionstine, 2005, p. 518) locally more so than the national level. Local municipalities were seen as more difficult to penetrate for minority candidates who had to overcome “other barriers to minority representation like citizenship, local electoral institutions, the cost of running a campaign, finding candidates with the requisite political experience and internal group division” (Hajnal & Truionstine, 2005, p. 528). Without proper representation in these positions, elected officials were noted as lacking the motivation to consider those constituents in the decision-making process. One reason was the lack of voter turnout, which Hajnal and Trounstine noted increased the community’s segregation. Women running for office in communities with lower voter turnout will no doubt continue to experience challenges.

Through the use of qualitative, in-depth interviews of seven women in office, Rombough and Keithly (2010) discovered a unique trait all participants shared. The researchers found the emerging theme of risk-taking behavior through a history of participation in sports, performances



in theatre or music, and running for office during their educational journey contributed to the likelihood women would run for office. Further, the interviews of these elected representatives of a South Rio Grande Valley community revealed a similarity of cultural expectations experienced, media coverage portrayals, identical political party affiliation, and similar gender biases described both in society and their respective cultures. The results prompted the researchers to recommend girls involvement in “athletics, theater, music, campus politics or similar activities” (Rombough & Keithly, 2010, p. 183). The importance of exposure to candidates as role models also served to increase participation for WOC in all politics levels (Rombough & Keithly, 2010). This study is essential in contributing to the research creating more awareness of EWOC as role models and an indication of the change in the horizon for future voter turnout and increased WOC candidates.

### **Conclusion**

Historically feminism has centered on the lives of white women and universalizing their experiences for all women (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996), as in the case of research on women in leadership. The mainstream study of women in leadership must continue to move toward a more intersectional approach (Barnes, 2017; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Although the challenges noted in the previous sections are referenced as women’s issues, WOC experience these challenges differently through their intersectional identities; however, the difference is not something to exclude, problematize, or dismiss, but should instead be recognized and included in the research (Lugones, 1991). A framework such as multiracial feminism moves away from sexism as the primary goal of feminism to a more intersectional and inclusive framework incorporating race and “institutionalized racism, and of struggles against racial oppression”

(Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 321). Multiracial feminism centers race and inequalities moving away from temptations of tokenizing or spicing up white dishes (hooks, 2012).

WOC no doubt face a double bind (Lyness & Heilman, 2006) and double disadvantages when aspiring to leadership positions. These hindrances are experiences in organizations, educational, and political contexts Collins (2002) described as the institutional “matrix of domination” (p. 227). For these reasons, the research presented in this dissertation is both timely and useful as the makeup of the U.S. population continues to change, primarily with WOC becoming the majority of all women in the United States by 2060 (Catalyst, 2020). The next chapter delves into the methods of gathering and analyzing speeches from first-time office winners in an effort to answer the research questions presented in this study.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The following section includes the different methods used in this research. Covered in this chapter is Bengtsson's (2016) process of conducting a qualitative content analysis. The methods section outlines the strategies of collecting data, and a detailed description of how decisions were made in the selection of speeches and EWOC city council members. Lastly, the institutional review board, trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the study will be discussed.

### **Research Question**

WOC have historically been shown to be politically active (Mays, 2004). The legacy of participation continues as there is increased political participation for WOC in this era (Bach, 2018). This study provided insight to the following research question: In what ways do the victory speeches of EWOC city council, first-time office winners in California inform our understanding of their campaigns and vision for the future of their cities? To bring in the voices from the margins, WOC were at the center of this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To understand the nuances of lived experiences, or the "what," Wertz et al. (2011) argued one must incorporate the nature of knowledge and existence as experienced by participants, or the "how" of something. Qualitative research was best equipped to handle social inquiry because it helped guide the investigation with an epistemology that is context-bound and an ontology where a variety of truths exist (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research methods could capture the essence of the victory speeches, which are both context-bound and unique to each EWOC.

The relationship the researcher has with the research acknowledges the role of the researcher as part of or within the research (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research is a subjective approach that can result in a deep understanding of a topic. Openness is required to embrace the

meaningful interactions that are part of this tradition. Being open to participants' experiences, embracing interactions, and acknowledging one's presence in the research is essential for qualitative research.

The following section includes the theoretical framework used in interpreting and analyzing the data. Feminist theory can serve to enhance understandings of power structures that exist in society (Weedon, 1987) yet lacks the voices and experiences of WOC. The historical oppression of WOC is noted in feminism (Crenshaw, 2010), followed by the hegemony of feminism in repressing the voices of WOC (Baca-Zinn & Dill, 1996), all reinforcing the need for a more inclusive theoretical framework. These frameworks are included as part of the historical evolution of feminism, which touch on one aspect of WOC's identity. Additionally, multiracial feminism (Baca-Zinn & Dill, 1996) and the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014) are discussed in depth as the strongest theoretical framework for this qualitative study.

### **Statement of Research**

WOC are winning elections in record numbers (Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2018). Elected women have something to say, and the time is ripe for listening. Local offices have been largely weak in the representation of growing diversity in many cities. Women's presence in political spaces will continue to increase, and scholarship must keep up with the trend. The purpose of this research was to inform our understanding of EWOC city council members and their vision of progress and leadership in the Trump era through the analysis of victory speeches.

### **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research was appropriate in this research study for the purpose of investigating ways of knowing and understanding the construction of reality by individuals in different contexts. Using this methodology in the following research facilitated the flexibility

required to understand the relationships between the various aspects of delivered victory speeches of EWOC city council members, and how these voices inform understanding of leadership development in political spaces.

### **Defining Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is more than finding a cause and effect, as the strength of qualitative research lies in “uncovering the meaning of phenomenon for those involved” (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). Van Maanen (1979) noted “the label qualitative methods have no precise meaning in any of the of the social sciences” (p. 520). Qualitative research can be understood as an overarching term that is capable of describing, decoding, and translating the phenomena at hand. Unlike quantitative analysis, qualitative research is less concerned with counting frequencies and focuses on understanding the study with an emic or within approach that reduces the distance between the researcher and takes context into consideration. The overall goal of qualitative research is not to discover one truth to replicate, but rather to understand what is socially happening in the phenomena (van Maanen, 1979). By using qualitative research, the researcher has an option to unpack deeper meaning of what is being studied.

Creswell and Poth (2018) added to the definition of qualitative research by highlighting the method and the “ability to transform the world” (p. 8) and allow space for diverse voices through the use of rich descriptive methods of research. Hence, qualitative researchers aim to be inclusive and expand the field. Qualitative research is useful for increasing perceptions of reality and what constitutes truth for various individuals. Through the use of qualitative research as a methodology, researchers can delve into the construction of messages in political spaces.

There are several approaches to qualitative inquiry, according to Creswell and Poth (2018). Narrative research is an approach that can be used as a method of analyzing data and has

the strength to explore stories. A phenomenological approach emphasizes a “single content or idea” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 76). Creswell and Poth (2018) further noted grounded theory “seeks, in the end to develop a theory” (p. 83), while ethnography focuses on the development of “complex, complete descriptions of the culture group” (p. 91). Case study investigates “bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 96). Wertz et al. (2011) also referenced phenomenological research, grounded theory, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry, which they defined as originating from the hermeneutical tradition, as having a “wide application in the interpretation of sacred and literary texts in religion, philosophy, and literature, and more recently, in the interpretation of textual data in qualitative research” (p. 66). Finally, Wertz et al. (2011) included discourse analysis as an expanded and flexible approach to the study of written and spoken content. Because I chose to research the victory speeches of EWOC city council members, I dismissed the other approaches and selected qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is a flexible method and was appropriate to gain an understanding of the experiences of EWOC, office winners as expressed in their own words. Analyzing the victory speeches with this approach facilitated the unpacking of those experiences, and the collection of said speeches is paramount to the research.

### **Qualitative Content Analysis**

This research used qualitative content analysis methods. Following Bengtsson’s (2016) process for performing a qualitative study using content analysis, victory speeches of EWOC, first time, local officeholders post 2016 were analyzed. The planning process of a qualitative content analysis highlights the importance of defining a unit of analysis and deciding between manifest and latent content interpretation (Bengtsson, 2016; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004;

Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Bengtsson (2016) underscored the researcher's options during this stage as choosing "whether the analysis should be of a broad surface structure (*manifest analysis*) or of a deep structure (*a latent analysis*) as a critical part of the planning stage" (p. 8). Lastly, once the planning decisions were made, this research applied Bengtsson's four stages of conducting a qualitative content analysis of the text. The four stages of decontextualizing, recontextualizing, categorisation, and compilation are all discussed (Bengtsson, 2016).

The first section to follow describes the qualitative content analysis process. The fundamental purpose of qualitative content analysis is to manage a large amount of content and transform it into an "organised and concise summary of key results" (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 94). Addressed next are the variety of descriptions researchers use to illustrate and highlight the flexibility of qualitative content analysis (Bengtsson, 2016; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Fields, 1988; Morgan, 1993; Schilling, 2006; White & Marsh, 2006; Vaismoradi et al., 2013), followed by the decisions made in the planning of the study (Bengtsson, 2016).

Qualitative content analysis "reduces data, it is systematic, and it is flexible" (Schreier, 2014, p. 170). Qualitative content analysis seeks real meanings (Berelson, 1971). The purpose of using qualitative content analysis is to reduce large amounts of text into groups of manageable categories (Bengtsson, 2016), with the overarching goal of understanding what the content can potentially be indicating, or as a reflection of "deeper phenomena" (Berelson, 1971, p. 123). The intention of the communicator and the impacts of the content is the primary focus of qualitative content analysis (Berelson, 1971). The flexibility and strength of this particular method of analysis is one reason why, as noted by Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017), a step-by-step process of analysis the content is somewhat abstract. Because of the variety of labels researchers use to

describe the process of using qualitative content analysis, it is worth spending some time identifying the process and discussing the method further.

Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) addressed the frustration of many past and current researchers who continue to struggle when trying to find or use a concrete, step-by-step process of conducting a qualitative content analysis. Conducting research using qualitative content analysis has been noted as being less than clear (Bengtsson, 2016; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Fields, 1988). To add to the lack of clarity, researchers use different labels of the process from a spiral (Schilling, 2006), low-level to high-level abstraction (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017), a process (Bengtsson, 2016; Fields, 1988), a recursive process (Morgan, 1993), hermeneutic loop (White & Marsh, 2006), and a nonlinear process (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Further, Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) underscored qualitative content analysis should not be thought of as “a pattern cutter at a textile factory” (p. 93), suggesting the method is purposefully flexible. Berg (2009) previously included this sentiment when he described qualitative content analysis as a perspective and a “passport to listening to words of the text and understanding better the perspective(s) of the producer of these words” (p. 343) and not a method that reduces content, but instead places it in a different light. Placing content in a different light will require the researcher to decide how the content will be interpreted. In the following section, the planning process will include the researchers intentional move from manifest to latent content as a means to move from lower levels of abstraction to higher levels (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017), and the choice of using inductive code generations over deductive code generation to stay consistent with the design of the research.



## **Unit of Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis includes a frequency component similar to what is measured in quantitative research, known as the *unit of analysis* (Bengtsson, 2016; Berelson, 1971). Another way to understand the unit of analysis is what Bengtsson (2016) described as the sample, “and the researcher has to determine whether the material is to be analyzed in its entirety or divided into smaller units” (p. 10). Neuendorf (2002) described a unit of analysis as “the ‘thing’ that is the subject of the study” (p. 13). For this research, the unit of analysis is the victory speeches of EWOC city council members. Once the speeches (unit of analysis) were isolated and video downloaded, the transcription commenced.

## **Manifest and Latent Content**

The process of qualitative content analysis starts with the decision between the manifest or latent interpretation of the content (Bengtsson, 2016; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Bengtsson (2016) explained manifest analysis as a specific analysis where a researcher “describes what the informants actually say, stays very close to the text, uses the words themselves, and describes the visible and obvious in the text” (p. 10) or “what is being said” (p. 9). Berg (2009) defined manifest content as “those elements that are physically present and countable” (p. 343) or quantifiable. On the other hand, latent content is what is “intended to be said” (Bengtsson, 2016, p. 9), or more specifically, when the researcher “seeks to find the underlying meaning of the text” (p. 10). Vaismoradi et al. (2013) noted similarities between the two analyses in regard to interpretation with differences in the level of “abstraction” (p. 403). Latent analysis requires a deeper level of unpacking (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

The use of both manifest and latent content analysis were included in this research. The manifest quality of staying close to the text is an essential first step that resulted in the in-depth reading and familiarity of the content through detailed transcriptions. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) noted the systematic move from manifest content interpretation as staying as close to the text (what is being said) and moving to latent (why it is being said) levels of deeper abstraction. In application, the manifest interpretation of the text looked at what the candidates said in their victory speeches word for word (manifest) and moved to a deeper level of abstraction, the *why* or *what*, or the intended meaning of what was said (latent) in their victory speeches. As part of the process of the analysis, the suggested next step required the decision of how codes were generated using the deductive or inductive process (Bengtsson, 2016).

### **Deductive and Inductive Code Generation**

There are two main ways of generating codes from the content. Bengtsson (2016) wrote, “Codes can be generated inductively or deductively, depending on the study design. If the study has a deductive reasoning design, the researcher has to create a coding list before starting the analyzing process” (p. 12). Unlike deductive code generation, which is more focused on the procedure or technique, an inductive code generation is person-centered and focused on the character of the content (Berg, 2009).

Inductive content analysis is focused on the individual and originates from the humanistic tradition (White & Marsh, 2006). A humanistic tradition is concerned with human experience (Schilling, 2006). An inductive analysis of content is a method of taking the qualitative data and formulating codes, categories, and abstractions or themes from the data itself (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Mayring, 2000). Bengtsson (2016) further clarified “codes created inductively may change as the study progresses and as more data become available. Interpretations of the meaning units

that seemed clear at the beginning may be obscured during the process” (p. 12). This research focused on EWOC city council members and their victory speeches. An inductive approach was the preferred method of generating codes for this work. Bengtsson (2016) noted once the decisions or planning mentioned previously has taken place, the researcher then moves to the stages of analysis. The following section describes the four main stages of analysis that guided the process of analysis throughout the study, as Bengtsson introduced.

### **The Four Stages of Qualitative Content Analysis**

The section that follows details the abstraction process, as described by Bengtsson (2016), including (a) decontextualisation, (b) recontextualisation, (c) categorisation, and (d) compilation. Bengtsson outlined the analysis in stages, starting with the content in whole, and then refining to smaller segments or words. The subsequent section details the stages outlined and named the “four distinct main stages” (Bengtsson, 2016, p. 8) of content analysis in more depth.

#### **Decontextualization**

The first stage requires a familiarity with the text and a total immersion by the researcher (Bengtsson, 2016). The victory speeches of EWOC city council members were downloaded from public websites. Detailed transcriptions and in-depth understanding of the content were attained through a high level of commitment to the content. First, listening and viewing the downloaded victory speeches was repeated three times for each elected woman. This absorption of videos through audio and visual means helped the researcher to know each of the elected leaders and their unique voice. Once familiar with the visual and auditory portions of each of the messages, detailed transcriptions were added. Fields (1988) highlighted the purpose of the transcriptions as essential for the researcher to further “observe” (p. 185) not merely “watch” (p. 185) or “hear”

(p. 185) the content. Detailed transcriptions helped the researcher “see” (Fields, 1988, p. 185) what was happening in the text.

### ***Transcriptions***

The speeches of the EWOC city council members were transcribed using REV (rev.com) transcription services for quality and expediency. Transcription of the material furthered the familiarization of the content (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Reading and rereading the content was performed. The goal of rereading the material is to understand what is being said, to extract the main ideas, and view the material in its totality (Bengtsson, 2016; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). After a thorough and repeated reading of transcripts an additional three times, the content was then divided into smaller units or parts called meaning units, as further discussed in the next section.

### ***Meaning Unit***

Bengtsson (2016) described the identification of meaning units as “decontextualizing” (p. 9). Elo et al. (2014) suggested a meaning unit be large enough not to lose the wholeness yet small enough to retain meaning. In this stage, Bengtsson (2016) recommended creating deep meaning units such as sentences or paragraphs. Breaking down the meaning unit into even smaller units can then be performed.

These smaller units are called condensed meaning units (Bengtsson, 2016; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). The condensed meaning units were further refined from larger paragraphs or sentences toward more concise wording to create codes. Once the condensed meaning units were identified, they were labeled as codes (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). The creation and use of codes will be detailed next.

## ***Codes***

Codes are a tool used to give meaning units a different light, or as Graneheim and Lundman (2003) noted, codes are tools used to “think with” (p. 107). Codes are generated out of the data itself and through an inductive process (Morgan, 1993). The coding process must be repeated to gain reliability (Bengtsson, 2016). Once the meaning units were identified and labeled as codes, a return to the original text for a rereading was performed.

## **Recontextualisation**

This second stage is recontextualisation. Bengtsson (2016) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005) referred to this activity as recontextualising the content. In this stage, another review of the entire text is conducted to be certain nothing was missed. Bengtsson noted the material will likely be color-coded, broken down to codes, and the researcher decides on any text that is not coded as to its inclusion or exclusion from the study. Bengtsson (2016) suggested the researcher be prepared to “let go of the unimportant information that does not correspond to the aim of the study” (p. 12); yet, acknowledging its presence is nonetheless recommended (Saldaña, 2016). Once the recontextualising of the text is completed, the process moves to the third stage of categorisation.

## **Categorisation**

Categories are a group of codes that are related to each other through “content or context” (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 94). Although categories are created, it is crucial to understand that human experience is not easily compartmentalized, as Graneheim and Lundman (2003) noted, “it is not always possible to create mutually exclusive categories when a text deals with experiences” (p. 107). The linking of meaning is where one creates categories (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003). Saldaña (2016) noted “some categories may contain clusters of coded data

that merit further refinement into subcategories” (p. 14). It is within this refinement of categorisations that themes can emerge (Bengtsson, 2016).

### ***Themes***

Themes can constitute the findings and have been described as the “expression of the latent content” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003, p. 107). Graneheim and Lundman noted (2003) themes have “multiple meanings and creating themes is a way to link the underlying meanings together in categories” (p. 107). This step has been described as the highest level of abstraction in the analysis process (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). As noted before, the entire process is a hermeneutical loop (White & Marsh, 2016). Finally, the fourth and final stage is the presentation of the data.

### **Compilation**

Bengtsson (2016) completes the four stages with both the analysis and the write up of the data. Qualitative content analysis and the choice to use a latent level of analysis allows the “researcher to immerse him/herself to some extent in the data in order to identify hidden meaning in the text” (Bengtsson, 2016, p. 12). Through this process, the research may use tables to show the different themes or subthemes for a summative view. Quotations may also be included in the write up of this compilation.

This section addressed the appropriateness of qualitative content analysis and its use in the research of EWOC city council members’ victory speeches. The decision in the planning process to include both manifest and latent content was discussed and the utility to move from low-level to high-level abstraction was noted (Bengtsson, 2016). In addition, the four stages of qualitative content analysis were presented in detail. Bengtsson (2016) reiterated the first stage of decontextualising and the importance of precise transcriptions that were then highlighted and

moved into codes. Recontextualisation is the recursive process of diving back into the data to ascertain thoroughness explained by reexamining the codes in terms of the data. The third stage of categorisation is described as generating codes to form categories and grouping of categories into themes. Finally, compilation or the presentation of the data and analysis was discussed in detail. The entire process of qualitative content analysis was noted as a recursive, spiral, and iterative process (Morgan, 1993; Schilling, 2006).

### **Methods**

A complete and alphabetical list of all 482 cities/towns for the state of California was retrieved and downloaded from the League of California Cities (2019) website (<https://www.cacities.org>). Of those 482-city councils, 121 were labeled *chartered cities*, and 361 were labeled *general law cities*. A master list of all cities was generated alphabetically in an Excel sheet. Through a Google search, all city council seats won by women within the years post November 5, 2016, to June 2020 were located, then funneled down to women, first-time, office winners, and finally WOC, self-identified, first-time, office winners. The following paragraphs describe in detail the steps of identifying all women, first-time, city council winners, dates of certification of election and oaths, and videos of the self-identified women chosen for this research.

First, a search of each respective city council website was conducted for any women listed as council members. Pictures or names were included in all websites indicating their status as elected. In some instances, pictures, names, and terms were included underneath the councilmember picture. When no picture was provided, a name was listed; however, terms were not listed in all cases. For missing or incomplete term information (e.g., 2018–2020 versus term expiration 2020) and for accuracy, archival research was conducted to confirm if the term was a

complete 4-year term or the remainder of a term in the case of an appointment. It is important to note a small number of city councils did not provide archives. For those city councils lacking archival research options, an open Google search was conducted with the council member's name and city. Results returned elected officer's websites, Facebook profiles, newspaper articles, and in some cases a Voter's Edge page (<https://votersedge.org/ca>). After finalizing the review of all 482 cities through city council archives or open searches, a total of 256 women were identified as winning city council seats for the first time. Once terms were identified, a search for victory speeches via videos was conducted to isolate self-identifying WOC.

To locate videos, city council archives agendas were reviewed for the certification of election and oath of office dates. The dates noted were instrumental in locating the victory speeches during the installation of newly elected city council officials. When available, speeches were retrieved from the city council public sites, usually located next to the agenda. If no video was posted, an email or public records request was sent requesting the video with the specific date of oath of office and official's name. It is worth mentioning, some women self-identified in their victory speeches, via another medium, and by association. The final number of 48 EWOC city council members identified via their video, Facebook page, bio, webpage, or organizational membership were compiled.

### **Population**

As mentioned, 48 elected women who self-identified as fitting the researcher's definition of WOC (as noted in the definition of terms in Chapter 1) were included in the study (see Table 2). Although city councils are nonpartisan, Table 3 shows the political party affiliation and also the birthplace as shown in voter registration known as Political Data, and is included for reference purposes. It is essential to highlight some of the EWOC's self-identified gender and



race or ethnicity in their victory speech, while others self-identified on Facebook, a post in their candidate website, or through membership with a group explicitly referencing an identity matching the WOC description outlined in Chapter 1.

**Table 2**

*Elected City Council*

City	County	Elected Name	Speech Date	Term/Years
Adelano	San Bernardino	Stevevonna Evans *	12-12-2018	4
Alhambra	Los Angeles	Adele Andrade-Stadler	12-10-2018	4
Alhambra	Los Angeles	Katherine Lee	12-10-2018	4
Banning	Riverside	Colleen Wallace*	12-11-2018	4
Bell Gardens	Los Angeles	Alejandra Cortez	12-11-2018	4
Bell Gardens	Los Angeles	Liseth Flores*	12-11-2018	4
Buena Park	Orange	Sunny Youngson Park	12-11-2018	4
Carlsbad	San Diego	Priya Bhat-Patel	12-11-2018	4
Costa Mesa	Orange	Andrea Marr	12-04-2018	4
Davis	Yolo	Gloria Partida	12-12-2018	4
Downey	Los Angeles	Claudia Frometa	12-11-2018	4
East Palo Alto	San Mateo	Regina Wallace-Jones	12-13-2018	4
Fremont	Alameda	Teresa Keng	12-11-2018	4
Hayward	Alameda	Aisha Wahab	12-11-2018	4
Imperial Beach	San Diego	Paloma Aguirre	12-12-2018	4
La Mesa	San Diego	Dr. Akilah Weber	12-11-2018	4
Long Beach	Los Angeles	Mary Zendejas**	12-03-2019	3
Los Altos	Santa Clara	Neysa Fligor	12-04-2018	4
Milpitas	Santa Clara	Karina R. Dominguez*	12-18-2018	4
Moreno Valley	Riverside	Dr. Carla Thornton	01-07-2019	4
Morgan Hill	Santa Clara	Yvonne Martinez Beltran	12-12-2018	4
Mountain View	Santa Clara	Ellen Kamei	01-08-2019	4
Oakland	Alameda	Nikki Fortunato Bas	01-07-2019	4
Oakland	Alameda	Sheng Thao	01-07-2019	4
Oxnard	Ventura	Vianey Lopez	12-11-2018	4

City	County	Elected Name	Speech Date	Term/Years
Oxnard	Ventura	Gabriela Basua	12-11-2018	4
Palm Springs	Riverside	Grace Elena Garner**	12-04-2019	3
Paso Robles	San Luis Obispo	Maria Garcia	12-04-2018	4
Pico Rivera	Los Angeles	Dr. Monica Sanchez**	12-10-2019	1
Pinole	Contra Costa	Norma Martínez-Rubin	12-04-2018	4
Pomona	Los Angeles	Nora Garcia	12-03-2018	4
Riverside	Riverside	Gaby Plascencia	12-03-2018	4
San Diego	San Diego	Monica Montgomery	12-10-2018	4
San Diego	San Diego	Vivian Moreno	12-10-2018	4
San Gabriel	Los Angeles	Denise Menchaca***	04-04-2017	5
San Jose	Santa Clara	Maya Esparza	01-08-2019	4
San Luis Obispo	San Luis Obispo	Erica Stewart	12-03-2018	4
San Marcos	San Diego	Maria Nuñez	12-11-2018	4
San Ramon	Contra Costa	Sabina Zafar	12-11-2018	4
Santa Ana	Orange	Cecilia “Ceci” Iglesias*	12-11-2018	4
Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara	Alejandra Gutierrez	01-07-2020	4
Santa Maria	Santa Barbara	Gloria Soto	12-16-2018	4
Simi Valley	Ventura	Ruth Luevanos	12-01-2018	4
Torrance	Los Angeles	Sharon Kalani	04-14-2020	4
Ventura	Ventura	Sofia Rubalcava	12-10-2018	4
Ventura	Ventura	Lorrie Brown	12-10-2018	4
West Covina`	Los Angeles	Letty Lopez-Viado	12-04-2018	4
Whittier	Los Angeles	Jessica Martinez	04-14-2020	4

*Note.* The following symbols represent: \* No speech recorded or retrieved; \*\* Special election-serving remainder of term; \*\*\* Election during an odd year to cycle in new districts.

**Table 0***Elected City Council Demographics and Political Party Registration*

Elected Name	Age	Political Party	Birthplace
Adele Andrade-Stadler	63	Democrat	California
Aisha Wahab	33	Democrat	New York
Alejandra Cortez	28	Democrat	California
Alejandra Gutierrez	37	Democrat	California
Andrea Marr	37	Democrat	California
Cecilia “Ceci“ Iglesias	48	Republican	El Salvador
Claudia M. Frometa	46	Democrat	Mexico
Colleen Wallace	58	Democrat	California
Denise Menchaca	59	Democrat	California
Dr. Akilah Weber	42	Democrat	California
Dr. Carla Thornton	42	Republican	California
Dr. Monica Sanchez	42	Democrat	California
Ellen Kamei	37	Democrat	California
Erica Stewart	48	Democrat	California
Gabriela Basua	42	Democrat	California
Gaby Plascencia	42	Democrat	California
Gloria Partida	58	Democrat	Texas
Gloria Soto	31	Democrat	California
Grace Elena Garner	34	Democrat	California
Jessica Martinez	30	Republican	California
Karina R. Dominguez	38	Democrat	California
Katherine Lee	55	Decline to State	Taiwan
Letty Lopez-Viado	38	Decline to State	Mexico
Lisseth Flores	30	Democrat	California
Lorrie Brown	46	Democrat	California
Maria Elena Garcia	49	Democrat	Vermont
Maria Nuñez	47	Decline to State	Mexico
Mary Zendejas	49	Democrat	Mexico
Maya A. Esparza	50	Democrat	California

Elected Name	Age	Political Party	Birthplace
Monica Montgomery	42	Democrat	California
Neysa Fligor	45	Democrat	Jamaica
Nikki Fortunato Bas	52	Democrat	New York
Nora Garcia	34	Democrat	California
Norma Martínez-Rubin	60	Decline to State	California
Paloma Aguirre	43	Democrat	California
Priya Bhat-Patel	32	Democrat	Illinois
Regina Wallace-Jones	46	Democrat	California
Ruth Luevanos	46	Democrat	California
Sabina Zafar	45	Democrat	Pakistan
Sharon Kalani	61	Republican	California
Sheng Thao	35	Democrat	California
Sofia Rubalcava	38	Democrat	California
Stevevonna Evans	36	Democrat	California
Sunny Youngson Park	50	Democrat	Korea
Teresa Keng	45	Democrat	Hong Kong
Vianey Lopez	33	Democrat	Mexico
Vivian Moreno	38	Democrat	California
Yvonne Martinez-Beltran	46	Democrat	California

*Note.* Information in the table was obtained from “Online Campus Tools,” by Political Data, Inc., 2020. <https://www.politicaldata.com/>

Given the public nature of these elections, protocols to protect the identity of those included in this dissertation were not applicable. All information was acquired via public city council webpages, public Facebook pages, or other published public media; therefore, the study received expedited Institutional Review Board approval at Chapman University. Public officials have limited expectations of privacy in the United States “because of the widely accepted belief in the ‘right to know’ information of public concern, [so] freedom of speech generally overrides

public figures' right to privacy" (Yanisky-Ravid & Lahav, 2017, p. 976) and more so in the digital era.

### **Codes, Categories, and Themes**

The acquisition of the data, as described previously, was methodical and purposeful and included the formulation of codes, categories, and themes following Bengtsson's (2016) qualitative content analysis steps of working the data. Formatting data were the first step in the creation of codes, categories, and themes. The transcriptions were transferred to a Word document for each speech. The content was formatted to separate the speech into individual sentences. The third step included the creation of Excel sheets for each of the elected council members. In each of the sheets, the line-by-line transcript was pasted. Lastly, a column was added for the first cycle of coding.

Codes (see Appendix A) were identified as recurring words or ideas that emerged from the videos and transcripts (Bengtsson, 2016). Line by line, the transcript was reviewed an additional three times to pull out words or ideas. An extensive list of 225 codes were generated, through the repeated review of the data and without limitation on quantity. The codes were formatted as a drop-down menu in the column labeled codes. Each sentence was reviewed once more to select the code. The process was repeated for all sentences in the Excel master list. For example, Wahab (2018) stated, "We all deserve a voice, and that is one of the reasons why I decided to run" was labeled with the code *voice*. The list of all the codes was transferred to a single Excel sheet labeled "Codes." The list of codes were then clustered to perform the next step of creating categories.

Fifty-five categories (see Appendix B) were identified after another review of the data for all 48 sheets was performed. During that cycle, sentences were used along with the codes to

create the set of categories. For example, the same sentence noted previously by Wahab (2018), was labeled with the code *voice*, but was also labeled as a category in this cycle of coding. Some categories were labeled the same as a code due to their repeated use by the EWOC. The last cycle completed by the researcher included the creation of themes.

Twenty-five themes (see Appendix C) were created by linking the meaning of the categories identified in ways that helped further understand the data (Granehiem & Lundman, 2003). Also, the themes created were funneled down to subthemes (Saldaña, 2016). Three main themes were identified as *inclusive voice*, *systems of support*, and *vision with the community*. The entire process was cyclical and continuous. The overall process was guided with attention to detail and an openness to the data as changing and emerging within each cycle. Examples from the coding process can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4***An Example of Analysis: Transcribed Victory Speeches of EWOC*

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Categories	Theme
I am proud to be Oakland’s first Filipina council member, and I will represent our diverse Asian Pacific American community (Fortunato Bas, 2019).	Identity “first Filipina” represent Asian Community	First	Identity	Intersectionality
I’ve been a resident of Hayward for many years, and even though I wasn’t born in Hayward, Hayward belongs to all of us (Wahab, 2018).	Outsiders belonging to city	Belonging	Inclusion	Belonging
I look forward to being a voice for all the residents of Imperial Beach, and I especially look forward to being a voice for those who feel they don’t have one (Aguirre, 2018).	Being a “voice” for	Voice	Inclusion	Voice
Your presence means everything to me and reflects our collective recognition that we have to work together to make magic happen (Wallace, 2018).	“Collective recognition” collaboration with others	Collective	Collaboration	Coalitions
We are bound together to make this world work for all of us and not just the chosen few (Andrade-Stadler, 2018).	Bound together	Equity	Inclusion	Inclusion

**Research Ethics**

Ethics in research enhance the trustworthiness of a study and researcher (Merriam, 2019; Saldaña, 2016). Moreover, ethics are essential to the reliability and credibility of qualitative research (Krefting, 1991; Merriam, 2009; Saldaña, 2016). The following sections include strategies used to enhance the data’s validity and reliability through the practices of triangulation, data engagement, peer review, and researcher reflexivity (Bengtsson, 2016; Krefting, 1991;

Merriam, 2009; Morgan, 1993; Saldaña, 2016). Along with thick descriptions of data, audit trails are vital in presenting the data and points to the research's credibility (Merriam, 2009). These components ultimately lead to the transferability of the study to other similar contexts.

Moreover, as an instrument, the researcher is a necessary part to acknowledge and addressed in qualitative research (Bourke, 2014; Merriam, 2009). As such, the researcher's positionality is described in detail in the following sections to increase trustworthiness.

### **Trustworthiness**

Transcribing the audio was of the utmost importance. Videos of the speeches were uploaded to Rev.com. Once transcriptions were completed, a review for accuracy was conducted and Spanish speeches, words, or phrases were translated to English by the researcher whose first language is Spanish. The recorded speeches were the only data coded for this research. The first level of coding included words and/or phrases, which Saldaña (2016) described as a method to “symbolically assign a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 4). This process required a pattern of cycling back and repeating the process, capturing more information until a confident level of saturation was achieved. The recursive process, as described in the previous sections, was completed (Morgan, 1993). The rigor and commitment to the process noted previously and suggested by Bengtsson (2016) were followed with a high level of detail to ensure the trustworthiness of the work.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Several key strategies that help meet the criteria of both the validity and reliability of the study were implemented. For a qualitative study to have the prospect of being transferred to similar contexts, Merriam (2009) suggested several strategies for both rigor and understanding of the phenomena under study. Merriam also suggested several key applications to ensure the



quality of findings and credibility of the work. Some of these strategies include engagement of data, peer review, audit trail, thick description, and maximum variation.

### ***Engagement of Data***

The time researchers dedicate to gathering data shows in the depth of the work produced and increases credibility. Merriam (2009) suggested collecting the data until the researcher reaches a level of *saturation*. To reach a level of saturation, data or “discrepant or negative cases” (Merriam, 2009, p. 219) should be included for contrast and comparison. Using all cases helps to ensure nothing is left out without cause and justification. For this research, every case found was used to ensure full engagement. Unlike quantitative research where the researcher’s goal is to be as objective and distant from the study, qualitative research encourages the researchers to close the gap and continuously engage in self-reflection (Krefting, 1991).

### ***Peer Review***

The ability to examine the data with colleagues is essential to the quality of the research. Merriam (2009) highlighted the utility of having the perspective of someone outside the research as a sounding board and for variation of interpretations. Discussions with colleagues can also serve as a sounding board. The members of the peer review group can include members from different fields and research traditions. Scanning and discussing interpretations of the data with colleagues is part of the peer review process and serves to verbalize the findings and receive feedback. Krefting (1991) noted the advantage of collaborating with “colleagues can also increase credibility by checking categories developed out of data and by looking for disconfirming or negative cases” (p. 219).

Sharing the content and context of speeches, videos, and coding methods with peers was part of the process of data mining for this research. For this study, I engaged in conversations

with two colleagues in different emphases of education as a method of checking-in, sharing data, progress, and process. Conversations included the sharing of reflections, transcripts, and videos and were focused on the context and content of the speeches. The sharing of codes, categories, and themes generation was another aspect of peer review where I sought feedback from colleagues with the aim to be open as a researcher. Meetings with my dissertation chair, committee, faculty members, and a retired faculty were conducted to discuss various aspects of the dissertation from its origin. A master Excel sheet was shared using a Google document in real-time and was made accessible to the dissertation chair.

### ***Audit Trail***

Having an audit trail is vital in the organization of the research and its validity (Merriam, 2009). Detailing the steps of the study in detail is both beneficial to the researcher and future researchers who may be interested in conducting a similar study. Detailing the identification of candidates, selection of speeches, data challenges, and process-related notes assist in having a robust audit trail. Merriam (2009) stated the items that should be included in this audit are “the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study” (p. 229). In addition to copious notes, qualitative research requires detailed descriptions for transferability and credibility (Krefting, 1991).

In this particular study, detailed steps of how city councils were identified and which councils provided online recordings of victory speeches were included. Second, I detailed the method of downloading speeches and organizing them by city. Third, the process of choosing candidates’ victory speeches was included. Once speeches were downloaded, notes of the transcription were generated. Lastly, the code identification process and application was detailed.

These audit trails are highly dependent on the quality and depth of thick descriptions, as discussed next.

### ***Thick Descriptions***

Providing rich descriptions are essential to qualitative studies. Rich and detailed descriptions are necessary for the transferability of any study to diverse contexts. The “readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situations match the research context” (Merriam, 2009, p. 229). Detailing the content of the speeches, noting word choice, transcriptions, video content, sound, and context are part of creating thick descriptions in qualitative research. Thick description was used in the findings of this study through the quotations of the speeches to give the reader a sense of context and make it relatable for the reader. The quantity and depth of speeches are essential in the variation of the research.

### ***Maximum Variation***

Merriam (2009) suggested having variation in research. The greater the variation and diversity of the research and participants, the higher the likelihood the research will have transferable properties. To meet the variation aspect, the entire state of California was included for variation of communities. All these recommendations add to the depth of the research.

Two hundred and fifty-six, first-time, city council office winners were identified for the entire state of California, post November 5, 2016. The victory speeches were funneled down to 48, self-identified, EWOC city council members, post 2016. The quantity of the speeches helped strengthen the variation. In addition to increased variation, self-reflection was practiced to increase the integrity and content of the research, and to help readers understand how the researcher as an instrument arrived at the conclusions (Merriam, 2009), as discussed in the following section.

## Researcher as Instrument

The following section describes the importance of the researcher as an active interpreter of data, and also recognizes the position researchers bring to the research. Merriam (2009) described the skill of a researcher as the “the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (p. 15). Writing and representing data findings are involved processes required by the researcher. Acknowledging inherent biases is essential for researchers. Rather than trying to eliminate biases, Merriam (2009) recommended facing them and taking the opportunity to include their purpose, reflection, and increase the researcher’s awareness. As an instrument, the researcher has the unique ability to “expand his or her understanding through nonverbal as well as verbal communication, process information (data) immediately, clarify and summarize material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation, and explore unusual or unanticipated responses” (Merriam, 2009, p. 15).

As individuals, researchers exist in different groups and spaces (Bourke, 2014). Researchers are never totally objective. Bourke (2014) underscored this sentiment, stating “to achieve a pure objectivism is a naïve quest, and we can never truly divorce ourselves of subjectivity. We can strive to remain objective, but must be ever mindful of our subjectivities” (p. 3). This awareness referenced by Bourke (2014) was described as positionality. Merriam (2009) noted the researcher’s “assumptions, worldview, biases theoretical orientation, and relationships to the study” (p. 229) as aspects that are in a relationship with the research. My areas of interest have continuously been focused on women in different roles. Through reflection and processing, I have uncovered several first-hand experiences that have piqued my interest in the leadership of women and women’s voice. As the youngest of 12 children, I was in the perpetual position of listening with limited opportunities to speak. I grew up following directions

and fitting into gender and power roles. During my transformative years as a teen, I began to feel the subtle, yet powerful, discomfort of being silent. Excelling in school was not difficult. I was a devoted student. I was, however, questioning what I now understand were power structures. The professors, adults in my family, and those holding power positions (e.g., police, school principals) did not understand my frustration. I was muting my identities. I engaged in unsolicited commentaries and flat refusal to obey the rules I found to be unfair and ridiculous. I spent many hours, days, and years under the power of those who chose to discipline rather than listen. I finally left school. I felt separated from my identity as a WOC in a white world. After many years of self-work, I realized I had not lost my identity. Assimilation had repressed my roots, but dissent helped me find restoration and recovery.

Vera and Santos (2005) noted “learning how to maintain our ethnic or cultural identity while learning to adapt to the dominant culture” (p. 105) is essential for perseverance. I began to understand my position as a reflection of my ethnicity, gender, and class. I accepted my triple oppression and reframed it as a triple threat. I began to exist unapologetically. Rebuilding my identity as a Mexican woman was an opportunity, and I needed to dissect the power imbalances in my culture, language, and society to do so. Although not fully aware of what I was doing at the time, the refusal to adopt roles and follow the guidelines set by those who did not know me was something I engaged in for years. I followed my path and continued to work on developing my voice.

Regaining my education was paramount in this journey. I finally understood the importance of occupying any space and place available. These spaces require a continuous negotiation of identity dependent on context, language, power position, and ingroup/outgroup status. This background led to my curiosity about women and leadership. I recognize being the

vice president of operations of a financial institution is one way to shift the power structure and violate the expectancy of my gender as noted in some of the literature stated previously. I continue to actively allow myself to feel deserving of this position, reject any imposter syndrome, and manage the benefits and privileges of my positions. The power I had previously rejected as classism now became part of my employment. I, an immigrant, Latina, queer woman, was now occupying a position historically reserved for white males. Never in my imagination as a recently immigrated, undocumented young girl, would I have dreamt of this kind of outcome.

Lastly, as a former city council candidate, the experience opened another sphere of embodying leadership. Being in this position has expanded my perspective. I confess, I did not see myself as prepared, smart enough, white enough, or good enough to run. I, alone, added to the narrative of women as less than. As a first-time, immigrant, queer, woman of color, I have developed an ability to navigate yet another system designed without me in a mind—a system historically afforded to white males. Through a constant and unforgiving presence, our campaign has garnered both considerable supports, and some small-scale opposition. Prior to our campaign, the city of Orange had five council members. In the history of Orange, there has never been an immigrant, a Latina, or an openly queer woman running for city council.

In 2020, the residents have an opportunity to elect someone who represents some or more of these identities. In 2020, five city council seats are up for election. We have started a movement in the city that advocates participation, activism, voice, and descent. We have fought for fair and transparent democracy. Our campaign is known nationally. A moment truly became a movement. I am aware this campaign, although no longer an active campaign, continues to change our city. I continue to be changed by the experience of the campaign. Constant awareness and reflection helped me to stay grounded and resilient. The stronger the introspection, the

stronger I can be both open to other's experiences while maintaining the unique position as a researcher, and to develop this research to the extent I can contribute to academia and diverse communities.

Although situated in this work via my own experiences, I adopted an intentional practice and openness to learning from the experiences of others, and this was paramount to the integrity of the research. With this awareness in mind, I carefully checked in with my peers, checked out, or walked away from the study when needed to filter out many of the tendencies to default to the known and continue to have a practice of learning. It is worth noting it is impossible to be completely separate from the data. My intention for this study was not only to study but to learn from the experiences of others in their own words in hopes of furthering the field of educational leadership with WOC at the center.

This chapter discussed in detail Bengtsson's (2016) process of conducting a qualitative content analysis along with the main guiding frameworks of multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996) and the feminist of the multidimensional color lens (SCFCC, 2014). The methods section outlined the population, strategies for collecting data, and a detailed description of how decisions were made in selecting speeches. The cyclical process of code, categories, and theme generation was discussed and demonstrated in the study's rigor. The institutional review board process, trustworthiness, validity, and reliability were included to demonstrate the intention with which this research was conducted. Lastly, research ethics were discussed, and a thorough reflection of the researcher as an instrument was included to demonstrating the commitment to the rigor of this study. The following chapter highlights the findings of this analysis and the overall themes that emerged.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter contains a discussion of the results of the qualitative content analysis study used to answer the following research question: In what ways do the victory speeches of EWOC city council, first-time office winners in California inform our understanding of their campaigns and vision for the future of their cities? This analysis looked at the victory speeches of 48 EWOC that won their election for city council in the state of California, post 2016. As demonstrated in the following sections, the overall findings revealed the EWOC spoke with an inclusive voice that motivated them to run with a goal of representation within their city. Further, the EWOC shared a vision with their communities through trust and accountability while building coalitions and systems of support during the campaign. These notions will be represented in the following sections: inclusive voice, creating a vision with community, and building coalitions: systems of support.

Prior to discussing the findings, it is essential to contextualize the speeches. Table 5 represents the speeches as they were delivered and includes: (a) the length of speech; (b) the location where the speech was delivered, such as via Zoom, in front of the council chambers, or on a raised platform like a stage; (c) if the speech was read from a prepared statement or spontaneous; (d) if the speech was delivered in a different language (the only language used other than English was Spanish, with only some sprinkles of different languages used as greetings or a farewell, mainly one word); and (e) who surrounded the candidate during the speech as it was delivered. Aside from the Zoom meeting, the EWOC all delivered their speeches with other council members in attendance or unknown audience members who attended the city council meeting—few brought up families to stand beside them. Table 5 helps to give some context of the recorded speeches.



**Table 5***Time and Context Background of the EWOC Speeches*

Elected	Time	Location	Read Speech	Bilingual	Surrounded
Adele Andrade-Stadler	0:05:17	Dais	Yes	Yes	Other CC
Aisha Wahab	0:06:35	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC
Alejandra Cortez	0:02:23	Dais	Yes	Yes	Other CC
Alejandra Gutierrez	0:01:25	Dais	No	Yes	Other CC
Andrea Marr	0:02:29	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC
Cecilia “Ceci” Iglesias	0:00:00	No Video			
Claudia Frometa	0:09:13	Podium	Yes	No	Alone
Colleen Wallace	0.00:15	Dais	No	No	Other CC
Denise Menchaca	0.00.00	No Video			
Dr. Akilah Weber	0:04:31	Podium	No	No	Alone
Dr. Carla Thornton	0:02:43	<i> Holding Mic  Middle of CC</i>	No	No	Alone
Dr. Monica Sanchez	0:03:32	Dais	Yes	No	Stood at Center of Dais
Ellen Kamei	0:02:59	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC
Erica Stewart	0:00:35	Dais	No	No	Other CC
Gabriela Basua	0:01:53	Dias	No	Yes	Other CC
Gaby Plascencia	0:02:00	Dais	Yes	Yes	Other CC
Gloria Partida	0:03:45	<i> Mic in Front  of CC</i>	Yes	No	Other
Gloria Soto	0:04:21	Dias	Yes	Yes	Other CC
Grace Elena Gardner	0:01:04	Dais	Yes	Yes	Other CC
Jessica Martinez	0:02:53	<i> Zoom</i>	Yes	No	Other CC Zoom
Karina R. Dominguez	0:00:00	Dias	Yes	No	Other CC
Katherine Lee	0:04:48	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC
Letty Lopez-Viado	0:01:34	Dais	No	No	Other CC
Liseth Flores	0.00.00	Dais	Yes	No	Other
Lorrie Brown	0:03:05	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC
Maria Garcia	0:02:13	Audio Only	No Video	No Video	
Maria Nuñez	0:03:20	Dais	No	Yes	Mother, two women, one man
Mary Zendejas	0:01:06	Podium	No	No	Alone

Elected	Time	Location	Read Speech	Bilingual	Surrounded
Maya Esparza	0:00:00	No Video			
Monica Montgomery	0:08:19	Podium	Yes	No	Alone
Neysa Fligor	0:03:30	Dais	No	No	Other CC
Nikki Fortunato Bas	0:08:18	Podium	Yes	No	Husband/Daughter
Nora Garcia	0:08:00	Dais	No	No	Other CC
Norma Martínez-Rubin	0:03:26	Dais	No	No	Other CC
Paloma Aguirre	0:13:34	<i>Mic In front of CC</i>	Yes	Yes	Alone
Priya Bhat-Patel	0:01:52	Dais	No	No	Other CC
Regina Wallace-Jones	0:07:26	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC
Ruth Luevanos	0:04:31	Dias	Yes	Yes	Other
Sabina Zafar	0:01:34	<i>Holding Mic Middle of CC</i>	No	No	
Sharon Kalani	0:03:43	<i>Covid Video</i>	Yes	No	Alone
Sheng Thao	0:07:23	Podium	No	No	Entire Family Present
Sofia Rubalcava	0:04:23	Dais	No	Yes	Other CC
Steevonna Evans	0:00:00	No Video	No Video	No Video	No Video
Sunny Youngson Park	0:02:48	Standing in CC	Yes	No	Alone
Teresa Keng	0:01:45	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC
Vianey Lopez	0:01:39	Dais	No	Yes	Other CC
Vivian Moreno	0:06:36	Podium	Yes	Yes	Alone
Yvonne Martinez Beltran	0:05:15	Dais	Yes	No	Other CC

### **Inclusive Voice: “We All Deserve a Voice”**

After the analysis of the EWOC’s victory speeches, the desire for more inclusivity and representation was found in numerous speeches, both for themselves and others. Inclusion was noted in the analysis as a theme and as a driving force for the EWOC in two subthemes: *voice with representation* and *voice with courage*. This section describes each subtheme that emerged in more detail. These EWOC’s voices demonstrated the reasons for running, the strength for perseverance, and the victorious outcome.

## **Voice With Representation: “No More”**

EWOC amplified and echoed the need for representation, which often influenced their desire to run and resonated a strong commitment to serve as representatives. Some of the EWOC’s speeches expressed the value of using their voices with representation both as the reason they decided to run and as an approach to how to lead and/or serve once elected. Representation included expressions of courage to name the injustices experienced by the candidate and the community they sought to represent. These representative ideas are emphasized in the EWOC’s speeches included in the following section.

### ***Representation as Motivation to Run***

Although not all of the EWOC shared their reasons for running, those that did expressed their longing to be a representative voice for others. Some expressed a drive motivated by residents who lacked the space to exercise a voice. Many of the EWOC wanted to increase representation in local politics, as Thao (2019) did, by being “the voice for those who don’t have a voice; because I understand what that looks like.” Representative voice was noted as necessary to include those historically forgotten, or as absent in the city’s decision-making practices.

Thornton (2019), espousing a strong sense of service, noted her reason for running as driven by those who continue to be unheard:

I originally said I wanted to run, and it still holds true to me. The 20 years I started in the Air Force, that desire to serve my country, is transferred also to my hometown here in Reno Valley. And I wanted to be a voice for those who didn’t have a voice and to be the person on the dais that’s always thinking about the next steps and how our decisions can positively impact our city.

Similarly, in her victory speech, Wahab (2018) addressed the motivation to run as amplifying the voice of those at the margins:

I ran because I believe that the people of Hayward were struggling and hurting. I've been a resident of Hayward for many years, and even though I wasn't born in Hayward, Hayward belongs to all of us. We all deserve a voice, and that is one of the reasons why I decided to run. I believe that we needed to focus on issues that impact the most marginalized communities, and I plan to do just that.

Wahab (2018) went on to note, "I ran for the veteran on a fixed income that struggled to find a job, the single mother working two jobs just to support her family, and the college students sleeping in their car." For her and several others, being a voice meant representing and serving marginalized communities.

For Fligor (2018), she recalled her decision to run as stirred by a desire to increase engagement, "I shared many specific priorities when I ran and one of them was to increase engagement of young families and I think I can check that off the list because look around." Bringing young families into the city demonstrated increased representative voice. A. Weber (2018) highlighted her leading reason for running as driven by seeing the community for their unique perspectives and the need include those perspectives:

I ran because I wanted to be the voice for the future of La Mesa. I ran so that I can speak for you, so that you would have someone on the council that has a very diverse background than some of the members in the past; and can give a different perspective.

To make sure that everyone's voice is heard here in La Mesa.

On other occasions, being a representative voice meant drawing attention to the lack of access and absence of resources to certain parts of the community. Montgomery (2018) stated:

I ran for this seat because, as a 30-year resident of District 4, I saw that we were lacking so much. I saw buildings going up, but we were not the builders. I experienced a lack of respect and history. A lack of respect for our community and our history. And I saw that we had lost our servant's heart for each other. Now we have a chance to shift the paradigm and we have to work together to get it done. So, while at City Hall, I will fight for social equity. Social equity in the areas of economic justice, police reform, and ensuring that every single neighborhood is healthy and safe. I will fight for the things that we need.

The EWOC expressed a strong desire and motivation to be a representative voice, or to amplify the voices of those who are often politically not at the core of the decisions being made in their local municipalities. They made unique mentions that engagement was a driving force for their decisions to run. Many of the EWOC expressed a longing to be a representative voice to their constituents and to be justice oriented. This, however, was just the beginning of their story. Although representation was noted as a driving force to run for some of the EWOC, the commitment to serve as a representative was also expressed by the EWOC.

### ***Representation as Commitment***

Several EWOC expressed a high level of commitment to represent the community upon their election. Thao (2019) expressed her commitment to representing the community by stating, "And so that's what I've done, is I just want to commit and be that great representative for District 4 and for Oakland as well." Thao (2019) further specified her intent of wanting:

To be a strong representative for everybody, not just the people who voted for me, but for everyone in District 4 because that's what District 4 deserves. And I want to be a strong

representative for the city of Oakland because we are one city, not just a district, we are one city.

The commitment to represent was directly referenced by Thao (2019) and echoed by others.

Formeta (2018) shared her gratitude for the opportunity to represent, “Thank you for believing in me, and over the next 4 years, I look forward to representing our city with integrity.” Similarly, Fligor (2018) noted, “As your council member, I will represent the entire community. All the school communities. North Los Altos, South Los Altos. Young families, seniors, and everyone in between.” Another EWOC, Aguirre (2018), expressed the desire to represent those who have felt unheard: “I look forward to being a voice for all the residents of Imperial Beach, and I especially look forward to being a voice for those who feel they don’t have one.”

Similarly, Bas (2019) articulated several levels of representation. First, the ability to speak out and speak up for her constituents, stating, “So, I’m here to represent you to say enough. No more free passes, no more backroom deals behind closed doors.” Further into her speech, and more specifically, Bas (2019) elaborated as to what it means to represent all the constituents and named the following:

I know that our Black neighbors are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, over-policing, and lack of jobs. I will represent you. I am proud to be Oakland’s first Filipina council member, and I will represent our diverse Asian Pacific American community. I’m the daughter of immigrants, and I will represent our Latinx and immigrant communities. I recognize that we’re on Ohlone land, and I will represent our indigenous communities. We know that Oakland is rich in LGBTQ culture, and I will represent you. We know Oakland is a union town, and I will represent our workers all across the city. Finally, as a parent, I will represent our kids and work to make sure their future is bright.

Representation continued to be a reference by other EWOC as a place of honor and pride.

Gutierrez (2020) stated, “I am definitely a first-time candidate, but it’s such an honor to represent the city I grew up in, and I’m rooted.” In a similar fashion, Beltran (2018) shared, “With that, I tell you that it is the honor to serve and represent my hometown Morgan Hill.” Keng (2018) mirrored the sense of pride expressed by Gutierrez and described the outcome as unimaginable:

As I stood here tonight and got sworn in just now, I am extremely honored and thankful beyond words that you have placed your trust in me to represent our district and our wonderful city. I would not have imagined this is where I would be 28 years ago when I came to the United States as a sophomore in high school.

Lastly, Bas (2019) made clear representation was for everyone: “Oakland for all of us means that I will represent you whether you voted for me or not. We have a mandate for people, power, government.” Representation was a driving force, but at the same time, it was courage that kept many of the EWOC committed to the campaign.

### **Voice With Courage: “At Times My Voice Shook”**

The EWOC’s victory speeches recount their opportunities to speak from a place of courage during their campaigns, particularly when they faced challenges they needed to overcome. One of the ways they were able to do this was by finding their voices and standing up to their fears and risks faced on the campaign trail. As Wahab (2018) stated:

On the campaign trail, I overcame many of my own fears, things that I didn’t really think about until I decided to run. I heard the comments about my race, my age, my capabilities, my values, and much more. At times, my voice shook as I continued to

challenge the status quo. As a challenger, we had every card stacked against us. I was told not to run, to consider a different seat, and to wait my turn.

Partida (2018) had similar experiences, noting, “We always pushed the envelope.” For Frometa (2018), voice required an ability to distinguish between courage and fear: “It often requires more courage to dare to do what is right, than to fear to do wrong.”

Others were inspired by their family to find their courage. Luevanos (2018) shared her inspiration and a continued practice to be courageous as something she learned from her son. In her speech, Luevanos (2018) referred to the role her son played during a contentious city council meeting: “Joey, who inspired me to take a stand that fateful night in June.” As illustrated previously, the courage to persevere was noted by these EWOC, while others continued to demonstrate a commitment to represent intersectional identities. As Partida (2018) boldly stated:

And it’s everybody here on the dais brings their experiences and their realities to this place, and in so doing, their voices for everyone in the community. And so, the voices of women and people of color belong in this room. And I think that me being elected says more about our community than it says about me.

In the EWOC’s victory speeches, the desire for more inclusivity and representation was a recurring sentiment. The importance of inclusion of both the candidate and the community that they sought to represent were noted. Further, inclusion seemed to be the prime motivator for some of the EWOC, as noted in the emerging themes: (a) voice with representation and (b) voice with courage. Whether courage originated from the candidate or someone close to the candidate, it was clear the candidates were relying on a shared vision that accompanied their campaigns.



### **Vision With Community: “Together We Will Build A Future”**

Throughout the EWOCs’ speeches, a story was told about deciding to run for city council and about being bolstered by their support systems during the campaign, all of which brought them to the historic victories of their election. As such, many of the speeches spoke about what comes after this victory. For some EWOC this was a communal vision—a vision with their constituents and for their city.

### **Creating a Vision With Community: “To Create an Agenda Together”**

For many of the EWOC, the visions they presented in their speeches were visions that were created with community—informed by the relationships they built during the campaign. In Soto’s (2018) speech she described the important act of listening to constituents’ stories as instrumental in her victory. Soto (2018) recounted:

During the campaign, we heard people’s stories, struggles, and visions for Santa Maria. We were able to communicate with constituents who hadn’t been spoken to. We listened to their concerns, which can’t be addressed until they are heard. And most importantly, we reminded people that their voices and their votes are powerful and that we can make a difference. And this November made their voices heard.

This notion of coming together during the campaign was a point Wahab (2018) also expressed led to the success of her campaign. She said, “Community members came together for a voice and a vision for all of us, ignoring labels of being seen as an outsider, too young, too progressive, or too radical” (Wahab, 2018). Aguirre (2018) communicated a similar sentiment, noting the commonalities that led to the building community during her campaign:

During these last few months, I had the great pleasure of getting to know our community on a one-on-one basis. Speaking face to face with thousands of our neighbors and the

very core of every single conversation was always a common thread that we all want to live in a safe, healthy, and thriving community.

Ultimately, creating a mutual agenda was the goal for these candidates, which is what Bas (2019) also experienced during her campaign:

Some of you in this room were there, and that was to create an agenda together with you to continue building the grassroots progressive movement infrastructure that emerged during our campaign. I heard from you this weekend, just like I heard from you over the course of the year. Talking with you at your doorstep, talking with you on the phone out in the community, and what I heard is that you love Oakland deeply. This is your home.

These conversations shaped the collaborative visions that some of the EWOC expressed in their speeches.

Other EWOC made similar community connections by centering a collective vision co-created with constituents. Moreno (2018) expressed the vision as a mutual legacy for future generations saying, “Together, we will build a future and a legacy we could be proud to leave to our children and generations to come.” Bhat-Patel (2018) reminded those present of their responsibility in the formulation of the vision, stating, “Everyone here, we’re all part of that change, and we’re all part of that vision, and I’m really excited to be able to work with our team here and with all of you.” Andrade-Stadler (2018) spoke about transparency for her city’s vision: “For now let us wish for Alhambra to be more transparent, more affordable, more accessible, language-rich, responsible, responsive, kid, teen, and millennial-friendly.” She painted a colorful picture of her envisioned city as “veteran-supportive, well-read, poetic, colorful, communicative, fair, balanced, green, inclusive, friendly, immigrant-friendly, clean, compassionate, fresh, and safe” (Andrade-Stadler, 2018).

One facet of connected vision was focused on community success in various ways. The future of the city from generational legacies, economic justice, and access were expressed by several EWOC. For example, as a pathway to success, Montgomery (2018) expressed her version of a brighter future for her city in stating, “If we are not providing pathways for our youth to succeed, then we are not leaving a legacy and creating a brighter future for the next generation.” Moreover, for several of the EWOC the vision meant a strong focus on the economy.

Wahab (2018) shared her economic vision as “housing at all income levels, economic development, and true community engagement to make Hayward a leader for working people.” Aguirre (2018) echoed an economic vision of progress in her version of unity for a better Imperial Beach:

A community where kids can play, where seniors have access to services, where families can enjoy the beach without getting sick. Further, she described an environment where all can live. A community where people aren’t displaced because of the rising cost of living. So, let’s move forward united in our quest to keep improving Imperial Beach.

Wallace-Jones (2018) furthered this by stating, “As we work to accelerate our connection with the broader regional economy, may we aspire to leave no one behind and may we be as smart as we are creative, innovative, understanding, empathetic, compassionate, and accessible to each other.” Tied to the economic future, the topic of access was mentioned in several forms.

For example, Park (2018) expressed her vision of the future of her city in terms of access: “A newer and brighter Buena Park means the local government being accessible to all people, regardless of ethnic or religious background, and also everyone will be treated equally in this newer and brighter Buena Park.” For Montgomery (2018), access without resources were aspects

that were inseparable. Sharing and building on that vision, Montgomery (2018) furthered underscored the victory was just the beginning, “We can celebrate it, but we can’t stay there.” Further, the investment and responsibility the moment carried was emphasized in saying, “Now it is the time for us to reap the benefits of the training and to adopt apprenticeship and earn while you learn programs. We will build and take ownership in our own community” (Montgomery, 2018). The generational, economic, and resource aspects of their vision were tied to the importance of coalitional work. To bring these collaborative visions to life, the EWOC noted an appetite for a continued practice of coalition building.

### **Acting on a Vision With Community: “So, Let’s Move Forward United”**

Many of the EWOC stated the urgency or desire to build future coalitions to enact their visions with the community. This was particularly important for building relationships with the others on the city council and those outside of the council. Basua (2018) shared the following about the need to build coalitions among the city council:

And to my fellow council members, I am looking forward to a great working relationship with each one of you. I do believe in the city, and I do believe that together, we can do great things for the citizens here.

Lopez (2018) expressed a similar longing to work with other council members in stating, “But I am very hopeful that, together with the rest of the council, we will do really great things for the city.” Plascencia (2019) also noted the importance of respect in her vision by building future coalitions with her colleagues in the city council:

We’re not always going to agree, but as Erin [city council member] mentioned, we need to ensure that we are treating all of us, not just us up here, but you all in the city with

respect. And if we listen to one another, we can really put Riverside on the map. So, I'm looking forward to working with all of you, with our city staff.

Wallace-Jones (2018) recounted a vision founded on respect, which included the value of working relationships:

To the current city council and staff, I've appreciated engaging with you as a resident, and I'm looking forward to all that we will achieve in service to this city. May our interactions reflect maturity, integrity, thoughtfulness, respect, decorum, but most of all, commitment to getting the work of the city done and done extraordinarily well.

Martinez-Rubin (2018) also expressed her vision to work with the city council to advance the work with the community by saying, "I look forward to working with everyone together to make this city even better than what it is today." Keng (2018) repeated a similar sentiment: "I am looking forward to working with my fellow council members under the leadership of our wonderful Mayor," and Aguirre (2018) referenced in her goals that "we all love our beautiful little beach town, and we all share the same goal, which is to continue to improve our quality of life. So, let's move forward united in our quest to keep improving Imperial Beach." Finally, the vision with the community included many mentions of working with council members and city staff for many of the EWOC.

The quotes mentioned in this section expressed a longing for an inclusive voice that was representative, and that enacting an inclusive voice was a significant motivation for the EWOC to run for the city council. In other words, a primary reason for these EWOC's candidacies was so they could speak for many who felt they did not have a voice in the local decision making of their communities. Throughout many of the speeches, EWOC's courageous voice shared the challenges many faced and the commitment to persevere. Finally, for the EWOC, the vision they

shared was focused on the community they sought to create and include their involvement during and after their campaign. These coalitions were foundational and highly valued as systems of support for the EWOC.

### **Building With Coalitions: Systems of Support**

During the campaign, many EWOC expressed the support they received enabled them to face the challenges they had while running for city council. In fact, the EWOC often stated the support they received during the campaign was a primary reason they were able to stay committed to their candidacy. For example, Luevanos (2018) had the support necessary to be courageous and engage in her campaign, a sentiment expressed by many other EWOC thanks to the support they received. Furthermore, many of the EWOC expressed a desire to cultivate these systems of support during and after their campaigns. These coalitional efforts were supported by (a) family, (b) diverse coalitions ranging from political organizations to volunteers, and (c) intersectional representation to connect with and create a broader community.

#### **Family Support: “Whenever You Enter Politics, They Enter It as Well”**

For many EWOC, support of the family was equally important to the success of the campaigns. The following section illustrates the various ways EWOC highlighted the importance of family support. Many of the EWOC in this section expressed repeated praise and gratitude in their speeches for immediate family, some noted their children and husbands, others mention extended family, and several repeated their gratitude for their parents in different ways. Aguirre (2018) mentioned family and its role in communities, “Families play such an important role in shaping who we are and is the foundation of any community.” Cortez (2018) mentioned and prioritized the place of the family as first in saying, “So I want to start by thanking my family,

the Cortez family.” This sentiment was similarly echoed by Wallace-Jones (2018): “I’ll begin by thanking the most important earthly vessels in this room, my family.”

The extended family was included in Andrade-Stadler’s (2018) speech, “For our family in Arizona fighting the big fight, Professor O’Leary in Arizona, in Tucson.” Weber (2018) was unique in her perspective of the support of family. Weber (2018) described family as also vicariously running for office in her statement: “I also want to start by thanking my family, whenever you enter politics, they enter it as well,” and described her husband as stepping up during the campaign saying, “I want to start by acknowledging my right-hand man, my husband,” and later in the speech named her children, “My sons Kadir and Jalil, they are my heart. They are the future. They are the reason why I do what I do.” Wallace-Jones (2018) also mentioned her children as inspiration:

And my children who inspire us to draw from our deepest depths to remain focused on improving their quality of life as we keep alive in them the debt of service that we all owe to those who will inhabit this earth long after we’re gone.

Equally, others were naming children or husbands in the celebration of the outcome. “So special thanks to my husband David and our children, William and Sarah, who have been very supportive through the entire process. They’ve been behind me 100%,” said Fligor (2018).

In a similar manner, Thornton (2019) noted her appreciation of her daughter: “I have the best daughter ever, but I am just, this has been a really long month, and I’m just so honored and grateful to be here today.” Thao (2019) expressed the importance of her son’s support in the campaign, stating, “To my family, my son Benedict, here he is. This guy right here, he is why I am here today. He’s my rock.” Andrade-Stadler (2018) described her daughter in thanks by saying, “Ramona, my first mariposa” (translation: butterfly). Montgomery’s (2018) victory

experiences focused partly on the children being prioritized: “And no more leaving our children behind. Today is a new day.” Luevanos (2018) similarly names both her children, “My kids Joey and Jocelyn,” and shares their efforts in the campaign:

Jocelyn was not very supportive of me doing this, but she became my biggest fan over the process of this campaign, and she knocked on doors with me just like Joey did. They walked and knocked and knocked and knocked and canvas and canvas, who has been there to support and has really stepped up and stepped in and filled in during this time of the campaign season.

To the same extent that children were mentioned, husbands were also regarded as one of the primary reasons for their victory.

Aguirre (2018), offering her husband gratitude for his role in the campaign said, “Thank you to the love of my life, my husband Delio Bakalski, for being my best friend and sharing this journey with me.” Likewise, Keng (2018) shared in appreciation and stated, “my husband for recognizing my talents and encouraging me to run.” Wallace-Jones (2018) described her husband: “My husband who anchors us in love, deep humility, and undying commitment to our family,” and “My mother-in-law, my mother-in-love, who holds the pieces of our lives together every day.” Andrade-Stadler (2018) echoed the appreciation with her reference to the strength of her husband’s support, “I wish to simply say thanks to my husband, Joe. My rock, my mountain,” and to when referring to her daughter “My touchstone, my role model.” Basua (2018) applied a similar expression when referring to her partner: “To my husband, my rock, I’m sure I’m not going to be easy to deal with, but thank you,” as did Frometa (2018):

In closing, I do want to thank my husband, who is my pillar and my rock, and my children, who throughout this campaign, I would not stay in here if it wasn’t for you and



for the support that you gave me over the past several, several weeks, that were pretty grueling.

Lee (2018) similarly thanked her husband: “Last but not least, my dear husband Irwin walked around the city to campaign for me tirelessly.”

The importance of family was a common theme among the vast majority of victory speeches demonstrating the love of family and the impact on these women’s outcomes.

Repeatedly, parents were discussed by some EWOC as further contributing to their win.

Luevanos (2018) thanked her parents for fulfilling the American dream:

My parents live the American dream through their five children. They came from Mexico with the dream and the hope that they could have a better future for their children. And tonight, is part of the fulfillment of that dream.

Beltran (2018) mentioned the perseverance of her parents saying, “My parents, Art and Joanne who worked hard and beat the odds to provide my sisters and I a solid foundation on which we could build.” In a similar way, Keng (2018) acknowledged her parents’ role in her education: “I want to thank my parents for the sacrifices they have made. They are not here tonight, but a lot of sacrifices they made to put me through school, through college here.” Similar expressions were used by Aguirre (2018), who stated, “I’d like to thank my parents for working hard and making opportunities for me and my siblings.” Lopez (2018) recounted the support from her parents from the first moment Lopez decided to run for an elected position:

So, I want to thank them and acknowledge them, more than anyone, for their support, from day one, when I first ran for school board, and from the moment that I shared with them that I would be running for city council. There was no doubt in their mind that we could do this.

Wahab (2018) also thanked her parents for their support saying, “I want to especially thank my parents for being supportive.” Gutierrez (2020), in Spanish, highlighted her mother, “Yo quiero agradecer a una mujer que está aquí que es mi madre. Que gracias a ella tengo la fortaleza de tomar esta gran responsabilidad de representar a la comunidad en general, no solamente el Distrito uno.” This translates to: “I want to thank a woman that is here who is my mother. Thanks to her I have the fortitude to take this grand responsibility to represent the community in general not only a district one.”

For many EWOC, family playing an essential role was recognized in many victory speeches. In conjunction with feelings of family appreciation, some EWOC emphasized their husbands and the role played in the campaign. Extended family was also included in their efforts to recognize the family. Finally, parents were regarded in the highest of terms in the speeches. Furthermore, many of the EWOC expressed a desire to cultivate other systems of support during and after their campaigns with broad coalitions.

### **Support With Coalitions: “Many People in This Campaign Took Political Risks”**

As Beltran (2018) recounted:

Many people in this campaign took political risks, took some type of risk, and Cecilia [a supporter who advocated for Beltran during her run] who supported, inspired, and advocated on my behalf is truly somebody who uplifts women, thank you.

Women helping women was, for Sanchez (2019), the foundation of her campaign and mentioned for “every woman that stands in front of you in an elected office, there are many, many, many more women and men that have supported that person. So, I would like to say thank you first of all.” Overcoming the challenges during their campaign required the EWOC continued their

practice of finding their voices and showing their resiliency. However, finding that voice was also possible due to the strong support coalitions they built.

***Support With Diverse Organizational Coalitions: “We Must Build Partnerships”***

The EWOC referenced coalitions built during the campaign. These coalitions were instrumental in supporting the candidacies. Wahab (2018) mentioned coalitions in the speech as a collective win:

It’s not about me. It’s about all of us together. I want to thank the Labor Council to the Building Trades, the Democratic Party, every individual that was a part of this campaign. I really couldn’t have done it without any of you.

Wallace-Jones (2018) recognized her membership in similar organizations that partnered with her campaign: “To my Delta, AKA and Jack and Jill sisters, and many more friends including those who supported me from labor to the Democratic Party.” Montgomery (2018), referring to police departments, noted the necessity of building positive coalitions in stating, “We must build partnerships and shared mutual respect” and “work together to strengthen the relationship with our police officers to keep our community safe with transparency, accountability, and community policing.” Lastly, a few EWOC mentioned other politicians with whom they had built relationships during their campaign. “I want to thank our honorable assembly member, Mr. Bill Quirk, for coming to swear me in. Thank you for your support and guidance,” said Keng (2018). For Wallace-Jones (2018), she gave her appreciation to a previous council member:

Thank you for being such a tremendous supporter of my campaign, for being a great friend, and I know that we will continue to remain close friends, and I know that I will be able to count on you. Thank you for knocking on doors with me.

Similarly, Lopez (2018) thanked both politicians and community to conclude her speech. She said:

But I also want to thank all those community members who stood behind me, my colleagues in the assembly, and Assembly Member Limon, who have provided so much support and encouragement the last couple of months and made today possible.

While some EWOC thanked several elected officials, others chose to thank the coalitions built from the ground up within the community.

***Support With Volunteer Coalitions: “Si se Pudo”***

Adding to the first part of her victory speech about the coalitions that made her campaign persevere, Cortez (2018) stated the following:

Today we have to thank a lot of people, a lot of people that were with us on this journey. It was hard. It was long. But it was so many people supporting us that made it worth it at the end of the day.

For Luevanos (2018), her experience of success was partly due to the coalitions built on a foundation of hope:

I heard a lot of people say that I brought them hope and that I inspired them, and I hope to continue to do that in the next 4 years. And I just want to let you know sí se pudo.

(Translation: yes, we could)

Similarly, other EWOC mentioned the volunteers and teams that contributed to their success.

Wallace-Jones (2018) spoke of her partnership with her collaborators in saying, “To my extraordinary campaign team that woke up every day asking the question, what do we need to do to make a difference in this campaign?” Likewise, Marr (2018) noted the efforts of her group: “I also want to thank the 25 or so hardcore volunteers that were out there for me every

single weekend pounding the pavement.” Lee (2018) commented on the importance of the support of her team, stating, “During my campaign, I realized that no candidates can ever go through this process and get to the finish line while remaining relatively sane without a support team.” Likewise, Wahab (2018) reached out to the constituents asking for a commitment to collaborate in the vision:

And I also want to make it clear that everyone has made it clear that I am just one of seven votes on this council. But I’m now asking the community for support, again.

Because now more than ever, we need to come together.

These coalitions proved to be of the utmost importance to the EWOC, as noted in this section. In much the same way, other EWOC made specific references to the importance of representation as intersectional in terms of building and creating coalitions.

### **Intersectional Representation: “To Connect to That Sense of Community and Belonging”**

Luevanos (2018), thanking her community, relayed the following as both representation and inspiration to the residents: “Who saw fit to elect a working mother, a teacher, a Latina, a cancer survivor, a union leader, all the things that I am and will continue to be as well as the council member.” As another form of representation, building a legacy for others, was also mentioned by the EWOC: “To leave a better legacy that a stay-at-home mom, that a Latina, a first-generation college student could and should be included in the possibility of who we see as a leader” (Beltran, 2018). Along the same lines, Plascencia (2019) made two important points. First, she noted the importance of community: “Without you, I wouldn’t be sitting here today as your first Latina elected” (Plascencia, 2019). Second, she recognized her other intersectional identities: “so as an educator, a mother, a labor member, so thank you to all the labor members

that are here in the house tonight” (Plascencia, 2019). Likewise, with Plascencia (2019), other EWOC also made their declaration of being first.

Partida (2018) shared the impact of her victory by stating she was unaware of the significance of her victory and described her moment as a historic and meaningful triumph for representation as the first alcala (mayor):

I am the first Latinx woman to be voted into city council. I was hoping that Rick Gonzalez was here because he spoke to me, and he said that I am the first alcala, which means mayor, in Davis, since the Spanish-American war, which I thought that counted for something. But why does that matter? It matters because democracy is about representation.

Another notable mention of being the first at something is made by Moreno (2018), who was the “first woman and Latina elected to represent District 8 in decades.” L. Brown (2018), similar to Moreno (2018), mentioned the two ways in which her victory was historic:

It is worthy of mention that I am the first-ever African American to take a seat at this table in the history of Ventura. That says a lot about the City of Ventura moving forward. It cannot also be denied that this will be the first female majority on this council ever as well. These things should be acknowledged, not because they are the reasons why we are here, but simply because they empower others.

Following the historic firsts stated here, two Oakland significant firsts are also mentioned: “I am proud to be Oakland’s first Filipina council member and I will represent our diverse Asian Pacific American community” said Bas (2019), and Thao (2019) declared, “And so although we went through all of that [struggles refugees in the United States] here I am standing today, the first Hmong American woman to be elected to city council in the state of

California.” Although Wahab (2018) did not mention any specifics regarding the historic moment of her election, she alluded to moment as nonetheless important and significant: “Thank you to each and every one of you for coming out tonight and sharing this historical moment, not only for myself but for the larger community.” The EWOC who mentioned their intersectional identities were proud of their social locations and their journey to that seat. There was a sense of honor in the opportunity to be represented by some of the EWOC. These statements of representation as a victorious outcome were followed the risks taken during the campaign. These risks were accompanied by a strong desire to be both accountable and trustworthy to themselves and their communities.

#### **Accountability and Trustworthiness: “No Relationship Without Accountability and Trust”**

Several EWOC expressed their appreciation for the constituents’ trust in their vision and strived to meet the challenge. Marr (2018) shared her commitment to practice honesty during her leadership in stating, “And I think that’s what people want, honesty, in their leaders. And I think that I will sustain myself for the 4 years if I try to be myself and my best self the entire time that I’m here.” Partida (2018) recognized the level of trust that led to her victory:

Then I’d also like to thank all the people that voted for me and trusted in me. Since the election, I have woken up and very keenly felt the weight of that trust. And I will work very diligently to honor that trust that you have placed in me.

Wallace-Jones (2018) described a similar feeling:

Finally, to the great people of East Palo Alto, may the magnitude of your trust never be lost on me. May I wake up every day asking the same question that my team asked me, what do I need to do to make a difference?

The recently elected Martinez (2020) expressed her intention to lead the city through the difficult time of a worldwide pandemic (COVID-19):

I am grateful that you have put your confidence in me to serve and look out for your best interest, and to do so to the best of my ability. I will endeavor to do so with the help of God and all of you. This is a significant and difficult time for our community here in Whittier, but we will carry on performing our duty to those that need help and encourage one another, until we conquer COVID-19, as those in generations past, that have overcome their own great challenges. We must not fight against one another, but rather fight together against fear.

Another EWOC, Montgomery (2018), asked the constituents for their willingness to enter into a working relationship: “I ask you to join me in that work because I can’t do it alone, but I will do all that I can do to make District 4 and the city a better place for all of us.” Montgomery (2018) further accentuated the importance of accountability in this work by saying, “There is no relationship without accountability and trust.” When speaking to the constituents, Martinez-Rubin (2018) emphasized her desire to remain accountable with the help of the community: “You are the ones who elected us to office. Please remain watchful.” And finally, Soto (2018) urged both engagement and accountability by stating, “Please continue to stay engaged, to stay informed, to ask questions, and above all else, hold us accountable.” Accountability was mentioned as integral to the vision of their city for some of the EWOC. Some of the EWOC also emphasized trust and relationships were foundational to fulfilling their visions. Additionally, the responsibility of others in the community in the realization of some of those visions was noted as necessary for a successful outcome. The candidates’ inclusive voice, and the vision that guided



the campaigns, were foundational aspects that manifested in building indispensable systems of support for successful outcomes.

In this chapter, I presented the data analysis of EWOC's city council victory speeches in the state of California, post 2016. The results of the qualitative content analysis were presented. The overall themes that emerged and the motivations to run were salient features in many of the EWOC's speeches. Although support was noted in the majority of speeches, specific mentions of family and coalitions of support were highlighted by some of the EWOC. Lastly, it was evident in the analysis that an equitable and inclusive vision was an indispensable part of many of the EWOC's goals for the future of their city and community.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the speeches of EWOC, first-time, city council winners in California to answer the following research question: In what ways do the victory speeches of EWOC city council, first-time office winners in California inform our understanding of their campaigns and vision for the future of their cities? Forty-eight speeches were acquired for this study. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Bengtsson, 2016). The following sections summarize and discuss the findings outlined in Chapter 4. Lastly, this chapter concludes with the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and the significance of the findings.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study were analyzed using the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014) as the principle guiding framework as discussed in Chapter 2. The sections herein will address the findings as they connect to the three elements of identity formation (who), the political project (why), and the methodology (how) of the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014). The political identity formation (who) of WOC is noted as being both contextual and continuously forming or “becoming” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 25). WOCs’ political identity is not static, but shifts as those aspects change and develop. There is a continued push against visible categorical markers and a move toward seeing the whole person and all the dimensions embodied that are not outwardly visible (SCFCC, 2014). The SCFCC (2014) further noted identity is not a fixed construct, but rather an aspect of how and with whom WOC identify.

The radical political project (why) acknowledges the differences and honors diverse histories of oppression as collective or coalitional (SCFCC, 2014). Guided by a strong sense of community, the feminist of color multidimensional lens incorporates a strong sense of collective

responsibility or accountability to foster and sustain a strong sense of community (SCFCC, 2014). This collective fostering of community is enacted by WOC while reinforcing a commitment to the acknowledgement that differences among groups are both necessary and inherent in society not as a deficit, but as an asset-based perspective.

Lastly, the methodology (how), which is informed by the who and the why, fosters a strong sense of true intersectionality. Intersectionality is used to build coalitions across groups while maintaining accountability. This accountability to self and each other is highlighted and prioritized. The coalitional identity and global connections that are part of intersectionality, according to the feminist of color multidimensional lens, form coalitions to further the work of building the vision of a more just and inclusive community (Combahee River Collective, 2014; SCFCC, 2014).

The results of the study are reflective of this feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014) and showed campaigns, bolstered by robust coalitional support systems, were built with an inclusive voice that created a community vision for the future. Through their victory speeches, the EWOC city council members in the state of California demonstrated the need for representation as the driving force to enter politics. These EWOC also demonstrated a voice of courage as they took many risks and worked against many binds to share their vision for the future of their cities. This inclusive voice and vision was supported by broad coalitions and family that were built through intersectional work. Finally, the EWOC further sustained their support systems through trust and accountability throughout their campaigns. The themes that emerged are listed in the following sections in more detail.

## **Inclusive Voice**

The EWOC used their voices to amplify their strong desire for a more inclusive community. For many of the EWOC, the inclusion or election into the city council meant integrating diverse communities that have been largely prevented from participating at an elected level. For some, the notion of representative democracy was a driving force to run. For others, the strong sense of representation motivated them to take the risk of running and ultimately prevail.

## **Voice of Representation**

With the goal of having more inclusive representation in local government, the EWOC spoke about representing the local communities historically alienated from the political process and decision making (Hajnal & Truionstine, 2005). First, the EWOC expressed they felt underrepresented in their cities and therefore compelled to run. The gap in representation was a point in some of the EWOCs' speeches, noting that although the cities were diverse, the representation did not reflect the reality of their city's makeup. A strong aspect of voice of representation manifested in discussions on representing the whole person. Their identity is a political identity of the whole person, which was mentioned by some EWOC in terms of their desire to run for office to represent others who were often forgotten or continued to be underrepresented. Although lacking representation of the whole person was often noted, some of the EWOC specifically prioritized race and gender for part of that gap. Although mentions of race and gender does not necessarily reference the whole person, it was significant for some of the EWOC because city council seats have historically been largely dominated by white males (CAWP, 2019; Conway, 2001; Dittmar et al., 2018; Dolan & Hanson, 2018; Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2019).

The feminist of color multidimensional lens highlighted the identity formation of WOC (SCFCC, 2014). Primarily, this identity is a political identity of the whole person as noted in many of the EWOC's speeches. The intersectional and coalitional work of the feminist of color multidimensional lens focuses on the whole person, and the political identity that is greater than "raceclassgender" (SCFCC, 2014, p. 32) limitations to avoid leaving some anyone behind. The intersectional work of WOC moves away from a type of essentialism and toward honoring diverse histories and context, which can differ from the U.S. racial, political identification, at the same time that it recognizes the connections of similar power structures globally shaped by heteropatriarchy, capitalism, racism, and colonialism (SCFCC, 2014). From the findings, an intentional and strategic challenge of the status quo and questions of racism and sexism were some of the aspects weaved into the speeches of the EWOC. The mentioning such structures was a type of recognition of how local government is also shaped by the same structures of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, racism, and colonialism. The voicing of such statements on race, gender, and power structures underscored the political identity of some of the EWOC in this study.

As noted previously, gender underrepresentation was a topic brought up by many EWOC. Interestingly, gender is constructed by "interlocking" (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 326) and "cross-cutting system of inequalities" (Mezey, 2005, p. 47) like sexism and racism that impact women and men. These inequalities have impacted the presence of WOC in local government (CAWP, 2019). Additionally, researchers have confirmed this gap in representation, reporting although women comprise 51% of the population, they continued to be severely underrepresented (Dolan & Hanson, 2018). The gender representation gap is more palpable for WOC (CAWP, 2019; Dittmar et al., 2018; Frederick, 2014; Lawless & Pearson, 2008). A point

can be made that partly because of the gap in representation, these EWOC took the risk of running for office as a way to increase the diversity of the council to reflect the communities of their cities. For some of the EWOC, a motivation to run was directly linked to the challenge of the status quo and it was noted in the subtheme *voice of courage*.

### **Voice of Courage**

The decision to run for office was noted by some of the EWOC as a courageous act. For some EWOC there were aspects of running for office that challenged them, such as losing, being open to personal attacks, the potential decline in physical and emotional stamina, and the unpredictability of support. The women mentioned they carefully considered these challenges and evaluated them strategically. Further, EWOC exemplified the courage of running for office even when faced with situational familial challenges, like caretaking responsibilities, among others. In this study, many of the EWOC spoke about their fears, their courage to push the boundaries, and the continued courage to see the campaign to the end, ultimately leading to a victory. The EWOC continued to speak with courage even with all these barriers they faced. During the victory speeches, some recounted the fear they felt, but even if their voice shook, they spoke courageously about the issues impacting the whole community. For these EWOC, the voice of courage was an attempt to push back on the continued hoarding of power in local offices by a select few. Some EWOC spoke loudly about those who were often marked as having less worth than others, those limited access to economic or political capital, and those who deserved to be part of the process of local government and the decisions that impact its citizens.

The SCFCC (2014) feminist of color multidimensional lens noted WOC have chosen to align with those who have felt underrepresented as part of their identity formation that is both continuously constructed and dependent of context. Additionally, the WOC political identity

includes those communities that surround the individual. Coinciding with the SCFCC (2014) feminist of color multidimensional lens, some of the EWOC recognized and spoke courageously about the struggles of others at the margins and advocated for true collective representation. As the voice of courage, the EWOC, themselves, decided to speak with and for others, who some noted lacked political capital, had been disenfranchised, or whose issues often were erased from the agendas of local politics. The action of running for office proved to be courageous for these EWOC candidates. This courageous act ultimately proved worth the risk as they won the city council position. This coalitional identity of some of the EWOC exemplified the connection and acknowledgement of a collective well-being, as noted by the SCFCC (2014). Interestingly, this courageous voice has been noted by scholars as a form of risk-taking behavior, pushing boundaries against the interlocking inequalities, and working through multiple binds present in the lives of women, as seen in the literature to follow.

In the fourth theme of multiracial feminism as described in Chapter 2, Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) noted women were able to act independently and assert their power despite the effects of a system that they saw continued to constrain women. Additionally, Baca Zinn and Dill (1996) highlighted women historically have “resisted and often undermined the forces of power that control them” (p. 328) such as racial oppression, which impact WOC disproportionately. This resistance is labeled as “dynamic of oppositional agency” (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 328), and is where multiracial feminism “explores the interplay of social structures and women’s agency” (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 328). It is also an act of courage in the face of local politics, exemplified by many of the EWOC in this study. For these EWOC, running for office and speaking with a voice of courage demonstrated the power Baca Zinn and Dill described. Another specific characteristic of multiracial feminism mentioned by the EWOC was risk taking, and risk

taking has also been noted by researchers as being present in women running in city council elections (Rombough & Keithly, 2010).

### ***Risk Taking***

Rombough and Keithly (2010) described one of the risk-taking traits as the ability to triumph over personal attacks, which many of the EWOC recounted in their speeches. First, for several EWOC, a risk-taking behavior was speaking out about the disproportionate impacts of underrepresentation in their city and those that continued to be adversely impacted. The EWOC noted such platforms are often strategically avoided to refrain from sacrificing votes. Second, the EWOC exemplified risk taking with the mere act of running for office as they were seen as nontraditional candidates or faced the situational challenges noted previously. Additionally, some situational challenges mentioned by several EWOC were balancing work, dealing with a lack of resources, and personal care. Third, even with all the hurdles faced, the EWOC took risks by pressing for a more equitable and representative city council, which challenged the status quo.

Researchers have noted women who run for office are more likely to carefully consider an array of factors that impact their family, household, careers, and often require repeated encouragement to run for office compared to men (Fox & Lawless, 2004). These considerations faced by women candidates stemmed from the continued family and career expectations, as many women manage dual roles that often dissuade women from running (Fox & Lawless, 2004). This, however, was not the case for these EWOC. In this study, many of the EWOC spoke about their fears, their courage to push the boundaries, and the continued courage to see the campaign through to the end, ultimately leading to a victory. Adding to the challenges already mentioned, the EWOC faced additional trials that required further courage and risks to overcome



as they experienced the interlocking inequalities of race and gender in their candidacy during their campaign.

### ***Interlocking Inequalities***

Many of the EWOC in this study were overt about their experience with sexism and racism. The EWOC did not move away from the topic, but instead spoke freely and courageously about the reality of their candidacy in city politics. For these EWOC, the political identity encompassed the realities of inequalities and racialization experienced by WOC. For many EWOC, it was an active choice to work toward exceeding these types of categories, focusing on relationships and moving away from the “I” to the “We,” which aligned with the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014).

Additionally, researchers noted in the first theme of multiracial feminism that interlocking inequalities impact WOC (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996). Those inequalities are, for example, experienced because of how race, class, and sexuality are scrutinized for some and embedded in society (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996; Collins, 2000; Mezey, 2005). Institutions such as schools and government continue to perpetuate the system-wide practice of oppression, lack of access, and inequality. For example, there remains a continued concentration of white men who comprise of 30% of the population and yet control 62% of elected positions (CAWP, 2019; Collins, 2000; Conway, 2001; Dittmar et al., 2018; Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2019). The interlocking inequality of gender as experienced in conjunction with race, class, and sexuality are present in the lives of many WOC, but unfaced by others (e.g., white males).

Those “interlocking” (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 326), “cross-cutting systems of inequality” (Mezey, 2005, p. 47), or “matrix of domination” (Collins, 2000, p. 227) are descriptions of systemwide, oppressive practices experienced by WOC. These practices are

overtly present in the lives of WOC and present for some of the EWOC in this study. The EWOC mentioned they were scrutinized about their abilities or eligibility during their campaign because of the interlocking inequalities of their race, age, gender, or identity. The awareness of such inequalities was noted in their speeches and shared as part of their experience as first-time candidates.

The intentional mention of racial and gender categories by some of the EWOC demonstrated it was not only a reality, but a necessary presence that needed to be documented and named to help uplift others, and to highlight the notion of a representative democracy, which was not for the few but the many. During some of the victory speeches, mentions of categories highlighted those interlocking inequalities to the broader public. These particular categories were also noted as historically and systematically prohibited from accessing these city council seats. Much like the interlocking inequalities, double binds exist for women in leadership positions, and were evident in the speeches of many of the EWOC.

### ***Double Binds***

Researchers noted the double binds experienced by women in higher leadership positions were particularly problematic when those positions required difficult decision making (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). These binds are often experienced by women who enact particular behaviors attributed to male qualities (e.g., assertiveness) and are judged unfairly (Bierema, 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Lyness & Heilman, 2006). For some EWOC, these binds were more evident as they expressed their realities of being questioned about their identities with respect to their race, age, capabilities, values, or ability to be effective council members. This scrutiny was experienced by some of the EWOC who were better prepared and had higher educational attainment than those in past and present council seats. Many of the binds were not the only unjust demands faced by

many of these EWOC. The reality of double disadvantages were also present in the campaigns of many EWOC and expressed in their speeches.

### ***Double Disadvantage***

The double disadvantage is a term Clayton (2003) used to describe many WOCs' realities when running for office. Clayton noted WOC experience race and gender bias and continue to experience the hardships of being seen as viable or electable candidates, in addition to encountering the barriers of success with what some label the concrete ceiling, bamboo ceiling, or adobe ceiling (Bowleg, 2008; Sanchez-Hueles & Davis, 2010; Zia, 1993). The EWOC in this study experienced many of these barriers, and some additional ones in terms of their work performance. As newly elected council members, many acknowledge their positionality and the reality of the higher standards that would likely be imposed on their performance. These perceived demands prompted some EWOC to highlight their promise or commitments to working harder in their new role. A point that has been noted in the literature regarding overall performance evaluations of women aspiring to leadership positions (Bierema, 2016; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Some EWOC mentioned their diverse identities as a mother, parent, single mother, first-generation student, educator, teacher, labor member, union leader, cancer survivor, daughter of refugees, and immigrants' daughter. These mentions, along with being the "first," were stated as strengths of perspective regardless of the double disadvantage inherent in some of these gendered identities (Clayton, 2003). The EWOC made these statements to show they represented others in these spaces, while at the same time they were aware of their "paradoxical positions" of being minoritized both in terms of race and gender (Lien, 2015).

The EWOC in this study demonstrated they spoke with a voice of courage and knew the risks, but still decided to run for office. Confronting interlocking inequalities that continue to exist in government associated with the positionality of their race and gender, among others, the EWOC faced their challenges head-on. Regardless of the double binds and double disadvantages that met them along the way, the EWOC showed their strong voice of representation and courage, led by their strong belief in their vision for their city's future.

### **Creating a Vision With Community**

The findings confirmed many of the EWOC continued to share a vision for their community's collective future. Many of the EWOC articulated a vision as means to activate their constituents with statements like "we are all part of that vision," "we can do this," or "we will do this." These visions for their city were also noted in their speeches as dependent on the co-enactment with others. For many of the EWOC, their vision was part of the story of why they ran and as a means to motivate others. Additionally, some of the EWOC's vision was projected by highlighting the multiple perspectives they saw as necessary for the future of their city and as a means to incorporate others. As noted previously, this is the why or the radical political project of the feminist of the color multidimensional lens.

In support of the ideas in the radical political project (SCFCC, 2014), the EWOC in this study felt a strong sense of community and were motivated to run as part of their vision to create lasting communities. According to the feminist of color multidimensional lens, WOC "reflect a multiplicity of perspectives" (SCFCC, 2014, p. 30) as tied to third world anticolonial movements, and this was seen in the data as well. Some of the EWOC were motivated by such multiplicity of perspectives as noted in their city's vision. This is the why of WOC political identity, which guides collective work and collaborative vision. Such a vision was noted in the

speeches in calling for coalitions and diverse perspectives as essential aspects that needed to be incorporated into the city council. Additionally, the radical political project is a type of leadership style shared by the EWOC.

This type of leadership, as described in their speeches, reflected power with and not over people. Such a characteristic is what Burns (1973) described as a transformational leader. Many of the EWOC behaved in transformational ways, but their success depended on their ability to inspire others to believe in the vision. Likewise, leaders who regularly connect with their followers embody transformational qualities (Lowe et al., 1996). Many of the EWOC in the study referenced their daily contact with both volunteers and the constituents. For many, the interaction was both life-changing and garnered further support. For many candidates, the campaign proved to be challenging at times, as noted in previous sections. The EWOC mentioned their ability to recognize and face those challenges. Many indicated they were self-aware and mentioned the ongoing work of staying motivated. Mandell and Pherwani (2003) noted transformational leaders possess this type of awareness known as emotional intelligence, an essential practice in transformational leadership, which was another possible reason why many of the EWOC were triumphant in their campaign. Additionally, many of the EWOC expressed their love of the city, the people in the city, and voiced sincere compassion for the marginalized. These expressions were embedded in the visions to break down the disconnect between the residents' personal and political lives.

For many of the EWOC, their speeches were reflective of a compassionate leadership style. It is interesting to note research like Eagly et al. (2003) referenced women being compassionate and supportive led to lower performance evaluations. Being evaluated as less effective in a leadership role than men was partly due to the perception women were unable to

make difficult decisions (Eagly et al., 2003). However, for these EWOC, compassion and supportive characteristics were essential and one of the most influential aspects of their campaign. Likewise, the EWOC made difficult choices when running for office and vowed to be both compassionate and effective in their new role. The ability to exercise fluid leadership roles is another aspect many of the EWOC demonstrated in their visions.

The EWOC expressed their willingness to face the difficult issues in their city while maintaining their connection and compassion, a quality noted as androgyny leadership by Asplund (1988). This androgyny leadership characteristic presses against rigid gender roles where males are those who can make difficult choices and females are the caretakers. Many EWOC included in their speeches that they cared for their neighbors, houses, businesses, and other issues that were part of their platform to represent. The victory speeches of EWOC city council members in California demonstrated representation was the driving force to enter politics.

The EWOC further exemplified the voice of courage and a strong vision with the broader community. The mention of the community was a prominent topic of most of the speeches. Many of the EWOC described their ability to supersede many challenges thanks to the support of broad coalitions, including their family and the intersectional representation, as building both coalitional and collaborative accountability with the broader community noted in the section to follow.

### **Building With Coalitions: Systems of Support**

The findings demonstrated the success of these EWOC was intertwined with the support from the community and family. Families were noted as instrumental in the success of these EWOC. Some of the EWOC mentioned their husbands, who were highly regarded in the

speeches, countering gender role expectations. Some of the husbands were described as caretakers, sounding boards, and the cohesion needed during the campaign. The role of the EWOC and their husbands, for example, were noted by some EWOC as breaking away from stereotypes. For many EWOC, the intersectional representation was an enactment to further build coalitions while maintaining a strong commitment to accountability and trustworthiness during their campaign and once in office. These aspects of coalitional building were noted as indispensable to both the candidates and the campaign.

### **Family Support**

The EWOC of this study demonstrated although they had household responsibilities, children, and careers, they ran for office, nonetheless. One possible reason they could run was the role or support of family during the campaign. In fact, many EWOC referred purposefully to their husbands as rocks, pillars, anchors, and the family's overall foundation. Additionally, in many of the speeches, children were highly regarded and mentioned. Some EWOC even noted their children motivated or inspired them to run, while others said they did so to set an example for their children. Once more, many of the EWOC in this study were teachers, labor leaders, stay-at-home moms, and single mothers, to name a few. These roles helped foster the coalitional and constituent reach of the candidates.

The feminist of color multidimensional lens outlines how WOC challenge power and norms as a means to interrogate “the colonial/modern gender system or the coloniality of gender” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 30). Another key element of the feminist of color multidimensional lens noted the pushing of power and norms was part of the political identity of WOC, which was evident in the mentions of the reverse gender roles of husbands as the family caretakers and supporters (SCFCC, 2014). For some EWOC, the reverse gender roles was highlighted and statements

confirming the challenging of gender roles were overtly emphasized. The pushing of such norms was also mentioned as rejecting the traditional candidate and spouse roles. Living with their supportive husbands or partners proved to be a motivation to run even amid the multiple roles of many of the EWOC who were mothers, teachers, leaders, daughters, caretakers, and/or professionals.

Interestingly, aspects of research like Fox and Lawless' (2004) indicated women who lived with their partners or spouses were 7 times more likely to be responsible for the household and childcare responsibilities known as "second shift" (p. 270). Research has indicated women with children tend to have lower ambitions to run for office (Foulton et al., 2006); however, many EWOC in this study spoke about their children encouraging them to run, supporting their candidacy, and contributing to their campaign. The success of the EWOC indicates the political pipeline that has been dominated by politically connected, white men (Foulton et al., 2006) may have been significantly interrupted during this cycle. Additionally, women who continue to balance the many responsibilities of family life were said to be deterred from careers that directly fed into political office (e.g., attorney; Foulton et al., 2006). Therefore, this study, unlike Foulton et al. (2006), demonstrated women with children did not have lower aspirations to run for office, and many candidates with diverse backgrounds decided to run for office. Since 2016, there has been an increase in political participation, which could be one reason why more WOC decided to run (CAWP, 2019). In other words, women have been more engaged post the 2016 election. Some EWOC also expressed the role of their involvement as children being civically engaged and parents who were role models of engagement.



## **Support Coalitions**

For the EWOC in this study, the coalitions built during the campaign across communities and demographics provided the foundation for the campaigns. The EWOC expressed gratitude for the support they received from political and organizational groups, volunteers, and communities that were cross generational and politically active. The support was an indication that the EWOC felt encouraged in the work, and the collaboration with these coalitions was highly dependent for their victory.

Volunteers were often acknowledged and highly praised for their efforts, commitment, and work during the campaign. Many of the EWOC noted they had teams or groups of dedicated members of the community who believed in their candidacy and supported their collaborative vision. Some of the EWOC also referred to the volunteers as family. Immense and repeated gratitude to voters was also mentioned by the majority of the EWOC. Some of the EWOC thanked the voters for their faith in casting a vote and the believed in their candidacy. Other EWOC noted their campaign inspired voter turnout and increased first-time voters.

Another interesting aspect of identification was the support of political parties mentioned by a few of the candidates as other types of coalitions. City council positions are designed to be nonpartisan; yet, party identification was a choice made by some of the EWOC when speaking about their platform. Interestingly, the vast majority of EWOC were registered as democrats (see Table 3), with more running than any other registration. The democratic party was the only one mentioned in some of the speeches and was noted as an organization that fostered coalitions of support with their members for some EWOC. Along with political party support, volunteers were also praised as foundational in the majority of the campaigns.

Women who grew up in cities that encouraged engagement from the community, had a higher likelihood of running for office (Fox & Lawless, 2004). Adding to engagement, the change in political affiliation has been observed to be directly attributed to men and women leaving a party to “seek the best representation of their gendered racial identity from political parties” (Ondercin, 2017, p. 749), feeling more supported by one party over the other. For some EWOC, it is interesting to note only one political party was mentioned in speeches, the democratic party, even though city council races are nonpartisan and the party registration was democrat heavy.

The ability of the EWOC to create these communities where individuals felt as committed as the candidate could also be an indication the candidate embodied communal qualities. Communal roles are described as a high degree of concern for others and largely attributed to women (Eagly, 1983; Eagly & Carli, 2003). Some EWOC used the metaphor of home when referring to the city council as another possible use of community centered qualities. Several EWOC even invited the community into their home in their speeches. Additionally, the voter’s engagement was mentioned in some of the speeches and directly tied their campaigns. Their gratitude to voters was mentioned by many of the EWOC. Some of the EWOC thanked the voters for their faith in casting a vote. Others noted their campaign inspired many who had never voted prior. Hanjnal and Trounstine (2005) noted the importance of minority turnout on down-ballot races and the importance at the local level. Perhaps minority voter turnout post 2016 is one possibility for the success of these EWOC, particularly for the democratic party at local city council elections in California.

In the framework of the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014), it was noted feminists of color in the United States analyze inequities and the power relations across

geopolitics (e.g., geographical, political spaces) as ways of connecting with others at the margins and simultaneously consider the intersections of those connections that push further than race, class, and gender, alone, to build coalitions of support (Combahee River Collective, 2014). The feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014) noted building coalitions for collaboration was key for WOC. This coalition approach as a methodology aligns with many of the EWOC whose visions of their cities expressed aspirational, coalitional, collaborative, and accountable work—more of which will be discussed in later sections. As noted in the findings previously, the strong support and emphasis on coalition building were significant aspects of the methodology of WOC and were present in many of their speeches through an intersectional, representative voice.

### **Intersectional Representation**

Many EWOC voiced their intersectional identities as a form of representation in their victory speeches. Some EWOC made mention of the historical moment of their election as the “first” by acknowledging their race and gender identification. Similarly, other EWOC enacted their identity as coalitional throughout their speeches by mentioning the importance of collaboration and coalitions in their community and government, while at the same time reminding those present about the importance of a representative democracy. Additionally, declarations that both women and people of color were needed in the city council was emphasized by several EWOC. One example is a declaration by an EWOC highlighting the new (and first in the city’s history) all-female city council.

Furthermore, some EWOC noted their connection to their constituents and broader global community by, for example, publicly sharing the family’s refugee story. The centering of race by some EWOC further indicated the consciousness of intersectional, coalitional identities and

many spoke with an intersectional voice of representation as a means to enact their visions. Further, as noted by the feminist of color multidimensional lens, the mention of racial identity serves to highlight “why these categories exist and how they dynamically adapt to devalue histories, reduce heritages, and keep people apart and disoriented” (SCFCC, 2014, p. 26). Many EWOC mentioned their race and gender intersections as categories, and theorists using the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCCFC, 2014) interpret this type of label as more of a mainstream concept of intersectionality. It is also worth mentioning that such a label can be seen as part of WOC’s developing political identity and used by some EWOC as opportunities for collaboration across “social positions, identity-formations, national allegiances, and lived experiences” (SCCFC, 2014, p. 32) and coalition building. In other words, WOC’s political identity is ever-developing.

The intersectional representation put forth by many of the EWOC noted in Chapter 4, were consistent with the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014) in that their stories served to explain what the EWOC meant by being the *first* or being an *immigrant*, for example. In other words, their election served as a step in closing the gap often imposed by electoral politics. Several of the EWOC also identified their intersections as an act of solidarity with others who exist at the margins of their city’s agendas. Although the racial categories were mentioned in some of the speeches, it was evident that it was less about how each was categorized and more about how each of those EWOC were willing to join others in their journey of being represented in their local municipalities (e.g., I represent you). These statements align and are influenced by the who and the why, according to the SCFCC (2014). Adding further to the how, is the high degree of accountability and trustworthiness that is placed and emphasized in the feminist of color multidimensional lens (SCFCC, 2014).

## **Accountability and Trustworthiness**

Self-accountability and the accountability of others was noted in many of the victory speeches. This type of accountability was made as promises to the constituents. Some of the speeches of the EWOC asked the community at large to engage in holding them accountable through dialogue and engagement. Many of the EWOC spoke to being held accountable in their decisions and inclusion of the community in the process. In some of the speeches, the EWOC expressed gratitude to the constituent who demonstrated their trust by casting a vote for the candidate and in return promised to be a trustworthy leader. Both accountability and trust were intertwined in the messages of the elected during their victory speech. The level of accountability and trust expressed by many of the EWOC exemplified the acknowledgement of the privileged position they would occupy as a city council member. Finally, for some it was a further call for collective accountability rooted in the wellbeing of the community's future.

The collective accountability of WOC is noted as a methodological approach rooted against the systems that continue to divide and oppress communities (SCFCC, 2014). Through accountability, WOC practice what the SCFCC (2014) terms “anthologizing” (p. 32) or the sharing of knowledge produced in conjunction with experience gained. This type of accountability is one way to mend the divisions that have historically erased many disenfranchised voices in the community. The political experience of these EWOC will no doubt contribute as a way to foster connections in the future with others who have also felt underrepresented and erased in their communities. This methodology or enactment is part of the ongoing work for EWOC and fosters high expectations and accountability for WOC, generally, to one another and to the larger global community (SCFCC, 2014).

Baca Zinn and Dill (1996), in their sixth and final theme of multiracial feminism, noted the importance of anthologizing, as mentioned previously, or “[bringing] together understandings drawn from the lived experiences of diverse and continuously changing groups of women” (p. 328), especially WOC. Furthermore, higher expectations and accountability have been seen to impact WOC in leadership roles, and WOC in the electoral process continue to be held to higher standards and societal expectations (Bowleg, 2008; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Zia, 1993). Reviewing the election results of the 2000 congressional race in Louisville, Kentucky’s third district, Clayton (2003) noted the continued racial and gender bias in the U.S. electoral process. Clayton acknowledged, in the case of this election, Black female candidates continued to struggle with being seen as politically viable candidates. Much of this can be attributed to the segregation of such communities from the electoral process and as a consequence of lacking political capital. The level of accountability for WOC in elected positions is a double bind, as noted previously, where “women of color may be perceived as powerful by virtue of their positions as lawmakers, yet the intersection of race and gender within legislatures may produce marginalization that is not experienced by either men of color or white” (Lien, 2015, p. 245).

Ultimately, this study reviewed the victory speeches of EWOC, first-time city council office winners in California, to inform our understanding of their campaigns and visions for their cities’ future. The results showed EWOC spoke with an inclusive voice to reinforce the need for a more equitable and representative city council, and this voice was a leading motivator for many to run for office. The EWOC challenged the status quo and took many personal risks during their campaign, but they persevered, nonetheless. Additionally, the EWOC in this study shared a vision that described their future college and representative cities that resonated with others in the community. The findings conveyed EWOC spoke about the interdependence of support

systems, coalitions, and family. The EWOC maintained a strong sense of trust and accountability with their constituents, noting their honor to represent their community.

### **Applications and Implications**

These findings raise several potential applications across disciplines. First, those who engage in civic engagement education could find utility in listening to WOC in local politics. Much of what was shared in the victory speeches highlighted the need to get involved, the need to be represented, and the acknowledgment local politics must reflect the cities' demographic makeup. For many students, this is an opportunity to see leaders in their local government interact with the city council members, and to have role models who represent their intersectionality, potentially creating more civic engagement. Increasing civic engagement and fostering relationships from an early age may help with the shortage of WOC candidates running for office.

In addition to civic engagement education, increasing participation in local organizing could help students feel more confident to enter local politics. Grassroots, local organizing was heavily referenced by many EWOC when speaking of the committed volunteers and coalitions. Many EWOC referenced their campaign's challenges in terms of time commitment, physical and emotional labor, and daily commitment to the work. All these statements were followed with some variation of the organizing that took place to accomplish and exceed goals. For local campaigns, grassroots organizing is a strong factor for access and success. This study is an example of the outcome of grassroots organizing coming together with strong leadership qualities.

Lastly, in terms of leadership studies, this research could be applied to local leadership training for women, first-time, office seekers, with a focus on WOC. Studies could focus on

WOC's stories and their insight into the understanding of the multidimensional aspects of race, gender, and sexuality within leadership. Leadership studies can be broad, and local politics provide a context-rich opportunity to create practice-oriented curriculums centering WOC voices and the values of collaboration and intersectionality for educational, political, and gender studies programs from precollege to university. This subject matter can also reach nonacademic institutions working with young women, such as nonprofits and organizations. Local politics furnish opportunities to combine theory and practice for hands-on experience. The study is rich in potential, and at the same time, is not without some limitations.

### **Limitations**

This study, as with any study, had some limitations that must be discussed. One immediate limitation was the time and context of the speeches. The context, or the swearing-in ceremonies at the city council, could have hampered the way that some EWOC expressed themselves. Also, time could have been a factor. With the exception of a few candidates, the majority seemed to be cognizant of a time limitation and kept their speeches short. One possible reason for the brevity of many speeches was the meeting length itself. The majority of the city council meetings were longer than most throughout the year, combining two meetings in one. The last meeting of the year was held with all of the outgoing city council members who either lost the election or were termed out. Following that meeting, the oath of office for the newly elected council members was administered, and an additional meeting immediately followed in the majority of the videos.

A second limitation is qualitative content analysis has been argued to be abstract (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017) and include a variety of labels (e.g., a process, spiral, low level to high level, a recursive process, hermeneutic loop, and nonlinear process). It was procedurally



challenging to isolate one way to reference understanding in the speeches (e.g., Bengtsson, 2016; Morgan, 1993; Schilling, 2006; Vaismoradi et al., 2013; White & Marsh, 2006) and organize the study. The method is purposefully not a “pattern cutter at a textile factory” (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 93) and known for the flexibility it offers researchers. Ironically, it is both the challenge and strength of the method. Although Bengtsson (2016) provided step-by-step suggestions, it became increasingly frustrating to filter down the data to themes and ultimately reach a point of saturation in this study. Member checking will be discussed later in a section on future research; however, the design of this study did not include interviews of the EWOC, so I was unable to confirm the analysis with the EWOC. The interviews may have provided an added layer of confirmation in terms of member checking. The speeches provided plenty of content, yet there were questions of meaning that arose. As a researcher, I was unable to confirm my analysis with the EWOC, which was somewhat limiting. However, this limitation provides a good opportunity for additional, future research.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

This research reviewed the victory speeches of EWOC, first-time, city council, office winners in California to inform our understanding of their campaigns and visions for the future of their cities. The results showed the EWOC spoke with an inclusive voice and used their voice to prioritize representation. The EWOC were courageous in speaking up and built an intentional network of support, heavily relying on familial support. These results were valuable, and the work is worthy of future research.

First, a more in-depth review of why these women choose to run and their personal stories are worth exploring through participant interviews. A study where the interviewer seeks to understand further the experiences of the EWOC running and winning their elections might

examine: What propelled these EWOC into this leadership role (e.g., was it a moment, a movement, a strategy, or organic)?, Does EWOC educational level influence their run and win?, Were EWOC educationally better prepared?, and Are EWOC expected to be better prepared? Although encompassing the State of California for this study provided a rich group for analysis, it may be worth focusing on a few EWOC focusing on their story and context.

Second, including at-large and districting history of the cities may provide data more specific to the makeup of the city in comparison to the elected council members. If they continue to stay at large, what is the rationale? Did the city transition to district elections, and why? Was the transition forced to move or a voluntary decision? The demographics of the city should be collected. Lastly, although the city council is defined as nonpartisan, what is the historical partisanship makeup of the city council?

Another aspect of an in-context design could research both the finances and demographics of the campaigns in each EWOC's campaign compared to the opponents and incumbents. Did the candidates outraise their opponents? What does the campaign contribution disclosure tell us about coalitions? An exploration into the other candidates listed on the ballot would be worth an investigation, mainly if there were many or few running on the ticket. These areas are particularly crucial for the first time, WOC representing a particular group (e.g., Latina) elected to the city council.

A longitudinal study could be conducted to follow-up on each of the EWOC. Generally, city council members have a 4-year term, unless appointed or winning a special election to finish the remainder of someone else's term. The potential to follow-up in the near future for many EWOC from 2016 is prime for 2020. Future research should investigate these EWOC's stories and review the work performed during their term. It would be interesting to find out if the

EWOC were able to fulfill their vision, and to what extent. Did the EWOC maintain their coalitions, or build new coalitions? Finally, did the EWOC form the relationship they referenced in their speeches to their city? Although many EWOC expressed their visions for the city during their campaigns and in their speeches, the reality may have looked different once they entered the city council.

Another area of future research is the makeup of the volunteers, teams, and others essential individuals in their campaigns. First, many of the women expressed immense gratitude for their spouses. How did the race affect their partners or spouses, and what was their role in the campaign? Following the partners, an in-depth review of the volunteers and why they committed to the campaign or candidate is worth investigating. This investigation of teams should differentiate paid teams versus volunteer teams. Many volunteers were mentioned with sentiments of gratitude; however, the speeches did not give us meaningful indications of the sacrifice, commitment, and drive of these volunteers. This line of future research could give us an indication of the outcomes of authentic grassroots campaigns.

This study was rich with data and contributed further to WOC in leadership, particularly politics, and it would also benefit from future research. Although some limitations in time and context were noted, along with design limitations, the study offers a foundation on which others can build. The potential to contribute to literature, enhancing the future that is available for EWOC, is expansive. WOC in leadership positions, primary local politics, is an area that will continue to see a significant change in many cities. Equally important are the researchers who explore these topics. It is my hope more WOC continue to lead in researching these fields that demand an intersectional lens.

## Significance of the Study

A new face of politics continues to be challenged at local levels, and this research aimed to amplify the voices of EWOC city council members. With the increase in diversity of U.S. demographics nationwide, the government must reflect those communities at all levels. Words can change the world. Focusing on how WOC use their voices to convey their experience in this particular context is essential to the development of leadership in our schools, communities, government, and families. We continue to build on the work of many WOC leaders who paved the road for the work we are taking on today, and who during their time were sharing the power of their story in political spaces.

Many academics have been inspired to contribute to this area of research by the work of Sojourner Truth who spoke about the experiences of WOC and challenged the patriarchy and white supremacy in her speech “Ain’t I a Woman?” in 1883. As well as by Anna J. Cooper who many years later continued to argue for the voices of WOC to be included, already echoing the intersectionality of gender, race, and class (Barrientos, 2015; Zackodnik, 2011). The fight is not new, and the voices seem to be speaking about the same issues. It is clear WOC are still struggling to have their voices heard. The number of WOC running for office and succeeding continues to remain relatively low (Dittmar, 2018) and the gap is more evident when compared to white women (see Figure 2). However, it is predicted WOC will be the majority of the U.S. population in 2060 (Catalyst, 2018). Historically, WOC were placed either in the back of the line or at the end of the agenda. This erasure of WOC was practiced during the suffrage movement when gender superseded race in the women’s movement (hooks, 2000) and gender was treated as homogenous (N. E. Brown, 2014). Yet, there is slow and hopefully steady change, and the

narrowing of the representation gap will continue. This study demonstrates this gap is changing, particularly for the EWOC in the city councils of California.

### **Conclusion**

This study showed EWOC built inclusive campaigns through a community vision for the future of their cities, and bolstered those campaigns with intersectional coalitions of support. Many of these campaigns were fueled by courage and risk taking. These victory speeches from the first-time, EWOC in California demonstrated representation was a driving force to run for office, and had a high standard of personal and community accountability. These political identities represent the future of WOC in local politics.

It is worth repeating Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's words: "In my opinion, if women and gender-expanding people want to run for office, we can't knock on anybody's doors; we have to build our own house" (as cited in Watkins, 2019, p. 5). Understanding the challenges WOC face in leadership positions is essential to peeling back the segregation prevalent in current U.S. institutions. Analyzing the challenges of these local city council, first-time, WOC candidates who truly reflect the diversity in many cities was a start. Whether the difficulty is a methodological research challenge or systemic racism in academia, WOC continue to occupy unequal space and representation. This study is an attempt to add to the body of literature on WOC in local politics by a WOC in local politics.

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# APPENDIX A

## Codes Generated

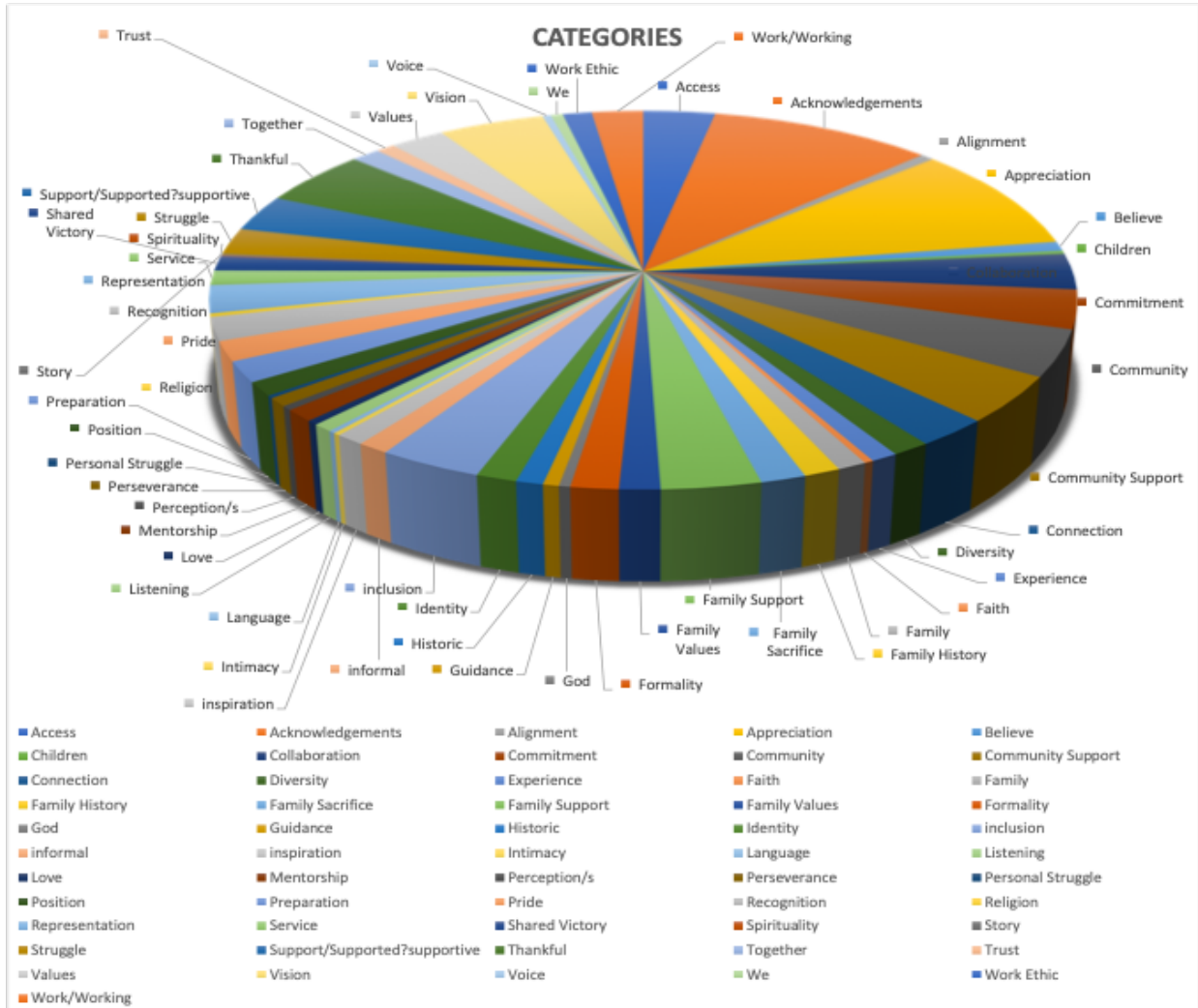


### CODES

- |                      |                                |                     |                       |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ■ Access             | ■ Accountability               | ■ Achievement       | ■ Acknowledgements    | ■ Action           |
| ■ Activist           | ■ Admission                    | ■ Advantage         | ■ Adventure           | ■ Advocate         |
| ■ Affiliation        | ■ Alienation                   | ■ Alignment         | ■ American Dream      | ■ American Dream   |
| ■ Apologetic         | ■ Appreciation                 | ■ Aspirations       | ■ Assistance          | ■ Attitude         |
| ■ Authenticity       | ■ Availability                 | ■ Believe           | ■ Belonging           | ■ Blessed/Blessing |
| ■ Bridge             | ■ Build/Building               | ■ Businesses        | ■ Campaign            | ■ Caring           |
| ■ Challenge          | ■ Change                       | ■ Children          | ■ Collaboration       | ■ Collective       |
| ■ Commitment         | ■ Community                    | ■ Confidence        | ■ Connection          | ■ Constituents     |
| ■ Cooperation        | ■ Courage                      | ■ Cultural          | ■ Cultural Adjustment | ■ Decisions        |
| ■ Democratic         | ■ Determination                | ■ Cultural          | ■ Disproportionately  | ■ Diversity        |
| ■ Division           | ■ Doubt                        | ■ Developing        | ■ Economy             | ■ Education        |
| ■ Elders             | ■ Election/Elected             | ■ Dream             | ■ Encouragement       | ■ Engagement       |
| ■ Environment        | ■ Equality                     | ■ Empathetic        | ■ Excitement          | ■ Expectations     |
| ■ Experience         | ■ Expression                   | ■ Equity            | ■ Fairness            | ■ Family           |
| ■ Family History     | ■ Family Sacrifice             | ■ Extended Family   | ■ Fathers             | ■ Feelings         |
| ■ Fight              | ■ First                        | ■ Family Values     | ■ Forward Thinking    | ■ Foster           |
| ■ Friends/friendship | ■ Future                       | ■ Follow            | ■ Generosity          | ■ Gentrification   |
| ■ Goals              | ■ God                          | ■ Generation        | ■ Grassroots          | ■ Gratitude        |
| ■ Grounded           | ■ Guidance                     | ■ Good              | ■ Helping             | ■ History          |
| ■ Home               | ■ Homelessness                 | ■ Hardship          | ■ Honesty             | ■ Honor            |
| ■ Hope               | ■ Housing                      | ■ Hometown          | ■ Identity            | ■ Immigrant        |
| ■ Improving          | ■ Inaccessibility              | ■ Humility          | ■ Information         | ■ Infrastructure   |
| ■ Inquiring          | ■ Inspiration                  | ■ Inclusion         | ■ Integrity           | ■ Interactions     |
| ■ Interest           | ■ Intervention                 | ■ Instability       | ■ Investment          | ■ Interactions     |
| ■ Issues             | ■ Jobs                         | ■ Intimidation      | ■ Justice             | ■ Involvement      |
| ■ Labels             | ■ Language                     | ■ Journey           | ■ Leadership          | ■ Knowledge        |
| ■ Listening          | ■ Love                         | ■ Latinx            | ■ Maternal Support    | ■ Learning         |
| ■ Media              | ■ Mentorship                   | ■ Marginalized      | ■ Minority Support    | ■ Maturity         |
| ■ Motivation         | ■ Motivation                   | ■ Meternal Support  | ■ Neighborhoods       | ■ Mothers          |
| ■ Nostalgia          | ■ Open                         | ■ Meternal Support  | ■ Neighbors           | ■ Networks         |
| ■ Participation      | ■ Passion                      | ■ Motivation        | ■ Outsiders           | ■ Ownership        |
| ■ People             | ■ Perseverance                 | ■ Opportunity       | ■ Paternal Support    | ■ Patience         |
| ■ Position           | ■ Possibility                  | ■ Paternal          | ■ Perspectives        | ■ Pride            |
| ■ Prioritizing       | ■ Privilege                    | ■ Personal Struggle | ■ Preparation         | ■ Promise          |
| ■ Protection         | ■ Pushout                      | ■ Power             | ■ Progressive         | ■ Refugee          |
| ■ Relationship/s     | ■ Represent                    | ■ Progress          | ■ Recognition         | ■ Resilience       |
| ■ Respect            | ■ Responsibility               | ■ Racism            | ■ Resilience          | ■ Safety           |
| ■ Servant            | ■ Service                      | ■ Role models       | ■ Sacrifice           | ■ Safety           |
| ■ Single Mother      | ■ Solutions                    | ■ Shared Victory    | ■ Sharing/Shared      | ■ Similarities     |
| ■ Standing           | ■ Story                        | ■ Space             | ■ Spouse              | ■ Stability        |
| ■ Success            | ■ Support/Supported/Supportive | ■ Stress/Stressors  | ■ Strong              | ■ Struggle         |
| ■ Time               | ■ Time Consideration           | ■ Sustainability    | ■ Team                | ■ Thankful         |
| ■ Truth              | ■ Understanding                | ■ Together          | ■ Transparency        | ■ Trust            |
| ■ Voice              | ■ Volunteering                 | ■ Values            | ■ Victory             | ■ Vision           |
| ■ Welcoming          | ■ Wisdom                       | ■ Votes             | ■ Voting              | ■ We               |
|                      |                                | ■ Women/Woman       | ■ Work Ethic          | ■ Work/Working     |

## APPENDIX B

### Categories Generated



# APPENDIX C

## Themes Generated

