Examining Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality for Black Urban-Residing Emerging Adults

by

Kayla J. Fike

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies)
in the University of Michigan
2021

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Jacqueline Mattis, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Sara McClelland, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Harley Etienne
Assistant Professor Lydia Kelow-Bennett

Kayla J. Fike

kjfike@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-3209-2005

© Kayla J. Fike 2021

Table of Contents

List of Tables....................vi

List of Figures.................... vii

Abstract.................... viii

Chapter 1 Introduction....................1

Definition of Urban, Neighborhood, and Neighborhood Quality....................1

Why study perceived neighborhood quality? 5

Gaps in Perceived Neighborhood Quality Research....................7

Perceived Neighborhood Quality and Other Related Constructs....................8

Social Identities, Social Locations and Perceived Neighborhood Quality. 11

Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Perceived Neighborhood Quality. 13

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Perceived Neighborhood Quality....................16

Dissertation Overview 19

Chapter 2 – Contextualizing Black Emerging Adults' Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality.....20

Introduction....................20

Literature Review....................22

Methods....................33

Results....................37

Discussion....................45

Conclusion 57

Chapter 3 Black Emerging Adults' Critical Consciousness and Perceived Neighborhood Quality 61

Introduction 61
Literature Review 62
The Current Study 68
Methods 70
Results 74
Discussion 79
Conclusion 86
Chapter 4 Gender, Race, and Space: A Qualitative Exploration of Young Black Women's Perceptions of Urban Neighborhoods 90
Introduction 90
Literature Review 91
The current study 96
Method 97
Participants. 97
Procedure. 98
Analyses. 99
Results 103
Discussion 112
Limitations. 119
Conclusion 122
Chapter 5 : Discussion 128
Social Identities, Intersectionality and PNQ 130
Sociostructural factors and PNQ 132
Spatial critical consciousness 133
Theoretical Implications 135
Practical and Research Implications 140

Future directions and research implications: Toward a psychological exploration of Urban Black Geographies 142

Appendix 146

References 160

List of Tables

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for Independent and Dependent Variables 59

Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality (PNQ) for Young Black Adults from Social Identities/Locations, Neighborhood Sociostructural Features, and Neighborhood Social Capital 60

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for Independent and Dependent Variables 88

Table 4: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality (PNQ) for Young Black Adults with Critical Consciousness and Critical Action 89

Table 5: Research Questions and Theme Descriptions Table 124

Table 6: Participant Pseudonyms and Demographics 127

List of Figures

Figure 1: Connerly & Marans (1985) Revised Model of Perceived Neighborhood Quality 9

Figure 2: Connerly & Marans (1985) Revised Model of Perceived Neighborhood Quality 24

Figure 3: Proposed Adaptation of Connerly and Marans (1985) Model of Perceived Neighborhood Quality 31

Abstract

Emerging adults (ages 18-30) exert influence on urban areas as they move into and change urban housing and employment landscapes (Moos, 2016; Moos et al., 2019). The relationship between young adults and the places in which they live are reciprocal in their influence. Neighborhood conditions have an effect on civic involvement, psychological health, and educational attainment of urban-residing young adults (Swisher & Warner, 2013; Wickrama & Noh, 2010). Yet, studies of perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) have failed to examine how emerging adults—particularly Black emerging adults-- assess the quality of neighborhoods and cities in which they live. Given the multifaceted standards that shape perceptions and evaluations (Campbell et al., 1976), studying PNQ among Black emerging adults would benefit from the guidance of critical sociohistorical frameworks. Conceptual frames from Black feminist geography and sociology offer historical context, prioritize residents' agency, and attend to gender in the study of race and place, which deepens the analyses of PNQ for Black emerging adults (Lipsitz, 2011; McKittrick, 2006, 2011). In this 3-study dissertation, I use multiple methods to explore the factors that are associated with urban-residing Black emerging adults' perceptions of the quality of their neighborhoods and cities. Study 1 uses survey data to explore the extent to which social identities and locations, neighborhood sociostructural features, and neighborhood social capital are associated with Black emerging adults' (n=524) PNQ. Results indicated that social identities and locations, such as household income and education, and neighborhood sociostructural features, such as the percentage of poor or financially struggling residents in the zip code, were related to PNQ. Gender stratified regression analyses highlight

that the proposed model was significantly explanatory of PNQ among Black women but was not for young Black men. Study 2 uses survey data from a sample of Black emerging adults (n=524) to examine the associations between critical reflection, critical agency, participation in political behaviors, and PNQ. Results from the full sample analyses indicated that critical consciousness is significantly related to PNQ net of included social identities and social locations, such as household income and partner status. Gender stratified regression analyses suggest that critical reflection and critical agency are not related to PNQ for young Black women but are related for young Black men in the sample. Study 3 used a blend of reflexive and codebook thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019) to analyze individual interviews with Black emerging adult women (n= 9). I aimed to identify the often-understudied aspects of social and physical communities that young Black women highlight in relation to their neighborhood's quality as well as explore the role of gender as it relates to neighborhood quality. Across 5 themes, young Black women discussed communal and social aspects of neighborhood life that are embedded in their physical communities, their analysis of the difference between outsiders' perceptions of their residential environments and their own, critical social analysis regarding urban spatial justice, as well as gendered safety and visibility for young Black adults living in the city. These three studies highlight intersectional and socially situated processes that shape PNQ among Black emerging adults. The findings from this exploratory investigation may position cities to effectively attract and to improve the quality of life of Black emerging adults by better aligning urban structural and sociopolitical arrangements with the needs, expectations, and experiences of Black emerging adults.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Scholars in Black feminist geography, Black studies, and sociology assert that both historical and contemporary sociopolitical arrangements have created a unique relationship between African-American people and the spaces they inhabit (Hunter et al., 2016; McKittrick, 2006, 2011; Lipsitz, 2011; Shabazz, 2015). Scholars in these disciplines have demonstrated that Black people occupy urban spaces in ways that offer insights to oppressive systems on the one hand, and strengths-based place-making on the other hand. However, psychological research has failed to draw on these rich conceptual frames to understand how the millions of Black adults living in urban areas perceive and understand their neighborhoods. The end result is that the factors that contribute to perceptions and evaluations of neighborhoods for urban-residing Black people remain undertheorized and understudied in psychology. This dissertation seeks to understand what new and counternarrative insights can be gleaned from studying Black people's reflections on the neighborhoods in which they live. Building on work in feminist geography, urban studies, and Black studies, this dissertation seeks to fill existing gaps in knowledge by addressing one overarching question: "What contributes to Black urban-residing emerging adults' perceptions of neighborhood quality?" Addressing this research question requires us to be clear on the meanings of "urban," "neighborhood" and "neighborhood quality."

Definition of Urban, Neighborhood, and Neighborhood Quality

There are many ways to define and conceptualize "urban". The word "urban" has often been used interchangeably with "low-income" and "racial-ethnic minority". While it is true that low-income and racial/ethnic minority populations are represented disproportionately in urban

areas, urban is a geographic descriptor, not a descriptor of ethnicity, race or class (Clark, 2003). The U.S. Census Bureau (2018) defines urban spaces as dense areas of development with residential, commercial, and other non-residential land uses. The Census Bureau delineates two levels of urbanicity in their classification: urbanized areas and urban clusters. Urbanized areas have populations of 50,000 people or more whereas urban clusters are home to at least 2,500 but less than 50,000 people. This study focuses on Black emerging adults living in urban clusters and urbanized areas.

"Neighborhood" and "neighborhood quality" have proven difficult for researchers to define, and these difficulties have resulted in contradictions in the measurement of neighborhood quality (Mast, 2010; Woldoff & Odavia, 2009). Neighborhoods are identifiable units that are smaller than cities and that collectively comprise a larger city (Melvin, 1985). However, the definition of neighborhood includes more than a geographic location. Neighborhoods are diverse places with mixed uses of land (residential and commercial) that serve as the basis for daily exchanges (Talen, 2019). Talen's (2019) assertion that neighborhoods hold value because of the connections between people and places implicates both the structural environment and the social aspects of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are also environments whose quality can be assessed through objective or subjective criteria (Nicotera, 2007). That is, neighborhood quality can be determined by objective characteristics, or features that are easily perceived and experienced by outsiders. For example, researchers and residents can both identify whether there is trash on the streets or if there are nearby schools. Alternatively, neighborhoods can be experienced subjectively by each resident. For example, residents can report on their perceptions of the level of social cohesion and trust between neighbors in their area. Nicotera (2007) argued that

explorations of neighborhood quality should attempt to capture both the objective and subjective levels of neighborhood that impact residents.

While objective attributes of a neighborhood (e.g., crime statistics) are considered important and relatively easy to measure, there is more variation among the measurement of subjective assessments of neighborhood quality (Connerly & Marans, 1985; Craik & Zube, 1976). Residents' subjective experiences of the condition of their neighborhood is referred to as perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) (Bonaiuto & Fornara, 2004; Roosa et al., 2009). Scholars have argued that PNQ is multidimensional, as environmental quality can include architectural and town planning features to municipal services to social aspects of neighborhoods (Bonaiuto & Fornara, 2004; Galster, 2001). Further, PNQ can be assessed regarding specific features of the neighborhood, such as quality of schools or neighbors' relationships, and/or with global evaluations that ask residents if they feel their neighborhood is a good place to live without specific reference to neighborhood features (see Stipak & Hensler, 1983 for an example of both). The variation in the level of analysis (i.e., specific neighborhood features versus global assessment) and scope (i.e., assessing services, architecture, and/or social aspects) of subjective neighborhood measures fundamentally impacts the research on this topic.

Subjective judgements of neighborhoods are consequential and impactful because they are made by policy makers, real estate agencies, and researchers in addition to neighborhood residents. Talen (2019), however, has noted that creating typologies of neighborhoods, or classifications of neighborhood quality, from a top-down perspective can be problematic. Typologies of neighborhoods based on factors such as the socioeconomic status (SES) and the racial/ethnic identities of residents and property values are used to both determine and reflect the value or quality of neighborhoods (Talen, 2019; Woldoff & Ovadia, 2009; Kasl & Harburg,

1972). This practice of making top-down judgements occurs both in real estate and policy arenas as well as public opinion and labels certain neighborhoods as “declining” while others are “desirable”. These practices can have lasting material consequences for the investment of resources into neighborhoods. Thus, subjective assessments of neighborhood quality are not only needed to better inform research on the topic, but to disrupt problematic patterns that unevenly provide a high quality of life to residents in some neighborhoods and not to others. A necessary first step to informing the subjective neighborhood quality research is to improve the conceptualization and measurement of PNQ. Revisiting the definition of “neighborhood” and “quality” may help to clarify how we might more effectively assess PNQ in research.

Understanding the meaning of “neighborhood quality” requires attention to the definition of both “neighborhood” and of “quality.” Neighborhood is a combination of “neighbor” and “-hood”, where “neighbor” originally meant “near dweller” and the suffix “-hood” meant “condition, quality, or position” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). An early meaning of the word “neighborhood” is the condition of living near someone or something. Today, a neighborhood is defined as “a place or region near” and “a section lived in by neighbors and usually having distinguishing characteristics” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). The dictionary definition overlaps with Talen’s (2019) conceptualization of neighborhood, as nearness is key, and residents have a shared set of experiences by virtue of the fact that they live in a common geographical area. Interestingly, while social scientists often struggle to define the boundaries of neighborhoods, the etymology of neighborhood does not emphasize discrete boundaries, but rather a subjective “nearness.”

The etymology of the word “quality” also illuminates the integral elements of studying neighborhood quality. The word “quality” derives from the Latin word *qualis* meaning “of what

kind" or "of such a kind." *Qualis* eventually evolved from Latin into the Middle English word "quality" meaning "character, disposition" and "particular property or feature." Today, Merriam-Webster (2020) lists their top two definitions of quality as: 1) "peculiar and essential character," and 2) "a degree of excellence." The etymologies of the words "neighborhood" and "quality" provide clues as to how social scientists might measure neighborhood quality. For example, the focus on excellence and on characteristics that are central to the word *quality* suggests that "neighborhood quality" should be conceptualized as the evaluation of the factors that residents would identify as the neighborhood's distinguishing features, and the degree of excellence of these distinguishing features. In sum, an effective study of neighborhood quality should allow residents to drive the conversation about what features of life matter in evaluating the neighborhood and should elucidate the heuristics that residents use to evaluate these features of life. This study takes such an approach.

Why study perceived neighborhood quality?

The function of a neighborhood is to give a sense of local rootedness, social connection, a sense of place, and a sense that the surrounding environment matters because it is a basis for daily life (Talen, 2019). Talen (2019) defined neighborhoods as "physical places where built forms, identity, and social and economic worlds come together", such that place is the basis for a collective identity among residents. Neighborhoods that provide these experiences also evoke a sense of agency for residents wherein residents come to believe that they can effect change and play a role in neighborhood life. The ability of the neighborhood to convey this sense of mattering, agency, and connection not only to residents, but to important outsiders (i.e., policy makers, social science researchers, urban planners), may be mediated through perceptions of the neighborhood (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). The concept of perceived neighborhood

quality originated in quality-of-life self-report research, with the neighborhood conceptualized as one part of the residential environment that contributes to people's subjective sense of how good their life is (Campbell et al., 1976; Marans & Rodgers, 1975). Just as individuals' lives are shaped by the places they work and the relationships they have with others, the environments in which they live also contribute to their subjective sense of their quality of life. Perceived neighborhood quality is also an important contributor to the quality of life and well-being of residents (van Kamp et al., 2003). A study of a sample of mostly White adults demonstrated that adults who evaluated their neighborhood poorly (i.e., low PNQ) tended to report worse sleep quality, lower self-rated health, and more depressive symptoms (Hale et al., 2013) than their counterparts who rated their neighborhoods more positively. Young adults who reported lower neighborhood quality (e.g., those who reported more neighborhood stressors, poverty, and dissatisfaction), also reported higher levels of anger, hopelessness, and depressive affect (Snedker & Hooven, 2013).

However, perceived neighborhood quality does not just impact the overall sense of one's satisfaction with their quality of life, but also one's sense of self and what is possible for themselves and others in their community. People make sense of themselves, their futures, and the interactions they have with others in relation to their neighborhood evaluations. For example, perceptions of neighborhood reputations impact self-esteem, job opportunities, and the ways residents interpret social interactions with nonresidents (Kullberg et al., 2010). Thus, residents have reason to evaluate and assess neighborhoods since the conditions of the space matter for their self-concept, material conditions, physical and psychological well-being, and for how others interact with them.

Importantly, race, age, income, and education appear to be related to PNQ such that Black, young, low-income, and less educated residents tend to report lower neighborhood quality than their White, older, high-income, and more educated counterparts (Weden et al., 2008). Importantly, a small but growing body of research demonstrates links between race, age, and gender, PNQ and consequential life outcomes for young Black adults (Teixeira, 2015; Teixeira, 2016; Assari et al., 2015; Assari, Smith, et al., 2015). Lower perceived neighborhood quality (as measured by perceived neighborhood safety) was associated with a decline in self-rated health in a longitudinal study that followed a predominantly Black and Bi-racial sample of youth from around 14 to 33 years old (Assari et al., 2015). In contrast, young Black people who reside in "higher quality neighborhoods" as measured by the number of two-parent families, the number of middle- or high-income families, and the percentage of adults employed in professional or managerial positions, had more positive outcomes including a lower likelihood of dropping out of high school (Vartanian & Gleason, 1999). The relative lack of attention to Black adults in PNQ research has left us with a number of gaps in both our understanding of what PNQ means for young Black adults, and in our understanding of the factors that are most consequential in young Black adults' efforts to assess the quality of their neighborhoods.

Gaps in Perceived Neighborhood Quality Research

Psychology research aimed at understanding what residents notice and use to make evaluations about their living spaces is marked by four key gaps. First, research has used satisfaction and attachment as proxies for perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ). Second, PNQ research has over-relied on cross-racial comparisons that have conflated race and class such that Whiteness is often equated with middle-class status and Blackness is often equated with working class status and poverty. Studies taking this approach have limited our understanding of how

young Black emerging adults across a variety of class backgrounds experience and evaluate the urban neighborhoods in which they live. Third, studies often assume that Black people uniformly reside in predominately Black neighborhoods, and that such neighborhoods are, by definition, marked by social chaos. Fourth, studies often have taken a top-down, etic (i.e., researcher-driven) approach to the study of PNQ rather than an emic (i.e., resident-driven) approach to understanding neighborhood quality. The three studies that comprise this dissertation study of PNQ address these four gaps in research. I take a within-group, participant-centered, inductive approach to PNQ, and combine quantitative and qualitative methods in an effort to explore both the correlates of PNQ and the ways that young Black people subjectively determine the quality of their neighborhoods.

Perceived Neighborhood Quality and Other Related Constructs. In general, efforts to study perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) have been plagued by conceptual problems, such as conflating PNQ with related constructs, and these issues have had implications for the operationalization of PNQ. Early attempts at defining neighborhood quality focused on neighborhood satisfaction and/or attachment (Connerly & Marans, 1985; Dahmann, 1981; van Kamp et al., 2003). See Figure 1 for Connerly and Marans' (1985) model. Connerly and Marans (1985) argue that "neighborhood satisfaction" measures cognitive evaluations that residents make about neighborhood features, while "neighborhood attachment" measures emotions associated with residents' social experiences in their neighborhood. Since the introduction of Connerly and Marans' (1985) model of PNQ, the study of neighborhood quality has been dominated by studies that assess satisfaction and attachment. It has not served the study of neighborhood quality to conflate satisfaction and attachment with quality. The definition of quality involves determining the essential features, the type or kind, and the degree of excellence

of an object, in this case, the neighborhood. Determining the essential features, the type or kind, and the degree of excellence of one's neighborhood (i.e., its quality) does not require an assessment of satisfaction or attachment. Instead, the study of neighborhood quality requires attention to perceptions and evaluations of neighborhoods (Hur, Nasar, Chun, 2010).

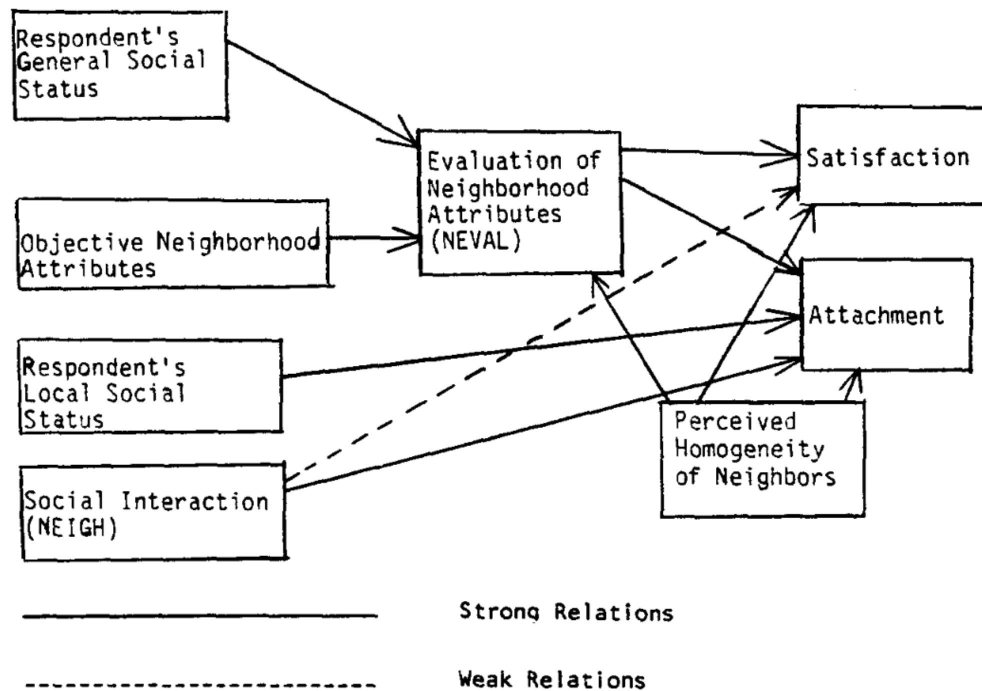

Fig. 3. Revised model of perceived neighborhood quality.

Figure 1: Connerly & Marans (1985) Revised Model of Perceived Neighborhood Quality

Connerly and Marans (1985) note that residents' evaluations of objective attributes about their neighborhoods are affected by their aspirations and expectations, which are, in turn, impacted by personal characteristics. The authors argued that personal characteristics can be distinguished into two categories: 1) general social status, which represents one's status in society at-large (e.g., race and income), and 2) local social status, which represents status within

one's neighborhood (e.g., age and length of residence). However, the distinction between general and local social status is not clear. General social status identities, such as race and income, also play a role in how residents are regarded (i.e., local social status). Similarly, local social status factors, such as age and length of residence in certain neighborhoods, can also impact the ways that the general public reacts to residents (i.e., general social status).

Although attachment and satisfaction are common points of focus in neighborhood quality research, other researchers have highlighted different constructs that may better align with the definition of quality. For example, Dahmann (1981) argues that subjective assessments of neighborhood quality involve two related but distinct cognitive dimensions: a) neighborhood perceptions and b) neighborhood evaluations. Neighborhood perceptions represent residents' "beliefs or recalled impressions of the presence of conditions in the neighborhood" (Dahmann, 1981, pg. 106). Residents' neighborhood perceptions are measured by reports of the presence or absence of certain conditions in their neighborhoods (e.g., commercial activities or street noise). Neighborhood evaluations capture residents' attitudes towards neighborhood conditions, and are measured by residents' reports of the benefits, value, and nuisance level that certain conditions pose to them (e.g., the extent to which commercial activities or street noise are bothersome to residents). Dahmann (1981) demonstrated the utility of assessing both perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality. Dahmann found that in some instances, residents perceived certain conditions (e.g., abandoned buildings) seldomly, but those conditions were evaluated as extremely bothersome. In contrast, some conditions that residents commonly perceived, such as airplane noise, were evaluated as less bothersome than any other condition in cities. Therefore, Dahmann concluded that neighborhood quality may involve both perceptions and evaluations, but that evaluations may better capture residents' assessments of neighborhood quality. Despite

Dahmann's conclusions, to date, psychology research includes relative few studies of neighborhood quality that allow residents to expound on both their perceptions and evaluations of the features of their neighborhoods that contribute to their assessments of their neighborhoods. This proposed dissertation study endeavors to fill that gap.

Another correlate of neighborhood quality is neighborhood social capital. Building on Putnam's (2000) seminal work on social capital, researchers have defined neighborhood social capital as factors that promote "trust between neighbors, norms of reciprocity and cooperation, and civic engagement" (Hutchinson et al., 2009, pg. 1860). Factors such as length of residence may function as neighborhood social capital and may contribute to people's perceptions and evaluations of their neighborhood (Connerly & Marans, 1985). However, the links between social capital and PNQ are not clear particularly among young African American people who reside in urban areas. Hutchinson (2004) has found, for example, that, for lower-income, urban-residing people who hold racial/ethnic minority status, the link between neighborhood social capital and indices of community quality (e.g., desire to remain in the community) are quite complex. Indeed, Hutchinson found that some individuals who lived in the community for the longest period of time (an index of social capital) remained because they valued, were invested in, and attached to the community, while others remained because they had few options for relocating. Hutchinson's work suggests the need for qualitative as well as quantitative studies that can elucidate the complex links between social capital and perceived neighborhood quality. This proposed multimethod study examines the link between social capital and PNQ among emerging adult, urban residing African American men and women.

Social Identities, Social Locations and Perceived Neighborhood Quality. Studies that consider the role of social identities in relation to perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) often

make comparisons across groups (Marans & Rodgers, 1975; St. John & Clark, 1983; St. John, 1987). Research has found differences in neighborhood evaluations based on social identities such as race and gender (Marans & Rodgers, 1975; St. John, 1987). However, foundational perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) studies have traditionally compared Black residents who live in lower quality neighborhoods to White residents who live in better resourced neighborhoods, and have found that Black residents reported lower PNQ than White residents (see, for example, Kasl & Harburg, 1972; Stokes, 2019). Often, research concludes that racial differences in PNQ are a result of differences in evaluative criteria, or that White and Black residents evaluate neighborhoods differently (Handal, Morrissy, & Barling, 1981; Stipak & Hensler, 1983). However, the findings of these studies are difficult to interpret because presumed racial differences in perceptions and evaluations of "objective" neighborhood features (e.g., crime ratings, income levels, or social disorganization measures) may actually reflect differences in neighborhood socioeconomic status (Kasl & Harburg, 1972). Regarding gender differences, evidences suggests that women rate their neighborhood quality as lower than men but often interprets these differences by relying on outdated or problematic assumptions. For example, Carp & Carp (1982) suggested that women rate their neighborhood quality lower because of more stringent standards for safety than men given women's "smaller stature" and Kasl & Harburg (1972) conflated women with child-rearing concerns that might result in more critical neighborhood assessment. While gender and race may be related to differences in PNQ, it is important to explore these social identities as factors that are connected to social histories and that shape people's experiences in their neighborhoods and cities broadly rather than essential determinants of subjective neighborhood assessment.

In addition to social identities and structural factors, emerging evidence suggests that social locations may influence PNQ. Social identity and social location are often used interchangeably, but the term "social location" has been used to implicate systemic forces that shape people's positions within social hierarchies and facilitate access to privilege (Kendall & Wijeyesinghe, 2017; Wood, 2005). I take the implication of systemic forces as inherent in the conceptualization of social identities, and further distinguish social locations as positions that highlight our relational ties with others that may also have political and social ramifications for our position in social hierarchies. While our social identities may help to represent our position in a societal hierarchy, our social locations capture other meaningful identities (e.g., parent or partner status) that implicate people close to us and thus may structure what we perceive and value in our neighborhoods. Parents with less than a high school education tend to rate their neighborhood quality more poorly than more educated parents (Stokes, 2019). Further, for residents with children, social aspects of neighborhood life (e.g., neighbors know and trust each other) more strongly predict neighborhood satisfaction than perceived physical characteristics of the neighborhood (Handal et al., 1981). No studies have examined how partner status (e.g., being single or married) contributes to perceptions of neighborhood quality to my knowledge. However, theoretical arguments that consider Black people's relationships with physical spaces have highlighted the relational motivations that may shape perspectives and uses of space, including romantic and familial relationships (McKittrick, 2006). Taken together, these findings point to the need for studies that explore within-group variations in social identities (e.g., gender, SES), social location (e.g., parental and partner status), and in the structural and broader sociopolitical conditions might inform PNQ.

Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Perceived Neighborhood Quality.

Quantitative approaches to studying perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) have prioritized researchers' interests and their predetermined lists of important neighborhood features (e.g., street noise, crime, recreation availability, marriage rates, aesthetic qualities of buildings) at the expense of what may be important to residents in evaluating their neighborhoods (Baba & Austin 1989; Bonaiuto et al. 1999; Bonaiuto & Fornara, 2004; Elo et al., 2009; Hur, Nasar, Chun, 2010; van Kamp et al. 2003). This approach is evident in the item bank developed by Carp and Carp (1982) from their review of literature. From the literature Carp and Carp (1982) identified 5 higher order factors that appeared to be important to neighborhood perceptions: 1) characteristics of neighbors, 2) accessibility and maintenance of public services, 3) safety, 4) noise disruptions to the home, and 5) privacy. While these findings broke from previous deficit-oriented research, like other top-down studies, Carp and Carp's (1982) study continued to prioritize researcher perspectives and existing trends in PNQ research over the views of residents. This focus on researcher interests is problematic because evidence suggests that residents and researchers consider and prioritize different elements of neighborhoods when making evaluations of neighborhoods (Carp & Carp, 1982; Craik & Zube, 1976; Donovan, 2017). For example, while researchers often focus on issues of safety as central to neighborhood quality, residents have reported that their neighborhood is an excellent place to live despite also reporting that they do not feel safe in their neighborhood (Echeverria et al. 2004). Echeverria and colleagues (2004) assert that residents may have insider knowledge that allows them to avoid danger in their neighborhoods, and thus the presence of "objective" indicators of danger may not undermine their evaluations of the quality of their neighborhood. The idea that commonly researched facets of neighborhoods (e.g., safety) may not be as closely related to neighborhood

quality as proposed by researchers suggests that subjective measurement of neighborhood quality should be rooted in criteria that residents prioritize (Roosa, White, Zeiders, & Tein, 2009).

If we are to center residents' perceptions of neighborhoods, then there is a need to prioritize more participant-driven methods, such as inductive qualitative approaches and mixed methods approaches in studies of PNQ. The limited body of qualitative research that has included young Black people has offered some insight to the features that contribute to perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ). Black youth's perceptions of vacancy, blight, and new construction in their neighborhoods were central to their evaluations of their neighborhood quality (Teixeira, 2015, 2016). These youth, who were in their mid to late teens, indicated that vacant lots and abandoned buildings made them feel as if no one cared about their neighborhood, and that their community was at risk of being negatively stereotyped by outsiders, which informed their evaluations of their neighborhoods (Teixeira, 2015). Teixeira and Gardner (2017) found that Black youth highlighted the juxtaposition between the low-quality areas of their neighborhood and new construction which they perceived as unaffordable to their community. While Teixeira's (2015, 2016) research highlighted some potentially important criteria to young Black people, these studies remain limited in that they focused only on low-income youth from disadvantaged neighborhoods who were engaged in participatory action and research programs. This sampling frame may have focused the participants' attention on specific issues in their neighborhoods. Explorations of PNQ would be benefitted by sampling across various urban neighborhoods and among a broad cross-section of young Black people using multiple methods (i.e., quantitative and qualitative approaches) to explore both objective features and subjective aspects of neighborhoods. Through the use of survey and qualitative inductive approaches to perceptions

and evaluations of neighborhood quality in a diverse group of Black emerging adults, this dissertation fills both a sample and methodological gap in the PNQ literature.

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Perceived Neighborhood Quality.

In addition to combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study of Black emerging adults' PNQ would be deepened by conceptual frames that link Black people's experience of space/place to their history in America, intersecting social identities and social locations, and agency. Social identities of residents (e.g., race, gender, and class) and sociostructural features of neighborhoods (e.g., racial composition and median income of neighborhood) are all located within social hierarchies. Some perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) studies acknowledge that social hierarchies are shaping residents' perceptions and evaluations but have not conducted a more in-depth analysis of how and why social hierarchies are involved (Connerly & Marans, 1985; Dahmann, 1981). I argue that centering the analysis of social hierarchies in PNQ research requires researchers to theorize the role of history, agency, and inequity in the context of their sample. Without conceptual frames that attend to these key elements, previous PNQ research has produced problematic or simplistic interpretations of group differences. For example, Stipak and Hensler (1983) found that neighborhoods with a higher percentage of racial minority residents, and lower socioeconomic status (SES) neighborhoods are evaluated more negatively, regardless of the participant's race or SES. Stipak and Hensler (1983) problematically assumed that low-income, racial/ethnic minority neighborhoods are inherently disorganized and suffer from low quality public services without measuring these neighborhood aspects and used these assumptions to interpret why participants reported lower neighborhood quality in those areas. The authors do not consider that lower-income and predominately racial/ethnic minority neighborhoods are marginalized in society and that participants living in

those neighborhoods are not outside of the dominant narratives surrounding certain urban areas. PNQ research would benefit from a more critical and focused analysis of residents' perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality that holds specific histories of social groups in context when interpreting study findings. The lack of research that attends to history and agency of specific populations may result from the presence of conceptual frames that subtly steer PNQ research toward the problems that plague urban neighborhoods.

PNQ research has focused on disorder and disorganization rather than neighborhood assets and strengths. It may be the case that PNQ research has been indirectly influenced by sociological and criminological approaches to studying neighborhoods, which focus on systems-level patterns of issues in urban communities. For example, the "broken windows" theory of disorder in urban areas asserts that unchecked minor neighborhood incivilities (e.g., broken windows) create a potential spiral into more serious crimes and neighborhood decay (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Critiques of this theory include the assumption that all residents view decay in the same ways, which overlooked differences in perceptions informed by social identities and social hierarchies and created neighborhood typologies that ranked mostly racial/ethnic minority urban neighborhoods the lowest quality and most disordered (Harcourt, 2001; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Talen, 2019; Teixeira, 2016). Measuring quality in terms of the presence and absence of problems obscures strengths-based perspectives on urban neighborhoods (Bonaiuto et al., 1999; Roosa et al., 2009). In addition, focusing on problems in urban neighborhoods overshadows the opportunity to understand how historical inequities emerged, or how young Black adult residents' social analysis and neighborhood participation may impact how they evaluate their neighborhoods.

This dissertation draws from conceptual and empirical arguments to bring historical social context, considerations of agency, and social identity to young Black adults' perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ). First, I ground the work in Lipsitz's (2011) Black Spatial Imaginary, which centers Black people's democratic notions of space and agency in solving social problems within their communities. The Black Spatial Imaginary is a critical perception of place that is informed by Black people's analysis of social inequities in physical spaces. The second frame that guides this work is McKittrick's (2006, 2011) Black Women's Geographies and a Black Sense of Place. McKittrick (2006) highlights the role of gender in Black Women's Geographies by discussing the strategies that Black women use to navigate and perceive space in ways that defy racist-sexist oppression. McKittrick asserts that Black people have authoritative knowledge of the physical spaces they inhabit, but these varying sets of knowledges are overlooked by social science research. Similar to Lipsitz (2011), McKittrick (2011) also highlights the agency of Black people as well as the labor they contribute to making and sustaining urban spaces. Lastly, Shabazz (2015) asserted that analyses of gender rarely explicitly consider men due to the false conflation of gender with women, and that Black men are understudied in research on race, place, and gender. As such, I draw on conceptual empirical work on Black men and masculinities to explore similarities and differences in men's and women's perceptions of neighborhood quality. Each of these three conceptual and empirical arguments offer important considerations for the study of young Black adults' perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality. The explicit attention to gender in each study allows me to highlight the extent to which Black men and Black women may have differing perceptions of urban neighborhood quality that are informed by their gendered interactions with the physical and social aspects of their neighborhoods.

Dissertation Overview

Building on work in feminist geography, urban studies, and Black studies this dissertation seeks to fill existing gaps in knowledge in psychology by addressing one overarching question: "What contributes to Black urban-residing emerging adults' perceptions of neighborhood quality?" To answer this question, this 3-study dissertation pursues four aims: First, Study 1 investigates the relations between social identities, social locations, neighborhood sociostructural and demographic features, neighborhood social capital and Black urban-residing emerging adults' perceptions of neighborhood quality. Second, Study 2 examines the relations between critical consciousness ideology and actions and Black urban-residing emerging adults' perceptions of neighborhood quality. Third, Study 3 explores what aspects of urban neighborhoods young Black women highlight when asked to describe their neighborhoods to fill existing gaps in PNQ research. Fourth, in each study, I consider the role of gender in how Black emerging adults perceive, evaluate, and describe their urban neighborhoods.

Chapter 2 – Contextualizing Black Emerging Adults' Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality

Introduction

Urban neighborhoods are home to 74% of Black/African American people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Moreover, more than 7 million Black/African American emerging adults (adults ages 18-29[1]) live in America's urban centers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Importantly, urbanicity is associated with a host of positive and negative experiences as well as quality of life outcomes for Black/African American people (Batson & Monnat, 2015; Cutrona et al., 2006; Frank et al., 2010; Rollings et al., 2015). Urban centers are sites of economic opportunity, entertainment, and cultural engagement for many Black/African Americans who live in these spaces (Clark, 2003). Research also suggests that urban areas are increasingly being "youthified" (i.e., the concentration of young adults in urban areas is greater than the concentration of older people), which fundamentally changes the economic, housing, and cultural processes in urban areas (Moos, 2016; Moos et al., 2019). Yet, for young Black/African American adults who live in urban settings, these sites can also be spaces where they experience ethnoracial segregation (Owens, 2017), hypersurveillance, confinement (Jones, 2014; Shabazz, 2015), and uneven levels of access to amenities and services across neighborhoods (Woldoff & Ovadia, 2009). These joint experiences of opportunity and oppression may have implications for Black/African American emerging adults' quality of life and may play a role in how they perceive their neighborhoods (Connerly & Marans, 1985; St. John & Clark, 1984; Weden et al, 2008; Wen et al., 2006). Yet,

[1]Given that U.S. Census Bureau data is available up to one year after it is collected, emerging adults are adults between the ages of 18 and 29 who may have turned 30 by the time data is available for use.

the ways in which joint realities of opportunities and oppressive forces inform PNQ for young Black people remains underexplored.

How people perceive their neighborhoods is a matter of consequence. Perceptions of one's neighborhood conditions are associated with sleep quality, self-rated health, mental health, and educational attainment (Hale et al., 2013; Snedker & Hooven, 2013; Vartanian & Gleason, 1999). Although perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ) are significantly related to well-being, few studies in psychology center Black/African American people's perceptions of their urban neighborhoods. Moreover, most PNQ studies that do include Black/African American people tend to make comparisons to White people (Connerly & Marans, 1985; Kasl & Harburg, 1972; St. John et al., 1984), and tend to focus disproportionately on the perceptions of low-income Black/African Americans who reside in predominately racial/ethnic minority and underresourced communities. This focus on interracial differences and on low-income Black/African American communities in PNQ research fails to appreciate the within-group diversity of Black/African Americans (e.g., class diversity and gender differences), and the diversity of contexts in which Black/African Americans live. Moreover, other research suggests that Black/African American people may use different criteria to evaluate their neighborhoods than White people (St. John & Clark, 1984). These oversights limit the current evidence base for understanding what contributes to young Black/African American people's PNQ. The current study seeks to broaden our understanding of the factors associated with PNQ among a diverse group of urban-residing Black/African American emerging adults. I draw from Connerly and Marans' (1985) PNQ model, and from empirical research on the contributors to PNQ in order to explore the relations between social identities and locations, neighborhood sociostructural features (e.g., racial and income composition, population density, etc.), neighborhood social

capital (i.e., time lived in a neighborhood and city), and PNQ among Black/African American urban-residing emerging adults.

Literature Review

Neighborhoods are behaviorally meaningful geographical units that impact residents' psychological well-being (Galster, 2001). Galster (2001) noted that existing definitions of neighborhoods suffer from shortcomings such as presuming some level of social relationships and spatial boundaries as well as overlooking key features of proximal residential areas that impact residents' and other stakeholders' perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ). Specifically, Galster (2001) noted that neighborhoods are presumed to indicate social interaction between neighbors as well as have agreed upon physical boundaries while not always being explicitly measured. Further, characteristics of this proximal geographic area, including the existence and quality of social interaction and the built environment, fundamentally shape residents' and others' perceptions of the neighborhood's quality. In an effort to define the construct of neighborhood in a way that would allow for quantifiable hypotheses and measurement, Galster (2001) defined neighborhoods as bundles of "spatially based attributes" such as demographic characteristics of the resident population and tax/public service characteristics, that are associated with residences as well as other land uses. Yet, Galster (2001) and others have pointed out that, despite previous researchers' attempts to narrow or define the geographic unit of neighborhood for residents, the concept and geographic size of neighborhoods fluctuate greatly among residents (Campbell et al., 1976; Lee et al., 1994). Researchers attempting to delineate the different scales of urban spaces that residents perceive and evaluate have focused on geographic scales chosen by governmental bodies, which determine resource allotment and perhaps social dynamics that impact residents (Galster, 1986; Suttles, 1972).

Although neighborhoods are meaningful to residents and given the great mobility that characterizes urban spaces (Jensen, 2009), zip codes have proved to be useful geographic scales within which to investigate perceptions of urban neighborhoods (Gould & Marlin, 1986/2019). The U.S. Census Bureau zip code tabulation areas, which generally match the U.S. Postal Service zip codes, cross wide swaths of urban spaces and are used to measure and aggregate social demographic data, such as racial and income composition, that reflect and determine objective and subjective neighborhood quality. Galster (2001) reminds us that there is not a "Holy Grail" method for meaningfully and unambiguously bounding urban neighborhoods and asserts that different levels of geographic scale can and should be chosen by researchers depending on their interests. In the current study, residents' subjectively defined neighborhoods as well as zip codes are the geographic scales of interest.

Defining and Contextualizing Perceived Neighborhood Quality. Perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) has proved to be important to the well-being of youth and adults, however, the construct has not had a clear and consistent definition among social scientists. Campbell and colleagues (1976) defined PNQ as the subjective experience of objective attributes in one's immediate environment. According to Campbell and colleagues (1976), individuals' perceptions of neighborhood attributes are compared to a multifaceted individual-level standard that involves one's aspirations, expectations, understanding of what other groups of people experience, and personal needs and values among other things. People's perceptions interact with their multifaceted standards to inform an evaluation of neighborhood attributes and a sense of (dis)satisfaction.

Connerly and Marans' (1985) model of PNQ focuses on neighborhood quality and outlines what they conceptualize as affective and cognitive elements of PNQ (see Figure 1). The

authors argued that neighborhood satisfaction (i.e., residents' cognitive evaluations of neighborhood attributes) and neighborhood attachment (i.e., emotions associated with residents' experiences in their neighborhood) reflect residents' overall sense of the quality of their neighborhoods. They measured evaluations of neighborhood attributes by creating an index of residents' ratings of neighborhood features, including physical features (e.g., noise and abandonment), social features (e.g., friendly neighbors and safety at night), local public services (e.g., streets and schools), and accessibility (i.e., satisfaction with shopping access). Connerly and Marans (1985) asserted that how people evaluate the attributes of their neighborhoods is directly informed by three factors: the general social status of the perceiver (e.g., their race, income), the objective attributes of the neighborhood (e.g., racial composition, median income levels), and the demographic composition (e.g., perceived homogeneity) of the neighborhood.

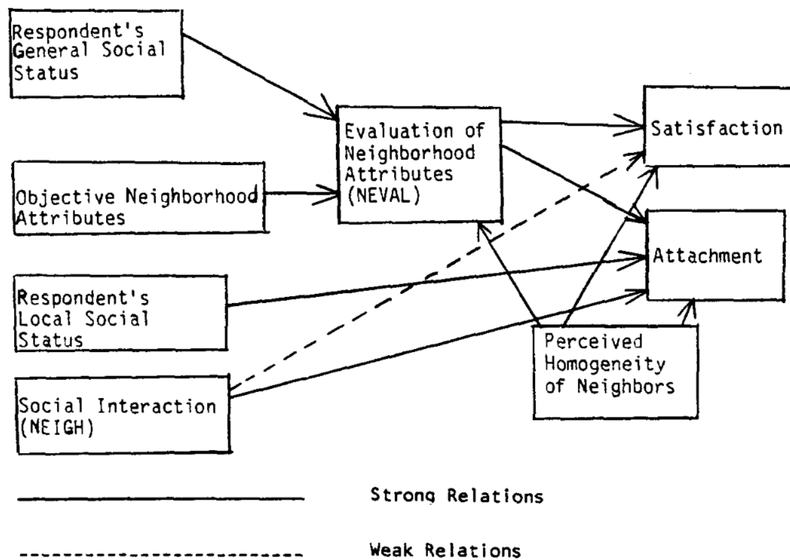

Figure 2: Connerly & Marans (1985) Revised Model of Perceived Neighborhood Quality

Connerly and Marans (1985) also note that residents' evaluations of neighborhood attributes are affected by their aspirations and expectations, which are impacted by "personal characteristics". The authors specified that personal characteristics can be distinguished into two

categories: 1) general social status, which represents one's status in society at large (e.g., race, education, income), and 2) local social status, which represents one's status within their neighborhood (e.g., age and length of residence). Using a sample of Black/African American and White residents, Connerly and Marans (1985) found that general social status (particularly income and housing tenure) is positively related to evaluations of neighborhood attributes. Of the local social status measures, participant's length of residence, young age, and middle age were negatively related to evaluations of neighborhood attributes. In particular, participants who lived in their neighborhoods longer and who are young or middle aged had lower evaluations of neighborhood attributes than newcomers and older residents. Lastly, within the objective neighborhood attribute domain, Connerly and Marans (1985) also found that residential stability (i.e., the average length of time that neighborhood residents lived in their homes) was positively related to neighborhood evaluations, while percentage of substandard housing and residential density were negatively related to neighborhood evaluations. Taken together, Connerly and Marans's (1985) findings support the need for further examining the relations between PNQ, social identities, social locations, neighborhood sociostructural features, and neighborhood social capital.

While Connerly and Marans' (1985) PNQ model is the only psychological model that explicitly conceptualizes residents' evaluations of their neighborhood quality, the model has important limitations. In particular, residents' evaluations of the quality of neighborhood attributes are not the focal point of the PNQ model. Additionally, Connerly and Marans (1985) name neighborhood satisfaction and neighborhood attachment as global measures of neighborhood quality (see also Campbell et al., 1976). The definitions of "quality" suggest that "excellence" and "unique characteristics" of one's neighborhood are the essence of

neighborhood “quality” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Determining the essential features, the type or kind, and the degree of excellence of one’s neighborhood (i.e., its quality) is not synonymous with assessing satisfaction or attachment. Instead, the study of neighborhood quality requires attention to perceptions and evaluations of essential features of neighborhoods (Hur, Nasar, Chun, 2010). Thus, in this study I conceptualize PNQ as residents’ subjective evaluations of the geographic areas that they identify as their neighborhood, with specific attention to their assessment of the degree of excellence of various neighborhood features.

Another limitation of Connerly and Marans’ (1985) model is the generalized standpoint from which it is articulated. Connerly and Marans’ (1985) model of PNQ and the general satisfaction model from which it is derived (Campbell et al., 1976) is conceptualized to encompass perceptions, evaluations, and satisfaction that may vary according to social identities and experiences informed by those identities, but that are formed in a universal way. Perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality are informed by individuals’ standards, which are complex and impacted by societal inequity (Campbell et al., 1976). Although Connerly and Marans explore the contributions of race, income, education level, and sex of participants to evaluations of neighborhoods, their PNQ model is not grounded in, and does not account for, the historical and contextual realities of Black/African American people. Critical scholars from across disciplines highlight the need to theorize and study phenomena with the standpoint of participants in mind, which also implicates the systems of privilege and power that shape their experiences as well as their agency (Collins, 1986; Itzigsohn & Brown, 2020; Stewart & Sewell, 2016). In the current study, I situate the examination of PNQ within larger sociohistorical contexts by considering the relationship between race, class, and neighborhood conditions and

the ways in which discriminatory spatial practices, such as racial and economic segregation, may have an impact on Black/African Americans' PNQ.

Adaptation of Perceived Neighborhood Quality Model. The current study draws on empirical research on perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) to test an adaptation of Connerly and Marans' (1985) PNQ model (see Figure 2). The model of PNQ has been adapted in four ways. First, unlike Connerly and Marans' (1985) model, this adapted model does not equate neighborhood quality with neighborhood satisfaction or neighborhood attachment. Instead, consistent with Galster (2001), neighborhood quality is conceptualized as residents' evaluations of features within the subjective bounds of their urban neighborhoods. Second, the adapted model focuses on PNQ as the outcome of interest. Thus, rather than examining perceptions and evaluations as a means to understand other outcomes, I ask how the constructs included in the adapted model of PNQ are associated with neighborhood perceptions and evaluations for Black/African American emerging adults.

Third, the adapted model of PNQ challenges and rejects the separation between general and local social status factors introduced in Connerly and Marans' (1985) PNQ model. The delineation between general and local social status factors as outlined by Connerly and Marans is not clear because the local social status factors that influence how neighbors view each other (e.g., age and length of residence) also impact general social status identities (e.g., race and income) that shape how society views residents of particular neighborhoods. The reverse is also true. Rather than draw distinctions between different types of social identities, I include social locations, or close relationships with others, that shape how society responds to Black/African American people as potential contributors to their PNQ. The adapted model recognizes that both social identities which structure how other people and structures react to you (e.g., gender and

class) and social locations that represent close relationships with others (e.g., parental status and partner status) may be important to PNQ (McKittrick, 2006, 2011).

The adapted model attempts to remedy some of the limitations of previous research on social identities and PNQ, such as cross-racial comparisons, conflations of class and race in underresourced urban areas, and problematic assumptions about differences between women and men. The current study circumvents the limitations of cross-racial comparisons by providing a within-group analysis of Black/African American emerging adults' PNQ to better understand the contributors to PNQ among this group. Further, in an effort to address the problematic conflation of race and class (see Kasl & Harburg, 1972), the current study sampled Black/African American residents from a range of class backgrounds and a range of urban neighborhoods. With respect to gender differences, this study challenges the tendency of PNQ research to conflate "women" with "mothers" and the assumption that women participants all have child-rearing responsibilities (Carp & Carp, 1982; Kasl & Harburg, 1972). Given the conceptual work of geographers and sociologists which argues that Black/African American emerging adult men and women may experience urban areas in qualitatively different ways (Jones, 2014; McKittrick, 2006; Shabazz, 2015), I conduct separate investigations into the extent to which PNQ is associated with the same or different factors for men and women.

Fourth, the adapted model of PNQ includes both objective and subjective measures of neighborhood attributes to capture a more comprehensive view of the interplay between existing neighborhood features and residents' perceptions of these features (Craik & Zube, 1976; Nicotera, 2007). Connerly and Marans' (1985) PNQ model only considered objective attributes as contributors to residents' evaluations of neighborhood features. However, these may not be perceived by residents in straightforward or intuitive ways that suggest that objectively negative

conditions are perceived and evaluated as lower quality or unsatisfactory. For example, residents living in "objectively" underresourced neighborhoods (e.g., lower housing ownership rates, median income and education levels) have reported that they are not dissatisfied with their neighborhood (St. John, 1987). St. John's (1987) study illustrates the pitfalls of assuming that objective indicators of neighborhood disadvantage translate to residents' perceptions of neighborhood disadvantage, and to lower evaluations of neighborhood attributes. Additionally, while the racial composition of a neighborhood is often used as an index of neighborhood quality, previous research has examined urban residents' preferences for the racial composition of neighborhoods (see Krysan, 2002 for a review). The findings are mixed in that some studies have found that Black urban residents prefer to live in equally split Black and White neighborhoods (Charles, 2000), while other studies suggest that Black people prefer to live in neighborhoods with a more substantial Black presence (Krysan, 2002). However, Krysan's (2002) study highlights that Black people's perceptions of the racial composition of urban communities, which may include their perceptions of the racial climate of their neighborhood, undergirds their residential preferences rather than objective racial composition alone. This research suggests that it is important to include subjective and objective measures of racial composition and study the ways these indicators operate independently and in tandem to impact residents' neighborhood assessment. Thus, the current study includes objective measures of neighborhood racial composition as well as subjective measures of residents' perceptions of neighborhood racial composition. This examination will inform the literature concerned with whether objective, subjective, or a combination of both measures are most predictive of residents' neighborhood evaluations (Bonaiuto & Fornara, 2004).

The adapted PNQ model also improves on community level income and class metrics used in studies of the previous model. Connerly and Marans' (1985) use of median family income, median property values, and percentage of substandard housing attend to particular types of class markers, such as property and income. The attention to these types of class markers has also translated to a focus on indicators of poverty, leaving other types of neighborhood class metrics understudied (Kasl & Harburg, 1972; St. John, 1987). The adapted model incorporates the Gini index and poverty density as measures of income inequality in communities. The (in)equitable distribution of wealth in a community may register with Black/African American residents in ways that property values and incomes of other residents can be inferred but not directly perceived. Thus, the current study introduces metrics that may have an impact on young Black emerging adults' PNQ which have not been adequately explored with this population.

Objective attributes of neighborhoods, such as average length of residence, may also function on both individual and structural levels. Environmental psychologists have used participants' length of residence in a neighborhood as a measure of neighborhood social capital (Bonaiuto et al., 1999; Greenberg, 1999; van Kemp et al., 2003), defined as "the strength and extensiveness of neighborhood ties and involvement in informal social activities in the neighborhood" (Lewicka, 2011; pg. 217). As such, residents who have lived in their communities for longer are expected to not only have deeper neighborhood ties but also to be involved in civic matters on the neighborhood's behalf. Residents who have lived in their communities for longer may see changes that have happened in the neighborhood or surrounding area that may have an impact on the standards and evaluations that residents use to assess their

neighborhoods (Galster, 2001; Teixeira, 2016). Thus, length of residence is at once a personal attribute and a social factor that may operate as a benefit to neighborhoods.

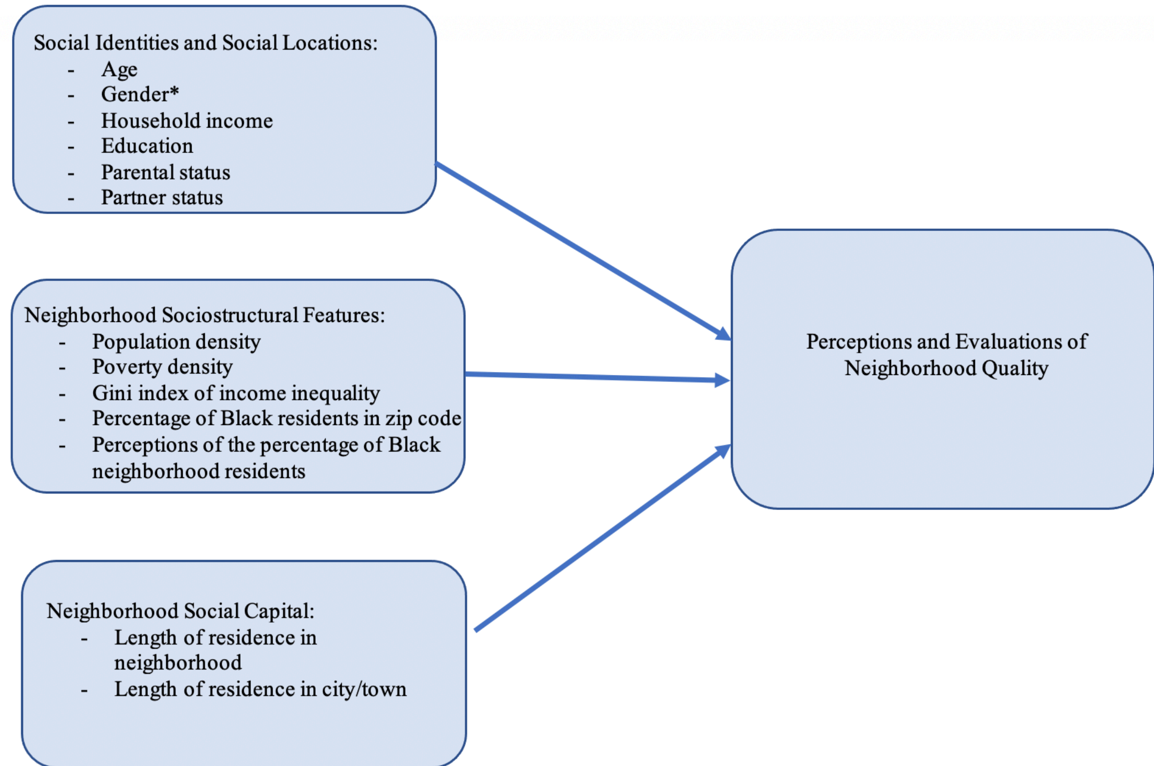

Figure 3: Proposed Adaptation of Connerly and Marans (1985) Model of Perceived Neighborhood Quality

The current study

This study has 2 aims: 1) to examine the links between social identities, social locations, neighborhood sociostructural factors, neighborhood social capital and perceived neighborhood quality among African American/Black emerging adults; and 2) to examine whether the explored relations are similar or different for Black emerging adult women and men. To pursue these aims, the following research questions are addressed:

RQ 1: To what extent are social identities (i.e., age, gender, income, and education) and social locations (i.e., parent status and partner status), neighborhood sociostructural factors (i.e.,

perceived racial composition of Black residents' communities, objective racial composition of Black residents' communities, population density, and poverty density), and neighborhood social capital (i.e., length of residence in the city and neighborhood) associated with perceptions of neighborhood quality for Black emerging adult men and women?

RQ 2: To what extent are the relations between social identities and social locations, neighborhood socio-structural factors, neighborhood social capital, and perceptions of neighborhood quality the same or different for Black emerging adult women and men?

The existing literature points to some preliminary hypotheses. First, I hypothesize that social identities and social locations, neighborhood sociostructural features, and neighborhood social capital will be significantly related to PNQ. Based on previous findings (see Stokes, 2019; Weden et al., 2008), I hypothesize that within the social identities and social locations domain, income and education will be positively related to PNQ. I hypothesize that age and parental status will be negatively related to PNQ (see Connerly et al., 1985; Galster et al., 2006). I expect that women will report lower PNQ than men based on previous research (see Carp et al., 1982; Kasl et al., 1972). To my knowledge, there is no existing research that has examined if and how partner status is related to PNQ. As such, I do not posit a hypothesis regarding this relation. In the neighborhood sociostructural domain, I hypothesize that poverty density, greater perceptions of Black/African American neighborhood composition, and higher percentages of Black/African Americans in one's zip code will be negatively related to PNQ and that population density will be positively related to PNQ (see Connerly et al., 1985; Kasl et al., 1972, Stipak et al., 1983; van Kemp et al., 2003). Within the neighborhood social capital domain, I hypothesize that length of time in the city and neighborhood will both be positively related to PNQ (see Hutchinson, 2004; Lewicka, 2011). Lastly, I hypothesize that there will be differences in the proposed relations for

Black emerging adult women and men, although the existing research is too mixed to generate hypotheses about which relations will differ (Assari et al., 2015a, Assari et al., 2015b, Carp et al., 1982; Stokes, 2019). See Figure 2 for the current study's analytic model.

Methods

Participants. The data source for the current study is The Life in the City study (Principal Investigator: Dr. Jacqueline Mattis). The Life in the City study is a mixed methods (survey and interview) study of prosocial engagement and prosocial development among urban residing African American/Black adults. For the purposes of our study, participants were encouraged to participate if they lived in a city with 10,000 people or more. These criteria meet the U.S. Census Bureau's classification of an urbanized area. From 2017 to 2019, participants were recruited online and in urban community settings (e.g., Black-owned and/or Black-run businesses) to participate in a survey and interview study. We recruited participants online by posting on our individual and research lab's social media pages (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). We also sent links to the survey directly to Black people on our social media accounts as well as to popular Black-focused social media groups or pages to invite users to share the survey with others in their networks. The full sample for the Life in the City Study is 1214 Black urban residents.

The analytic sample for this study is limited to adults ages 18-30 (n=524) as this range constitutes the emerging adulthood life stage (Arnett, 2001). The overall sample and analytic sample are similar across demographics. The exceptions are that the majority of the overall sample has at least one child (71%, n=760), while emerging adults that have at least one child are the minority in the analytic sample (46%, n=207). Also, the majority of the overall sample is partnered (69%), while the emerging adults are partnered to a lesser extent (51%). Participants

completed the survey online via Qualtrics (a survey web-based platform; n=524). Participants were compensated with a $10 Amazon gift cards for survey completion.

Measures.

Age. Age in years was measured using a single open-ended question.

Gender. Participants were asked to choose their gender from six options: male (male sex assigned at birth and current), female (female sex assigned at birth and current), transman, transwoman, non-binary gender identity, other, and "prefer not to answer". Three participants self-identified as gender minority group members (*n* = 3). These participants were excluded from the current analyses because their numbers were too small to be meaningfully included in gender-focused analyses.

Household Income. Household income was scored on an 8-point scale: 1) less than $19,999, 2) $20,000–39,999, 3) $40,000-59,999, 4) $60,000-79,999, 5) $80,000-99,999, 6) $100,000-149,999, 7) $150,000-199,999, 8) $200,000 or above. Participants could also select a "prefer not to answer" response option.

Education. Participants reported the highest level of education they had completed from a list of five options: 1) less than a high school degree, 2) GED/HS diploma, 3) some college, 4) college degree, and 5) graduate or professional degree.

Parental status. Participants reported the number of children via an open-ended item.

Partner status. Participants selected their partner status from one of five options: 1) single/never married, 2) partnered, 3) married/domestic partner, 4) divorced, and 5) widowed.

Population density. Population density per square mile was measured using data from the 5-year estimate American Community Survey[2] (ACS) sampling of zip code tabulation areas (ZCTAs) between 2014 and 2018 (see Sng et al., 2017 for an example). This number is calculated by dividing the number of people in a ZCTA by the number of square miles of land area in that ZCTA.

Poverty density. Poverty density was measured using the ratio of income to poverty level for those who are poor or struggling in the 5-year estimate ACS. The ratio of income to poverty level is calculated by dividing a household's income by the poverty threshold of 2018. If the number is less than or equal to 2, then families are considered to be poor or struggling, as they do not make more than two times the poverty threshold.

Gini index of income inequality. The Gini index of income inequality measures the distribution of income across households in a zip code from the ACS. It ranges from 0, in which households in a neighborhood have "perfect equality" or have an equal share of income, to 1, in which households in a neighborhood have "perfect inequality" or one household has all the income calculated for that zip code. Thus, higher values indicate more income inequality in a given zip code.

Percentage of Black/African American residents in zip code. The percentage of Black/African American people living in participants' zip codes is assessed using American Community Survey 5-year estimates between 2014 and 2018. The U.S. Census and ACS uses self-identification in most cases to determine race of household members. However, if race of

---

[2] The American Community Survey data is used and collected in partnership with the U.S. Census data annually and averaged over 5 years to create more up-to-date data on communities than the decennial Census. The American Community Survey data is thus a "rolling" data collection, constantly measuring the U.S. population using small monthly samples, and commonly used to measure a host of demographic factors (Spielman & Singleton, 2015; see Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012 for a relevant example). The 5-year estimate data are sampled from all zip code tabulation areas and the latest ACS data collection at the time of the study spanned 2014-2018.

any household member is missing, the data is imputed based on familial relation (e.g., natural-born children's races would be imputed based on parental data) or in the case of missing across the household, race was imputed based on previously collected household information. The percentage of Black/African Americans residing in the ZCTA was calculated by dividing the number of residents who chose Black/African American as their race by the total population that answered the race question on the ACS. Higher values represent more Black/African Americans living in a given ZCTA.

Perceived racial composition of Black neighbors. Participants' perceptions of the percentage of Black residents in their neighborhoods is assessed with one item: "What percentage of your neighborhood is Black/African American?" Responses options were on a five-point scale: 1= less than 10%, 2= 10-20%, 3= 21-50%, 4= 51-75%, 5= 76-100%.

Length of time lived in city/town. Participants reported how long they have lived in their current city or town using one of seven response options: 1) less than 5 years, 2) 6-10 years, 3)11-15 years, 4) 16-20 years, 5) 21-25 years, 6) 26-30 years, 7) 30 years or more.

Length of time lived in neighborhood. Participants chose from the same five response options how long they have lived in their present neighborhood: 1) less than 5 years, 2) 6-10 years, 3)11-15 years, 4) 16-20 years, or 5) 21-25 years.

Perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ). Participants reported their perceptions of their neighborhood quality using a ten-item measure designed for this study. The items asked about features of the neighborhood including the presence of resources such as parks, perceptions of neighborhood safety, and perceived social cohesion between neighbors. Sample items included "In my neighborhood, there are parks where people can play, jog, and have a good time." and "I live in a close-knit neighborhood". The response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5

(strongly agree). Three items were reverse-scored items: 1) “I don't trust the people in my neighborhood”; 2) “In my neighborhood it is pretty common to see graffiti on walls or trash on the streets”; and 3) “In my neighborhood families do not feel safe walking or allowing their children to play on the streets.” Participants’ scores were averaged, and higher scores reflect higher perceptions of neighborhood quality. Cohen’s alpha coefficient for this scale was .64.

Results

Descriptive Statistics. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among the independent and dependent variables examined in this study. Most young Black adults reported attaining some college education (44%; n = 229). The sample was more varied in terms of combined household income, with the largest proportions reporting household incomes of $40-$59,999 (22%, n = 112) and $60-$79,999 (23%; n = 118). The U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey (ACS) estimates from 2018 suggest that 87% of Black Americans have a high school diploma or higher and 22% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Similarly, the ACS 2018 estimates suggest that Black Americans had a mean household income of $22,237 over the past year. As such, the current study’s sample is about average on educational attainment in comparison to Black Americans generally, but the sample reports considerably higher combined household income than most Black Americans.

Three participants identified as non-binary and gender minority individuals. These individuals were excluded from the analyses so as to not overlook their uniquely gendered experiences by grouping them with cis-gendered men and women in the rest of the sample. Thus the remaining analytic sample (n = 521) is 51% Black women (n = 264). Young Black adults in the sample were mostly on the older end of emerging adulthood, ages 25 to 30 (78%; n = 407). However, women (M = 25.8; SD = 3.62) in the sample were slightly younger than men (M =

27.2; *SD* = 2.59) on average. Forty-four percent of the sample had some college education (*n* = 230), but one-third of participants had a college degree (30%; *n* = 158) and about a quarter of the sample had a GED/high school diploma (13%; *n* = 66), a graduate/professional degree (11%; *n* = 57), and less than high school education (2%; *n* = 12) combined. Black women in the sample were slightly more educated than Black men in the sample. Forty percent of Black women reported having some college education (*n* = 106) as was the case for Black men (48%; *n* = 123), but more Black women had a college degree (34%; *n* = 89) or a graduate/professional degree (13%; *n* = 34) than Black men (college degree: 26%; *n* = 67; graduate/professional degree: 9%; *n* = 23). However, Black men seem to have slightly higher combined household income than Black women. Twenty-nine percent of Black men reported combined household incomes of $60-79,999 (*n* = 74) while 22% of Black women reported combined household incomes of $40-59,999 (*n* = 59). Also, women were mostly not partnered (54%; *n* = 143) while men were mostly partnered (56%; *n* = 145), which could be explain women's lower combined household incomes. Finally, most women in the sample were not parents (59%; *n* = 137) and most men in the sample were parents (52%; *n* = 113). Fourteen percent of the sample did not enter a response for the open-ended item asking about the number of children they had, but because it is not clear whether they do not have children or simply left the response blank, they were excluded from the regression analyses (*n* = 73).

Participants reported moderately high perceptions of neighborhood quality, as the sample mean is 3.2 on a scale from 1-5. The item with the highest mean is: "In my neighborhood, there are parks where people can play, jog, or have a good time" (*M*= 3.44, *SD* = 1.11). The item with the lowest mean is: "Police treat people in my neighborhood with respect" (*M* = 3.09, *SD* =

1.02). The largest proportion of participants lived in their current cities/towns between 6 and 10 years (26%; $n = 135$) and 21 years and more (23%; $n = 118$), but the average was around 6 to 10 years of residence ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.26$). Similarly, the average length of residence in the current neighborhood was between 6 and 10 years ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 1.26$), but the largest proportion of participants lived in their current neighborhood between 6 and 10 years (29%; $n = 147$) and between 1 and 5 years (26%; $n = 135$). Young Black adults in the sample reported that their neighborhoods were about 21% to 50% African American/Black on average ($M = 2.59$; $SD = 1.10$), and ACS data indicates that their zip codes were also about 21% Black/African American on average ($M = .21$; $SD = .25$). The zip codes in which participants lived have an average of 7,270 people living per square mile ($SD = 12090.75$). The Gini index of income inequality average across zip codes included in the study is .47, suggesting that participants lived in zip codes that are moderately inequitable in relation to the distribution of income ($SD = .06$). Specifically, participants lived in zip codes where about 36% of the population is poor or struggling financially on average ($M = .36$; $SD = .17$).

Within the social identities and social locations variables, participants who reported high educational attainment ($r = .16$, $p < .001$) and higher combined household incomes ($r = .13$, $p < .01$) also reported higher PNQ. The neighborhood sociostructural features correlations suggest that participants who perceive more Black neighbors in their neighborhoods ($r = -.20$, $p < .001$) and who live in zip codes where more residents are poor or struggling ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$) report lower PNQ. The neighborhood social capital factors (i.e., length of residence in the neighborhood and length of residence in the city or town) were not correlated with PNQ.

Primary Analyses. Block-wise regression was used to answer the research questions. The first block consisted of social identities and social locations: age, combined household

income, educational attainment, parental status, and partner status. The second block included neighborhood sociostructural factors: 1) percentage of residents in the zip code who have a ratio of income to poverty level classified as poor or struggling, 2) population density, 3) perceived racial composition of neighbors who are Black, and 4) percentage of Black residents in participants' zip codes. The last step included two neighborhood social capital variables: 1) participants' length of residence in the current neighborhood, and 2) length of residence in the city/town. These analyses explored associations between each variable and perceptions of neighborhood quality as well as the extent to which the variables in each step significantly contribute to variance in perceptions of neighborhood quality. In the full sample analysis, I tested this model with gender included as a social identity in Block 1. This analysis allowed me to examine whether gender is associated with PNQ when all other variables are controlled statistically. I then tested the model separately for Black women and Black men in gender stratified models to examine the extent to which the relations between variables differ for men and women. The three block-wise regression models (i.e., the full sample and gender stratified analyses) are displayed in Table 2.

Full Sample Results. The block-wise regression analyses with the full sample modeled PNQ in three steps: 1) social identities and social locations, 2) neighborhood sociostructural features, and 3) neighborhood social capital (see Table 2). As hypothesized, each model accounted for significant variance in PNQ. In model 1, educational attainment, combined household income, and parental status are associated with PNQ. Specifically, Black emerging adults with higher levels of educational attainment reported significantly higher PNQ than their less-educated counterparts ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$). Similarly, participants who reported higher combined household incomes also reported higher PNQ than their lower-income young Black

counterparts ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$). With regard to parental status, participants without children ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$) reported higher PNQ than participants with children. The relation between partner status and perceptions of neighborhood quality was marginally significant, such that participants with partners reported higher PNQ than those who are not partnered ($\beta = .14$, $p = .052$). Together, these variables account for significantly more variance in perceptions of neighborhood quality than chance alone ($R^2 = .07$, $p < .001$).

In step 2, partner status, perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors and percentage of zip code residents who are poor or struggling financially were significantly related to PNQ. Specifically, Black emerging adults with partners report higher PNQ than those without partners ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$). Higher perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .001$) and a higher percentage of residents in the zip code who are poor or struggling ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$) were related to lower PNQ. The percentage of Black residents in the zip code trended positive in its relation with perceptions of neighborhood quality ($\beta = .11$, $p = .058$). The model with social identities, social locations, and neighborhood sociostructural features is significant ($R^2 = .14$, $p = .001$). Together, these variables accounted for significantly more variance in PNQ than the social identities and social locations block alone ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, p < .001).

In step 3, educational attainment was positively related to PNQ such that higher educational attainment is associated with higher PNQ ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$). Combined household income was also positively related to PNQ such that higher household incomes are associated with higher PNQ ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$). Partner status and parental status were related to PNQ, as participants with children and without partners rate the quality of their neighborhood lower than participants without children ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$) and with partners ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$). Interestingly, perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors were negatively related to PNQ ($\beta = -.25$, $p <$

.001), while the percentage of Black residents in one's zip code was positively related to PNQ (β = .11, $p < .05$). Lastly, the percentage of residents in the zip code who are poor or struggling was negatively related to PNQ, such that higher proportions of residents living below or near the poverty line was associated with lower PNQ (β = -.16, $p < .01$). However, neighborhood social capital factors, namely length of residence in the city/town and length of residence in the neighborhood, were not associated with PNQ in this sample. This final model explained 15% of the variance in PNQ ($R^2 = .15$, F (2, 382) = 3.44, $p < .05$), a significant change in F ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p < .05$).

Women Only Sample. Table 2 shows the results of the block-wise regression analyses with only the Black women (n= 264) in the sample. The results of the final model for the women only sample yielded significant main effects and the overall model is significant. However, only steps 1 and 2 yielded significant changes in R^2 values. The neighborhood social capital block, which consisted of residents' length of time lived in the neighborhood and length of time lived in the city/town, did not significantly add to the variance that the model explained in PNQ for Black women.

In step 1, education was marginally related to PNQ and income was significantly associated with PNQ for Black women in the sample. Specifically, young Black women with higher levels of educational attainment reported higher PNQ than their less-educated Black women counterparts, but this relation did not reach significance (β = .14, p =.053). Young Black women with higher combined household incomes reported higher PNQ than their young Black women counterparts who have lower household incomes (β = .23, $p < .01$). Unlike in the full sample results, parental status and partner status were not significantly related to PNQ for Black

women. This step significantly accounted for 11% of the variance in perceptions of neighborhood quality for young Black women ($R^2 = .11$, F (5, 196) = 4.92, $p < .001$).

When neighborhood sociostructural features were added to the model, combined household income is still positively related to PNQ (β = .18, $p < .01$) and education is still a marginally significant factor related to PNQ (β = .13, p =.066). Perceptions of Black neighbors, the percentage of Black residents in the zip code, and the percentage of residents in the zip code who are poor or struggling financially were the neighborhood sociostructural variables that were significantly associated with PNQ for Black women. Black women who reported increased perceptions of the percentage of Black people in their neighborhood also reported lower PNQ (β = -.35, $p < .001$). Yet, young Black women who live in zip codes with higher percentages of Black residents reported higher PNQ (β = .17, $p < .05$). Finally, Black women who live in zip codes with higher percentages of residents who are living near or below the poverty line reported lower PNQ (β = -.22, $p < .01$). The model with social identities, social locations, and neighborhood sociostructural variables accounted for 30% of the variance in PNQ for young Black women in the sample ($R^2 = .30$, F (10, 191) = 8.23, $p < .001$). Together, these variables accounted for significantly more variance in PNQ than the social identities and social locations block alone ($\Delta R^2 = .19$, p < .001).

In the final model, length of time lived in the city/town and length of time lived in the neighborhood was added to the analysis. Combined household income, educational attainment, and some of the neighborhood sociostructural features remained as the only factors significantly associated with PNQ for Black women in the sample. Combined household income was positively related to PNQ such that women with higher household incomes reported higher PNQ (β = .18, $p < .01$). Young Black women who reported higher levels of educational attainment

also reported higher levels of PNQ (β = .14, $p < .05$). Interestingly, perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors were negatively related to PNQ (β = -.37, $p < .001$), while the percentage of Black residents in one's zip code was positively related to PNQ (β = .16, $p < .05$). Lastly, the percentage of residents in the zip code who are poor or struggling was negatively related to PNQ, such that more residents living below or near the poverty line was associated with lower PNQ (β = -.22, $p < .01$). Neighborhood social capital factors were not significantly related to PNQ and the addition of the neighborhood social capital factors did not result in a significant change in F ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .41$). However, the final model was significant and explained 31% of the variance in perceptions of neighborhood quality ($R^2 = .31$, F (12, 189) = 7.00, $p < .001$).

To summarize, the findings from the women-only sample and the full sample were very similar. Specifically, combined household income, educational attainment, and the percentage of Black residents in the zip code were positively related to PNQ in both samples. The perception of the percentage of Black neighbors and the percentage of zip code residents who are poor or struggling financially were negatively related to PNQ for both the overall sample and for women only. However, while in the full sample partner status and parental status are related to perceptions of neighborhood quality, these variables were not related to PNQ for Black women.

Men Only Sample. Table 1 depicts the regression coefficients, standard errors, and p-values for the analyses with Black men only (n= 257). Contrary to our hypothesis, neither the overall model nor each of the steps are significantly related to PNQ for Black men in the sample. The social identities and social locations block did not significantly account for variance in PNQ among men ($R^2 = .04$, F (5, 188) = 1.58, $p = .17$). However, educational attainment was significantly related to PNQ, such that men who reported higher levels of educational attainment reported higher PNQ (β = .16, $p < .05$). The variables included in the neighborhood

sociostructural features block were not related to PNQ or associated with a significant change in F compared to the previous block for Black men ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .96$). Lastly, the addition of the neighborhood social capital features did not result in a significant change in F ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p = .31$) or emerge as significant predictors of PNQ. In the final model, young Black men with higher educational attainment report higher PNQ ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$). However, the final model does not significantly account for variance in PNQ for Black men in the sample ($R^2 = .06$, F (12, 181) = .93, $p = .51$).

Discussion

The current study engaged Connerly and Marans' (1985) model of PNQ as a starting point for examining Black emerging adults' perceptions of the urban neighborhoods in which they live. I considered three domains of potential contributors to young Black adults' PNQ: social identities and social locations, neighborhood sociostructural features, and neighborhood social capital. Results suggest that social identities and social locations, namely combined household income, education, partner status, and parental status, were associated with PNQ. Neighborhood sociostructural features, namely perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors, residents in the zip code who are poor or financially struggling, and Black residents in the zip code, were also associated with PNQ. The factors included in the neighborhood social capital domain, length of residence in the city/town and length of residence in the neighborhood, were not associated with PNQ. Gender stratified regression analyses suggest that social positions and neighborhood sociostructural features are contributors to PNQ, especially for Black emerging adult women, but education was the only significant contribution to PNQ for Black emerging adult men.

Social Identities and Social Locations. I explored age, gender, education level, combined household income, partner status, and parental status as potential contributors to perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ) in the social identities and social locations domain. In alignment with previous research, young Black residents with higher household incomes and higher educational attainment rated their neighborhood quality higher than their lower-income and less educated young Black counterparts in the current study (Connerly et al., 1985; Kasl et al., 1972). More materially secure and more educated Black emerging adults may be able to afford "objectively" higher quality neighborhoods than their lower-income young Black counterparts. Further, economically privileged young Black adults may choose particular neighborhoods for a variety of material and conceptual reasons. Indeed, Galster and Sharkey (2017) argue that the resources, conditions, and opportunities present in one's geographic context (i.e., spatial opportunity structure) shapes what seems desirable, the potential payoffs for individuals, and ultimately, generational socioeconomic privilege or disadvantage. Specifically, the spatial opportunity structure one is situated within mediates what opportunities or attributes one can experience or gain as well as what the outcomes may be of holding those attributes. As such, young Black adults with the economic ability to choose neighborhoods may be situated within spatial opportunity structures and neighborhoods that meet their standards for high neighborhood quality. Markers of neighborhood quality, such as high ratings for school districts, may make a potential neighborhood desirable as well as communicate high payoff in potential benefits of particular neighborhoods to young Black adults (Owens, 2017). Further, relative to their counterparts, Black emerging adults with more income and higher educational attainment may be more able to experience the benefits of the neighborhood they live in (e.g., they may be able to enjoy amenities in and near their neighborhoods), and avoid neighborhood challenges,

such as a lack of quality public transportation. Thus, the issues that may affect residents in neighborhoods with fewer resources may have less of an effect on young Black adults with more class privilege. Their relative privilege and therefore interceded interaction with the neighborhood may increase their PNQ compared to their less well-resourced Black counterparts.

Social locations also were associated with PNQ. I found that young Black adults in the sample who are partnered and those who do not have children rated their neighborhood quality higher than their counterparts who are unpartnered and/or who are parents. Material and class privilege may explain the partner status findings, as partnered young adults may cohabitate or share living expenses and have higher combined household incomes and more disposable income as a unit to choose where to live. These individuals may be better able to curate their experience of the neighborhood than single young Black adults. The findings regarding parental status are aligned with previous literature (Galster & Santiago, 2016; Stokes, 2019). Parents may expect more or have different expectations of their neighborhood amenities because of their desire for their children to have access to safe, clean, and quality living spaces. For parents, some aspects of neighborhood quality may also affect their perceptions of the neighborhood overall, such as public school quality. Several of the PNQ items reference public services used by children, like parks and schools. The differences in PNQ ratings among partnered and unpartnered participants and parental and non-parental adults may reflect the reality that social location matters in neighborhood evaluations. As existing research has not explored the potential contribution of partner status to PNQ, the current study contributes to the literature concerning Black emerging adults' subjective neighborhood assessment.

The gender stratified analyses revealed that the social identities and social locations were related to PNQ for young Black women but not for young Black men. The analyses for young

Black women mirrored the full sample analyses, with the exception of the parental and partner status findings. Specifically, for young Black women, combined household income and education were positively related to PNQ. However, for young Black men, education was the only variable that was significantly related to PNQ, and the overall model did not significantly explain variance in PNQ. Black women in the current study report higher levels of educational attainment and are more likely than Black men in the sample to report that they are unpartnered. Young Black women's higher incomes may allow them to choose neighborhoods that create a higher quality of life, such as access to desired businesses and recreation, and living within an acceptable distance from work or school. Partnered or not, young Black women may be especially motivated to maintain close relationships with their friends and family (Higginbotham & Weber, 1992). In addition to the spatial privileges that economic privilege may afford young Black adults, these findings suggest that education may play a particularly meaningful role in the ways that young Black women and men understand and evaluate the quality of the urban neighborhoods where they live. Future research would benefit from exploring the specific role of educational institutions in young Black adult's perceptions and evaluations of urban neighborhoods. Specifically, it is important to explore the ways in which students may be socialized within K-12 and higher education institutions to attend to particular markers of urban neighborhood quality. Understanding the vehicles by which such socialization may occur, and the conditions under which young people internalize or push back against socialized messages will be important areas of inquiry.

The findings that parent and partner status were significantly associated with PNQ in the full sample analyses, but not in the gender stratified analyses is worth noting. It is also worth noting that these indices of social location were also not correlated with PNQ in the bivariate

correlations. Thus, the regression findings may be a statistical artifact. Alternatively, parent and partner status may be related to a third variable which is related to PNQ and these social location indices are not independently related to PNQ. For example, a third factor such as combined household income may be related to the presence of a partner or children. However, it is possible that the confounding third construct may not be measured in the current study but explains the relations found in the full sample analyses. For example, it may the case that household income is associated with access to neighborhood level amenities that cater to young couples, and this latter variable is associated with PNQ. While parent and partner status were not significantly associated with PNQ for Black women and Black men separately, young Black adults as a whole rated the quality of their neighborhood higher when they are partnered and when they have no children. Future research with a larger sample would benefit from assessing whether partnered and childless young Black adults respond to PNQ measures differently than their single and parental counterparts using measurement invariance techniques. For example, measurement invariance techniques may help to determine whether there are subgroup differences in the ways that young Black adults respond to items on neighborhood assessment measures. Also, qualitative research with partnered and unpartnered people and with people who are parenting as well as those who are not may illuminate potential criteria for neighborhood evaluation.

Neighborhood Sociostructural Features. Black emerging adults who believed that a higher percentage of Black people live in their neighborhood and those who lived in zip codes where higher percentages of residents were poor or financially struggling rated the features of their neighborhoods lower. The presence of high proportions of Black neighbors and of people who are struggling financially (regardless of race/ethnicity) may signal the potential for reduced neighborhood quality to young Black residents. The equation of these factors would be

consistent with research that supports the relation between the presence of these minoritized and marginalized populations and material inequity in urban areas (Reardon, Townsend, & Fox, 2017). These findings are in line with previous research that suggests that perceptions of others in one's community (i.e., perceived similarity) contribute to residents' perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood attributes (Connerly et al., 1985). These potential signifiers are embedded within histories of redlining and discriminatory public housing policies which have reduced the quality of predominantly racial/ethnic minority and poor neighborhoods (Marable, 1983; Williams, 2004). These legacies have material consequences today, such that residents of predominantly racial/ethnic and/or poor neighborhoods suffer from more physical and psychological health issues than residents of mostly White and middle- to upper-class neighborhoods (Snedker & Hooven, 2013; Weden et al., 2008). Further, Bonam and colleagues found that among Black, White, and other racial/ethnic groups, space is racialized such that imagined Black spaces are characterized as undesirable and impoverished, and imagined White spaces are characterized as affluent and attractive. Future qualitative work should explicitly explore what perceptions of substantial numbers of Black neighbors communicate to young Black urban residents. Further, it would be beneficial to examine if there are particular aspects of neighborhoods with higher proportions of Black or financially struggling urban residents that Black emerging adults notice.

Even as legacies of inequity disproportionately impact Black urban residents across class lines, the problematic conflation of race and class in PNQ research obscures the diversity within Black urban residents and among the neighborhoods in which they live. Black urban residents live in middle-class and upper-class neighborhoods across the United States (Lacy, 2007; Michney, 2017; Pattillo, 2005). However, the blanket tendency to assume that Black urban

residents are poor and that Black people live in undesirable settings may undergird the relation between the social identities and PNQ. These assumptions have consequences. For example, Moore (2013) found that despite the influx of middle-class Black residents into lower-income Black neighborhoods, Black middle-class residents noted that the public's perception of these spaces maintained master narratives of a poor and struggling Black "ghetto". These public perceptions keep gentrifying neighborhoods in low demand and may influence the possibilities of improvement to neighborhood features, like recreation and schools. It may be the case that young middle-class Black residents have a lower PNQ in spaces where there are more Black residents or people who are struggling financially, as they identify issues that impact neighborhood quality. Yet, middle-class Black emerging adults may not endorse a global negative evaluation of the neighborhoods in which they reside, which may be greater than the sum of its issues of neighborhood quality.

The seemingly contradictory findings regarding young Black adults' perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors and the actual percentage of Black residents in the zip code emphasizes the importance of examining both subjective and "objective" measures of neighborhood sociostructural features. Scholars have noted that both objective and subjective measures may relate to PNQ, but in meaningfully different ways (Bonaiuto et al., 2004). In the current study, the actual percentage of Black residents in the zip code is positively related to PNQ. The concept of residential preferences for Black urban residents is relevant to these findings. Previous research noted that most Black people preferred an equally split or increasingly Black neighborhood to an increasingly White neighborhood (Farley et al., 1997; Pattillo, 2005). However, more educated and higher income Black participants strongly preferred mostly White neighborhoods when compared to their less educated and lower income Black

counterparts, who preferred mostly Black neighborhoods. Importantly, research in Black Geographies complicates these ideas about racialized residential preference in that this work suggests that even as people often work to minimize the presence of actual Black residents, Blackness (but not necessarily Black people or ways of life) can be considered a "cool" aesthetic that draws people in (Thompson-Summers, 2019). Specifically, businesses may use signage that communicates a value of Black culture, such as a raised black fist, despite their services being economically out of reach for the Black communities who used to reside there. Thompson-Summers' (2019) work raises the question of whether for young Black adults, the actual Black people living in the zip code may signal and proxy an aesthetic value that is positively related with PNQ, while the perceptions of close proximity to Black people diminishes PNQ.

A more positive read of these findings raises the questions of agency and intersectionality (Combahee River Collective, 1977/1983) in young Black residents' evaluations of spaces. Black emerging adults who have the means to choose their neighborhoods may benefit from the reality that the surrounding community is predominately Black, in that this demographic reality may be associated with the availability of culturally valued amenities and services in the community. For example, research suggests that where there is a higher concentration of Black residents in the larger community, more employment and recreational opportunities may exist that suits young Black adults' needs (Boyd, 1996). The findings of this study suggests that young Black urban residents may be engaging in an agentic and intersectional kind of "spatial literacy" in which their own social identities and the social identities of their neighbors jointly contribute to the value they place on their neighborhoods. Black emerging adults' spatial literacy may also reflect an awareness of dominant narratives of urban spaces that are home to Black people. Further, the

spatial literacies of Black emerging adults may be informed by other aspects of their specific positionality (i.e., gender or parental status).

The intersectional nature of young Black adults' perceptions of urban neighborhoods may be evident in the current study's findings. It may be the case that the significant predictors related to PNQ, namely household income, Black residents in the zip code, poor or struggling zip code residents, and perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors, are especially impactful or reliable indicators of neighborhood quality for young Black women than for young Black men in the sample. Previous research has suggested that there is an interplay between race and gender such that young Black women are more attuned to safety and communal concerns in urban spaces, leading them to rate their neighborhood quality lower than young Black men (Assari et al., 2015; Carp & Carp, 1982). However, Davis and colleagues' (2020) found that the lack of amenities that support a healthy lifestyle or that mirror the level of investment that they have in their neighborhoods contributes to how Black urban-residing women perceive and evaluate their urban neighborhoods. Perhaps the perception of the percentage of Black neighbors or the presence of people who are struggling financially, communicate messages about what the neighborhood can offer in terms of amenities, such as health food stores or coffee shops, to young Black women. The policy and structural forces that shape material conditions in predominately Black zip codes or in zip codes where there are higher percentages of poor or financially struggling people may be especially constraining to Black women, who are seeking particular amenities and resources to inform their neighborhood assessment. Young Black women may attend to the identities of others around them because it has been reliable information for their read and navigation of urban spaces, whereas young Black men may have other elements that are integral to their spatial literacy. More work is needed to understand what

aspects of the neighborhood contribute to young Black men's perceptions and evaluations of urban neighborhoods in particular. Ethnographic and interview methods with young Black men and women would contribute to the literature on this topic by examining these groups use the social identities of others in their community to inform their perceptions and evaluations of urban neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Social Capital. Contrary to my hypotheses, neighborhood social capital, or the length of residence in the neighborhood or city/town, was not related to PNQ for young Black adults in the sample. Length of residence has been argued to proxy neighborhood attachment and investment, but the mechanisms by which the amount of time living in a place is related to any form of neighborhood assessment are still in question (Greenberg, 1999; van Kemp et al., 2003). Most participants in the sample lived in their neighborhoods and cities/towns between 6 and 10 years. However, it is possible that for emerging adult participants this may not be a long enough time period to establish extensive or strong ties with others in the community or to the neighborhood. More direct measures of neighborhood social capital (e.g., the strength and extensiveness of ties to the community and informal social activities) may be needed to assess its relation with PNQ for young Black people. It may also be worthwhile to investigate whether specific types of neighborhood social capital, such as community-building activities and involvement in neighborhood-focused groups, are especially important for urban-residing Black adults in relation to PNQ. For example, Hunter and colleagues (2016) discussed block parties known as "street family reunions" and little league baseball games in Chicago that created and maintained intergenerational bonds and honored community memories. These Black Placemaking activities may reflect connections between neighborhood social capital and perceptions of neighborhoods, which are important to continue to explore.

Contrary to my hypotheses and previous research, some social identities and neighborhood sociostructural features were not related to young Black adults' PNQ (Carp & Carp, 1982; Connerly & Marans, 1985). For example, age was not related in the overall analyses nor in the gender-stratified analyses. It may be the case that young Black adults between 18 and 30 years old prioritize similar neighborhoods features as indicators of quality. The analytic sample is disproportionately child-free and unpartnered, which may make their priorities more similar to each other than different. The Gini income inequality index was also not significantly related to PNQ in the current study. Given their relative financial security, participants may navigate urban communities in ways that do not bring them into contact with inequitable income distribution across residents. Future research will benefit from using mixed methods, including measurement invariance and qualitative cognitive debriefing regarding existing neighborhood quality scales, to examine the extent to which Black emerging adults vary in their priorities for neighborhood quality. For example, qualitative research that asks young Black adults to respond to existing neighborhood assessment scales and then reflect upon how they made their evaluations and how they interpreted items regarding neighborhood quality will provide insight to patterns observed in the current study.

Limitations. As with all studies, there are important limitations to consider that contextualize the findings of this study and point to worthy future directions. The current study is cross-sectional and limited to the emerging adult age group. Future research would benefit from examining these relations longitudinally with both young Black adults and Black adults across the lifespan. This study was also exploratory. The adapted model that guided this work allowed us to better understand the factors that are associated with PNQ particularly among a demographic group (educated and well-resourced, Black, urban-residing emerging adults) that

has been left out of the conversation on PNQ. However, the current study (which relies on a secondary analysis of data) used a measure developed for the larger data collection study, but the items on the measure were based on existing literature and related studies rather than urban residents' perceptions of the distinguishing or essential features they would highlight in their neighborhoods. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .64 in the current study, which suggests that a stronger measure of PNQ should be developed and validated with Black/African Americans for use in future studies. It is important to note that higher perceptions of neighborhood quality could be understood as more positive perceptions. However, I emphasized the importance of understanding the perceptions of neighborhood quality scale in the context of residents' evaluations of the quality, or degree of excellence, of the neighborhood features assessed. Thus, I did not interpret lower scores as more negative perceptions of neighborhood features, but as evaluations of these features as lower quality. While participants may evaluate their neighborhoods' features as lacking in certain areas, that does not equate to a negative evaluation of those features globally. For example, the sample item regarding parks may lack equipment or lighting to encourage play or running, but the park may be a key characteristic of one's neighborhood which allows for the community to gather and spend quality time. Thus, participants may answer the questions reflecting a lack of quality according to the standards in the items but may not rate that neighborhood feature negatively. It is imperative that the study of subjective neighborhood assessment involve residents in the development of this research agenda going forward. PNQ has the potential to become a more meaningful concept if informed by those who live in the neighborhoods being assessed. Mixed and multiple method studies can reveal more rich and broad data than either approach has yielded on this topic thus far.

Conclusion

This study advances extant research on PNQ in four ways. First, the results from this study highlight that there is much more work needed to understand how perceptions and evaluations of urban spaces are formulated among young Black adults in particular. Second, the findings suggest that social identities and social locations of young Black urban residents and of their neighbors are important for perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ)--particularly for emerging adult aged Black women. Racial and class identities of young Black women and their neighbors may have implications for both the ways that young Black women experience their neighborhoods and make sense of the conditions of the neighborhoods in which they live. Third, this study illustrated the independent and meaningfully different contributions of objective and subjective measures of neighborhood sociostructural features, namely real and perceived racial composition of the surrounding community. The findings that lower perceptions of Black neighbors but higher percentages of Black residents in the zip code suggest the need for additional research that examines young Black adults' intersectional spatial analysis. Lastly, this study adds to the existing PNQ literature by using gender stratified analyses to demonstrate that the proposed adaptation of the PNQ model is not explanatory of young Black men's perceptions and evaluations of their urban neighborhoods. As such, future research would benefit from multi-method efforts to assess what informs young Black men's spatial literacy, or the ways in which young Black men read and navigate space and evaluate its quality.

The recommendations based on the current study are two-fold: 1) that research on PNQ center residents' perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality with attention to diversity within communities, and 2) that policy and interventions should attend to the ways that race, gender, and class independently and collectively are spatialized, and shape the ways that people

perceive spaces. For researchers, it will be important to bring insights from across disciplines to bear on the findings of these subsequent examinations of PNQ, so as not to misinterpret patterns of findings. Simplistic interpretations of these relations would be a disservice to the research on this topic. Indeed, PNQ carries a historical and social group specificity that cannot be ignored, and as such, research that has examined the relationships between specific groups of people and urban spaces offer important context to this work. For policymakers and interventionists, the current study offers some potential points of collaborations with researchers. Policy makers and practitioners interested in supporting the well-being of young Black adults in urban areas can work with communities to better understand how social identities of residents may inform their reading and experience of neighborhood quality. Particular attention must be paid to the ways that gender in particular may create unique experiences among young Black men and women that impact their experiences and evaluations of urban areas.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for Independent and Dependent Variables

Measure	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age	26.5	3.23	--													
2. Gender	1.5	.50	-.22***	--												
3. Education	3.35	.92	.17***	.12**	--											
4. Household Income	4.18	1.82	.15**	-.02	.17**	--										
5. Parental Status	.46	.50	.47***	-.11*	-.04	.29***	--									
6. Partner Status	.51	.50	.47***	-.11*	.14**	.22***	.70***	--								
7. Population Density[a]	3.38	.79	-.08	.04	.15**	.11*	.08	.05	--							
8. Black in Zip Code	.21	.25	-.33***	.08	-.02	-.10*	-.20***	-.05	-.05	--						
9. Gini Index	.47	.06	-.02	-.05	.15**	-.00	-.07	-.13**	.26***	.18***	--					
10. Poverty Density	.36	.17	-.17***	.05	-.07	-.18***	-.05	-.04	.00	.40***	.25***	--				
11. Black Neighbors	2.59	1.10	-.19***	.15**	.01	-.06	-.12*	-.02	.01	.26***	.05	.20***	--			
12. City/Town Time	3.32	1.26	.05	-.08	-.17***	.05	.08*	.09*	.02	.07	-.04	.13**	.23***	--		
13. Neighborhood Time	3.00	1.26	.06	-.05	-.16***	.07	.11*	.06	.05	.02	-.03	.13**	.25***	.81***	--	
14. PNQ	3.23	.54	.05	-.05	.16***	.13**	-.00	.09	.05	-.02	-.03	-.15**	-.20***	.02	.01	--

Note. Pairwise *N* ranges from 461 to 521. [a]Transformed to log10 for ease of interpretation. *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$.

Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality (PNQ) for Young Black Adults from Social Identities/Locations, Neighborhood Sociostructural Features, and Neighborhood Social Capital

	PNQ-Overall Sample				PNQ-Black Women				PNQ-Black Men			
Step and Predictor Variable		β	*B*	*SE B*		β	*B*	*SE B*		β	*B*	*SE B*
Step 1												
Age		.04	.01	.01		.08	.01	.01		-.07	-.01	.02
Gender		-.01	-.01	.06		--	--	--		--	--	--
Education		.15**	.09**	.03		.14^{+}	.10^{+}	.05		.16*	.09*	.04
Household Income		.15**	.05**	.02		.23*	.07*	.02		.03	.01	.02
Parental Status		-.16**	-.18**	.08		-.16	-.19	.13		-.13	-.14	.11
Partner Status		.14^{+}	.16^{+}	.08		.13	.15	.12		.14	.14	.11
R^2	.07***				.11***				.04			
Step 2												
Age		0	0	.01		0	0	.01		-.08	-.02	.02
Gender		.01	.01	.06		--	--	--		--	--	--
Education		.15**	.10**	.03		.13^{+}	.08^{+}	.05		.17*	.10*	.04
Household Income		.12*	.04*	.02		.18**	.05**	.02		.04	.01	.02
Parental Status		-.17*	-.20*	.08		-.15	-.18	.12		-.13	-.14	.12
Partner Status		.18*	.20*	.08		.15	.18	.11		.14	.15	.11
Pop. Density (log10)		-.06	-.05	.04		-.05	-.04	.06		-.03	-.02	.05
Black in Zip Code		.10^{+}	.23^{+}	.12		.17*	.38*	.16		-.01	-.03	.19
Gini Index		-.03	-.25	.46		-.03	-.28	.60		-.05	-.41	.69
Poverty Density		-.14*	-.45*	.18		-.20**	-.71**	.24		-.01	-.02	.26
Black Neighbors		-.21***	-.11***	.03		-.36***	-.18***	.03		0	0	.04
R^2	.14***				.30***				.05			
Step 3												
Age		-.02	0	.01		-.02	0	.01		-.07	-.01	.02
Gender		.01	.01	.06		--	--	--		--	--	--
Education		.18**	.11**	.03		.14*	.09*	.05		.19*	.11*	.05
Household Income		.11*	.03*	.02		.18**	.05**	.02		.02	.01	.03
Parental Status		-.18*	-.20*	.08		-.15	-.19	.12		-.14	-.15	.12
Partner Status		.17*	.19*	.08		.15	.18	.11		.14	.15	.11
Pop. Density (log10)		-.06	-.04	.04		-.05	-.04	.06		-.03	-.02	.05
Black in Zip Code		.11*	.24*	.12		.16*	.35*	.16		.02	.03	.20
Gini Index		-.03	-.23	.45		-.02	-.20	.61		-.05	-.41	.69
Poverty Density		-.16**	-.51**	.18		-.21**	-.73**	.25		-.04	-.11	.27
Black Neighbors		-.25***	-.12***	.03		-.38***	-.19***	.03		-.05	-.03	.04
City/Town Time		0	0	.04		.07	.04	.05		-.04	-.02	.05
Neighborhood Time		.13	.06	.04		.03	.01	.05		.16	.07	.05
R^2	.15***				.31***				.06			
N	396				202				194			

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, +$p < .1$

Chapter 3 Black Emerging Adults' Critical Consciousness and Perceived Neighborhood Quality

Introduction

Urban areas are characterized by extreme stratification of resources. Low- and high-income families live further apart from each other now than they did in the 1970s, and since 2009 there has been an increase in segregation and concentrated poverty in particular neighborhoods (Galster & Sharkey, 2017). These neighborhood level disparities are racialized and classed. Black Americans in particular have historically lived among other Black and racial/ethnic minority populations in clusters according to their socioeconomic class (Itzigsohn & Brown, 2020). Black and Latinx Americans of any given income also typically live in lower income neighborhoods than White and Asian Americans of that same income level (Reardon, Townsend, & Fox, 2017). The segregation and resulting uneven distribution of resources, including quality public education, in urban areas means that oppression and privilege may be especially salient in these areas (Taylor Jr. et al., 2013), and the centrality of race in the stratification of resources means that Black and other racial/ethnic minoritized groups are likely to experience the brunt of the negative consequences of these processes. Yet, young Black adults are increasingly drawn to, and exerting greater influence over, urban areas (Moos, 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Given Black emerging adults' presence in urban areas, which are sites of stratification and injustice, it is important to account for the role of young Black adults' social analysis and social actions may contribute to how urban-residing young Black and African

American adults perceive and evaluate urban settings, particularly the neighborhoods in which they live.

Theory in sociology and Black feminist geography suggests that Black Americans have perspectives and evaluations of physical spaces, and that these perspectives are imbued with awareness of social inequities and with actions that are aimed at creating dignifying spaces for Black people outside of oppression-focused frameworks (Hunter et al., 2016; Lipsitz, 2011; McKittrick 2006, 2011). In psychology, scholars have also theorized that individual expectations for equity and their reflections on conditions of other people's neighborhoods impact generalized perceptions of neighborhood quality (Campbell et al., 1976; Connerly et al., 1985). However, these assertions have not been substantially investigated. Instead, much of the research on PNQ has focused on social identities and social locations rather than critical ideologies and behaviors. The current study seeks to fill that gap by examining the extent to which social identities, social locations, and critical consciousness (i.e., critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action) are related to perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) among a sample of Black, urban-residing adults. To achieve the aims of this study, I review literature that implicates each element of critical consciousness in the relations between race and place. I pay particular attention to arguments from Black feminist geography which offers a generative frame in which to analyze the associations between Black peoples' social identities, social locations, critical consciousness, and perceptions of physical spaces.

Literature Review

Critical consciousness and perceived neighborhood quality. Early research conceptualized PNQ as a generalized process that is impacted by a range of factors including expectations for equity (Campbell et al., 1976). However, little of the research on PNQ accounts

for the importance of social histories and context in relation to places, especially in the case of race and class politics that have shaped where and how one might live. More recently, sociological studies of race and place have indirectly implicated critical consciousness in Black people's evaluations of their neighborhoods (Lipsitz, 2011; Hunter et al., 2016). That is, these studies center marginalized people's insights about systemic oppressive conditions, as well as actions taken by marginalized people in order to liberate themselves and/or others from these oppressive systems (Freire, 1973, 2000). Critical consciousness consists of three elements: critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action (Diemer et al., 2015; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Critical reflection refers to the recognition of the inequities that create structural oppression for some and advantages for others (Diemer et al., 2015). Critical motivation reflects one's feelings of agency and commitment to addressing injustices. Critical action refers to individual or collective behaviors in which people engage in order to effect social change. Critical actions may involve political engagement in the traditional sense (e.g., voting), or engagement in social justice activities more broadly (e.g., protesting or sharing a political video on social media; Diemer et al., 2017).

Empirical Research on Social Identities and PNQ. Social identities, such as age, race and gender, are related to PNQ (Carp & Carp, 1982; Stokes, 2019). Moos (2016; et al., 2019) highlights the ways in which young people influence high-density urban areas by changing the economic landscape through the work they seek, and the community amenities (e.g., walkability) they value. Social locations, or close relationships with others, may impact perceptions and evaluations of urban spaces as well. Research suggests that parents may prioritize specific features of the neighborhood to evaluate neighborhood quality, such as the behaviors of nearby

neighbors or the presence of other children in the neighborhood (Galster et al., 2006). Theoretical arguments and studies in humanistic disciplines have pointed to the role of kinship and familial relationships in the ways that Black women in particular evaluate and navigate physical space (McKittrick, 2006). However, more empirical evidence is needed to explore the relations between social locations (i.e., parent and partner) and PNQ. Further, social identities and social locations utilized as categorical contributors to PNQ do not capture within-group variation in psychological concepts that may related to neighborhood evaluations. Conceptual frames that center social identities and social locations in the study of Black people's perceptions of urban spaces help to address this limitation and implicate critical consciousness as well.

Black Spatial Imaginary. The Black Spatial Imaginary offers conceptual guidance for theorizing the relation between race as a social identity, critical consciousness, and perceptions of physical spaces. Lipsitz (2011) argued that Black people developed unique perspectives on physical space in response to oppressive spatial systems including slavery, sharecropping, and segregation (Lipsitz, 2011). Lipsitz (2011) argued that these perspectives are informed by historical and contemporary inequities and can be seen in the ways that Black people advocate for public responsibility in relation to physical spaces. As a conceptual frame rooted in historical analysis, the Black Spatial Imaginary posits that Black adults imagine that all community members have equal ownership of and share in both the benefits and problems of their communities. This way of understanding people and place has led Black people to generate democratic solutions to social problems, and to use principles of radical coalition-building to combat structural racism and other forms of oppression (Lipsitz, 2011). Ultimately, the Black Spatial Imaginary aligns with the idea that historically Black people have developed 1) a critical

awareness of inequality, 2) agency to enact change to disrupt inequities, and 3) a tendency to engage in progressive action that benefits society rather than individuals. Lipsitz's (2011) articulation of the Black Spatial Imaginary suggests that these processes can be aimed at spatial inequality and issues that impact the quality of one's neighborhood in particular. The main argument of the Black Spatial Imaginary rests on the notion that Black urban residents develop critical social analysis and take actions to catalyze social change. Thus, the critical analysis that Black people bring to, and that develop within, urban spaces may relate to how residents perceive and evaluate those spaces. These commitments and ways of functioning align with Freire's (1973, 2000) articulation of critical consciousness. However, to our knowledge no empirical research has explicitly examined the link between PNQ and critical consciousness. This study serves as a corrective to that gap.

Empirical Research on Critical Consciousness and Neighborhood Perceptions. No studies explicitly examine the relations between critical consciousness and perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ). However, action-oriented and intervention research with youth of color has produced some initial directions for conceptualizing a link between critical consciousness and PNQ. For example, in a qualitative study with Black youth ages 14 to 19, Teixeira (2016) found that participants pointed out the cycles that contributed to blight and vacancy in their neighborhoods. Black youth held both residents and community officials responsible for the state of their neighborhood, remarking on the role that class injustice plays in the quality of their neighborhoods.

The insights from action-oriented research have been useful in understanding how Black youth experience and identify problems in their neighborhoods. However, this body of research

is limited in two key regards. First, the research on youth's social analysis has tended to focus on Black youth in low-income and disadvantaged neighborhoods. This sampling constraint ignores the reality that Black people live in a variety of neighborhoods, some of which are mixed-income or affluent (Patillo, 2005), and limits our ability to discern how relations between critical consciousness and PNQ unfold for Black youth across other social and geographic locations. Second, extant research has focused almost exclusively on adolescents. The disproportionate focus on PNQ among Black youth in social science research on neighborhood evaluations is limiting in that Black adolescents may have a different relationship with the urban neighborhoods they inhabit as compared to young Black adults who may be navigating urban communities for full-time employment, higher education, and/or leisure, as well as with an eye toward starting their own families. To address these limitations, the current study explores the relations between critical consciousness, social identities, social locations and PNQ for Black emerging adults who live in racially and class diverse urban neighborhoods. While Black Spatial Imaginaries (Lipsitz, 2011) highlights the importance of centering race in examinations of place, injustice, and PNQ, other place-based theories highlight the need to attend to the intersectional relationships between race and gender (McKittrick, 2006).

Black Sense of Place and Black Women's Geographies. McKittrick's (2006, 2011) Black Sense of Place and Black Women's Geographies draw connections between Black people's varied social identities (e.g., race and gender), perspectives on injustice in society, and evaluations of physical spaces. McKittrick (2011) argues that a Black Sense of Place offers a way of situating historical and contemporary struggles against practices of domination and the complexities of between-group racial encounters. McKittrick (2011) reminds readers that a Black

Sense of Place is not solely defined by racism and resistance to racism, but also highlights the modern-day conditions and asymmetrical power relations that make being Black in America a state of struggle. Thus, a Black Sense of Place ties together awareness of societal injustices, especially those that impact Black people and places, actions taken to subvert oppressive structures and practices, and unique ways of seeing and evaluating physical spaces. McKittrick (2011) also warned against the tendency of social science researchers to study Black people and physical spaces from a deficit perspective. Exploring a Black Sense of Place is precluded when social science researchers do not center the agency and awareness that Black people have in evaluating and navigating their physical contexts (McKittrick, 2011).

McKittrick's (2006) Black Sense of Place does not argue that there is a monolithic experience of place among Black people. Instead, she argues that for Black women, the experience of place is fundamentally shaped by racial-sexual domination. McKittrick (2006) described the awareness and agency that Black women demonstrate in relation to physical spaces and the ways in which Black women create new geographies to accomplish their goals Black Women's Geographies. For example, McKittrick (2006) highlighted the ways that Harriett Jacobs/Linda Brent evaded the plantation master where she lived by living in a small attic, which gave her a birds-eye view of the plantation and her family while simultaneously physically constraining and concealing her body. Black women's alternative perspectives of physical space and mapping practices seem chaotic and unknowable to others, simply because they have not been intersectionally constrained in the same ways that Black women have. However, racial-sexual domination is not the only motivating force behind Black Women's Geographies. McKittrick (2006) asserted that Black Women's Geographies are nuanced by gender and other

social factors, such as familial and kinship relations. Black women's familial and kinship relationships shape their engagement with and perspectives of physical spaces in ways that both demonstrate individual agency and highlights the constrained choices that Black women can make within oppressive structures. Thus, a Black Sense of Place and Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006, 2011) argues that Black people's experience of physical spaces implicate critical consciousness and gender.

In line with McKittrick's (2006) focus on gender, empirical work suggests that Black men who reside in urban areas have gendered experiences (e.g., hypersurveillance by authority figures) in neighborhoods that may catalyze critical reflection on their positionality and their neighborhoods (Jones, 2014; Shabazz, 2015). For example, Jones (2014) noted that young Black men in her study conceptualize common stop-and-frisk tactics enacted by police in their neighborhood to be regular but harassing occurrences. These harassing encounters have the potential to constrain young Black men's freedom to move without fear throughout their neighborhood. Thus, young Black men's social positions within their neighborhoods may inform their thinking about societal inequity broadly, and their perceptions and evaluations of the quality of the urban spaces where they live. Taken together, conceptual and empirical work support the separate examination of the relations between critical consciousness and PNQ in the context of social identities and locations for Black men and women.

The Current Study

The current study examines the associations between critical consciousness and perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ) in the context of social identities and social locations

for Black emerging adults across a variety of urban neighborhoods. The study makes three key advances in the study of PNQ. First, in contrast to prevailing research that focuses PNQ among adolescents, this study attends to the experiences of Black emerging adult aged individuals. Second, in contrast with studies that have focused largely on PNQ among low-income youth residing in under-resourced urban neighborhoods, this study examines perceptions and evaluations of neighborhoods by Black participants from a spectrum of income and educational backgrounds who, by virtue of their income and education, are likely to reside in neighborhoods that vary with respect to level of resources or advantage. Lastly, informed by theory and by empirical work, this work advances research on PNQ by situating the study of PNQ among Black emerging adults' in conceptual frames that endeavors to account for the social identities, social locations, and critical consciousness. The current study has three aims: 1) to examine if social identities (i.e., age, education, gender, and income) and social locations (i.e., partner status and parental status) are associated with PNQ; 2) to examine whether critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action are associated with PNQ for Black emerging adults net of social identities and social locations for Black emerging adults; and 3) to examine the whether the relations between social identities, social locations, critical consciousness, and PNQ are the same or different for emerging adult aged Black men and women.

There is limited literature on the relations between social identities, social locations, critical consciousness, and PNQ. However, drawing from existing literature, I hypothesize the following: H1: income and education will be positively related to PNQ (see Stokes, 2019; Weden, Carpiano, & Robert, 2008), while age and parental status will be negatively related to PNQ (see Connerly & Marans, 1985; Galster & Santiago, 2006). To my knowledge, no research

has tested if and how partner status is related to PNQ. As such no hypothesis regarding this relation is posited. H2: No studies have explored the association between indices of critical consciousness (i.e., critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action) and PNQ. However, conceptual work in the Black Spatial Imaginary (Lipsitz, 2011) suggests that individuals who are more aware of injustice, who reflect more critically on injustice, and who are more engaged in efforts to transform injustice may rate the neighborhood's quality lower. Consistent with Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006), I expect that gender will play a role in PNQ and that the models will suggest unique patterns among young Black men and women. Given the exploratory nature of the current study, and the lack of research that has examined if and how social identities, social locations, critical consciousness, relate to PNQ, I do not posit specific hypotheses about the nature of these relations for the gender-stratified analyses. Rather, the analyses will offer insight as to how the relations between social identities, social locations, critical consciousness, and PNQ may vary among Black women and Black men.

Methods

Participants. The data source for the current study is The Life in the City Study (Principal Investigator: Dr. Jacqueline Mattis) which examined how prosocial behavior, psychological well-being, religiosity and spirituality may be related for urban-residing Black adults. Participants were encouraged to participate if they lived in a city with 10,000 people or more. These criteria meet the U.S. Census Bureau's classification of an urbanized area. Participants were recruited online and in urban community settings from 2017 to 2019, such as Black-owned and/or Black-run businesses. We recruited participants online by posting on our

individual and research lab's social media pages (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). We also shared links to the survey directly with Black people on our social media accounts as well as reached out to popular Black-focused groups or pages to ask them to share the survey with their networks. The full sample for the Life in the City Study is 1214 Black urban residents.

The analytic sample for this study is limited to adults ages 18-30 (*n* = 524) as this range constitutes the emerging adulthood life stage (Arnett, 2001). The overall sample and analytic sample are similar across demographics. The exceptions are that the majority of the overall sample has at least one child (71%, n=760), while emerging adults that have at least one child are the minority in the analytic sample (46%, n=207). Also, the majority of the overall sample is partnered (69%), while the emerging adults are partnered to a lesser extent (51%).

Procedure. Participants completed the survey online via Qualtrics (a survey web-based platform; n=524). Participants were compensated with a $10 Amazon gift cards for survey completion.

Measures.

Age. Age in years was measured using a single open-ended question. This study's sample is limited to participants ages 18-30.

Gender. Participants were asked to choose their gender from six options: male (male sex assigned at birth and current), female (female sex assigned at birth and current), transman, transwoman, non-binary gender identity, other, and "prefer not to answer."

Household Income. Household income was scored on an 8-point scale: 1) less than $19,999, 2) $20,000–39,999, 3) $40,000-59,999, 4) $60,000-79,999, 5) $80,000-99,999, 6)

$100,000-149,999, 7) $150,000-199,999, 8) $200,000 or above. Participants could also select a "prefer not to answer" response option.

Education. Participants reported the highest level of education they had completed from a list of five options: 1) less than a high school degree, 2) GED/HS diploma, 3) some college, 4) college degree, and 5) graduate or professional degree.

Parental status. Participants reported the number of children via an open-ended item. A binary variable was created such that participants who reported having at least one child were labeled parents and participants who noted they had no children were labeled nonparents.

Partner status. Participants selected their partner status from one of five options: 1) single/never married, 2) partnered, 3) married/domestic partner, 4) divorced, and 5) widowed. A binary partnered and unpartnered variable was created such that participants who selected single/never married, divorced, and widowed were labeled "unpartnered" and participants who selected partnered and married were labeled "partnered."

Perceived Inequality. To assess participants' critical reflection on societal injustice, we used Diemer and colleagues' (2017) measure of perceived inequality. This eleven-item measure assessed participants' endorsement of beliefs that some groups are more privileged than others based on social identities, such as gender and class. Response options were on a Likert scale and ranged from 1 = "strongly agree" to 8 = "strongly disagree". Sample items include "Women have fewer chances to get good jobs." and "Poor children have fewer chances to get a good education." Cronbach's alpha in this sample is .91. Participants' scores were averaged, and higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of the belief in perceived inequality.

Critical Agency. Participants responded to McWhirter and McWhirter's (2016) measure of critical agency, which assessed the extent to which participants thought they had the power to make change in societal injustice. The measure had seven items with Likert-type response options that ranged from 1 = "not true at all" to 5 = "very true". Sample items include "I can make a difference in my community." and "It is important to fight against social and economic inequality." Cronbach's alpha in this sample is .82. Participants' scores were averaged, and higher scores indicate stronger critical agency beliefs.

Critical Action. We measured participants' engagement in critical actions aimed at social change with Diemer and colleagues' (2017) socio-political participation measure. This scale has a list of ten behaviors and measures the frequency with which participants engaged in each behavior in the past year. Response options were scored on a Likert-type scale and ranged from 1 = "never did this" to 5 = "at least once a week". Sample items include "Participated in a civil rights group or organization" and "Shared a story or link about a political issue on social media". Cronbach's alpha in this sample is .88. Participants scores were averaged, and higher scores reflect more frequent sociopolitical participation.

Perceived neighborhood quality. We asked participants to report their perceptions of their neighborhood quality using a ten-item measure designed for this study. The items asked about features of the neighborhood such as parks where children can play and schools, safety, and social cohesion between neighbors. Sample items included "In my neighborhood, there are parks where people can play, jog, and have a good time." and "I live in a close-knit neighborhood". The response options were a Likert-scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree". Three items were reverse scored. Participants' scores were averaged and

higher scores reflect higher perceptions of neighborhood quality. The Cronbach's alpha for this measure in the analytic sample is .64.

Results

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for study variables are presented in Table 3. Three participants identified as non-binary and gender minority individuals. These individuals were excluded from the analyses so as to not overlook their uniquely gendered experiences by grouping them with cis-gendered men and women in the rest of the sample. Thus, the remaining analytic sample (*n* = 521) is 51% Black women (*n* = 264). Young Black adults in the sample were mostly on the older end of emerging adulthood, ages 25 to 30 (78%; *n* = 407). However, women (*M* = 25.8; *SD* = 3.62) in the sample were slightly younger than men (*M* = 27.2; *SD* = 2.59) on average. The largest proportion of the sample had some college education (44%; *n* = 230), but one-third of participants had a college degree (30%; *n* = 158) and about a quarter of the sample had a GED/high school diploma (13%; *n* = 66), a graduate/professional degree (11%; *n* = 57), and less than high school education (2%; *n* = 12) combined. Black women in the sample were slightly more educated than Black men in the sample. The largest proportion of Black women reported having some college education (40%; *n* = 106) as was the case for Black men (48%; *n* = 123), but more Black women had a college degree (34%; *n* = 89) or a graduate/professional degree (13%; *n* = 34) than Black men (college degree: 26%; *n* = 67; graduate/professional degree: 9%; *n* = 23). However, Black men seem to have slightly higher combined household incomes than Black women. Twenty-nine percent (*n* = 74) of Black men reported combined household incomes of $60-79,999, while 22% (*n* = 59) of Black women

reported combined household incomes of $40-59,999. Also, most women were not partnered (54%; $n = 143$) while most men were partnered (56%; $n = 145$). Finally, most women in the sample were not parents (59%; $n = 137$) and most men in the sample were parents (52%; $n = 113$). Fourteen percent ($n = 73$) of the sample did not enter a response for the open-ended item asking about the number of children they had. Because it is not clear whether these participants do not have children or simply left the response blank, they were excluded from the regression analyses.

Participants reported moderately high PNQ, signifying that they generally rated the features of their neighborhoods (e.g., schools and safety) high in quality ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .55$). Participants reported a mean of 4.16 (SD = 1.02) on societal inequality, indicating that they somewhat agree with statements positing that women, poor people, and certain groups face more barriers in society than others. Black women scored significantly higher on awareness of societal injustice ($M = 4.36$; $SD = 1.11$) than Black men ($M = 4.0$; $SD = .87$), $t(492.83) = -4.6$, $p < .001$. Participants also reported mean critical agency scores higher than the midpoint, suggesting that they believe it is important and possible for them to act against societal inequities, including racism and discrimination ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .80$). Black women reported higher endorsement of agency to act against societal injustice ($M = 3.66$; $SD = .84$) than Black men ($M = 3.40$; $SD = .74$), $t(511.12) = -3.9$, $p < .001$. Lastly, participants reported engaging in critical actions slightly more than once or twice a year ($M = 2.35$, $SD = .86$). Black men reported more frequent engagement in critical actions than Black women on average, with means of 2.40 ($SD = .89$) and 2.28 ($SD = .83$), respectively. However, the gender difference in scores on critical action was not significant ($t(516) = 1.7$, $p = .094$).

Intercorrelations among study variables were examined. Findings demonstrated weak but significant relations between PNQ and education ($r = .16$, $p < .001$) as well as income ($r = .13$, $p < .01$). Participants with higher educational attainment and those with higher household incomes reported higher PNQ than their less-educated and lower-income young Black counterparts. The other social identity and location indices (i.e., age, partner status, and parental status) were not correlated with PNQ in this sample. Each of the three elements of critical consciousness was significantly correlated with PNQ. Specifically, critical reflection ($r = .23$, $p < .001$) and critical agency ($r = .24$, $p < .001$) were positively related PNQ indicating that young Black adults who believe that societal inequity exists and those who believe that they can intervene in inequitable systems report higher PNQ. Interestingly, participation in actions to enact social change is negatively related to PNQ ($r = -.10$, $p < .05$). In sum, Black emerging adults who report more frequent engagement in civic and political behaviors tended to report lower PNQ.

To test hypotheses 1-2, I conducted three ordinary least squares regressions (full sample, women only, men only). Each analysis included social identities (i.e., age, education, income) factors, social locations (i.e., parental status and partner status), and the three critical consciousness measures (i.e., perceived inequality, critical agency, and critical action) as independent variables, and PNQ as the dependent variable. Testing the proposed model separately for young Black women and Black men allows us to explore McKittrick's (2006) assertion that these relations may be different from Black men and Black women. The results are described for the models in that order below. See Table 4.

Full Sample Results. The full sample regression results indicated that social identities, social locations, and critical consciousness elements are significantly related to PNQ. Hypothesis

1 was partially supported in that combined household income was positively related to PNQ for young Black adults ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$). However, education was not significantly related. Parental status was not significantly related to PNQ. Age was positively related to PNQ ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$) rather than negatively related as hypothesized. In short, older Black emerging adults reported higher PNQ than younger Black emerging adults. Although there was not a significant correlation between partner status and PNQ in bivariate analyses, the regression analyses revealed that participants with partners also tended to report higher PNQ than their unpartnered counterparts ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$).

With respect to the critical consciousness measures, critical reflection and critical agency are positively related to PNQ, while critical action is negatively related to PNQ for Black emerging adults in the sample. Specifically, Black emerging adults who more strongly endorsed the belief that marginalized groups experience social disadvantage also reported higher PNQ ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$). Similarly, Black emerging adults who believe that it is possible and important for them to address societal inequity also reported higher PNQ ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$). However, Black emerging adults who reported more frequent engagement in civic and political actions (e.g., writing a letter to a government official) reported lower PNQ ($b = -.16$, $p < .01$). Thus, hypothesis 2 was partially supported in that critical action was negatively related to PNQ as hypothesized, but critical reflection and critical agency are positively related to PNQ. The model was significant and explained 14% of the variance in PNQ quality in the full sample ($R^2 = .14$, $F(9, 431) = 7.60$, $p < .001$).

Women Only Results. The results of the young Black women (n= 264) only analysis highlighted some interesting differences, particularly as it relates to social identities and social

locations and PNQ. Combined household income was the only social identity or social location measure that was significantly associated with PNQ (β = .21, $p < .01$). Young Black women who reported higher household incomes tended to report higher PNQ. While all three indices of critical action were associated with PNQ for the full sample, critical action was the only critical consciousness measure related to PNQ among young Black women. Specifically, young Black women who reported more frequent engagement in civic actions also reported lower PNQ (β = -.18, $p < .05$). The overall model significantly explained 12% of the variance in PNQ for young Black women in this sample ($R^2 = .12$, F (8, 216) = 3.73, $p < .001$).

Men Only Results. The young Black men in the sample ($n = 257$) differed from the full sample results in that none of the included social identities or social locations were related to PNQ (see Table 2). However, all of the critical consciousness measures were significantly related to PNQ for young Black men. Specifically, critical reflection (β = .34, $p < .001$) and critical agency (β = .19, $p < .05$) were positively related to PNQ when all other factors were controlled. Young Black men who more strongly endorse beliefs that social inequity exists and those who believe that it is important for them to work against these inequities also report higher PNQ. Critical action was negatively related to PNQ for young Black men in this sample, such that young men who reported more frequent engagement in political actions tended to report lower PNQ (β = -.13, $p < .05$). The overall model was significant and explained 26% of the variance in PNQ for Black emerging adult men ($R^2 = .23$, F (8, 205) = 9.07, $p < .001$).

Discussion

Previous conceptualizations of PNQ have posited that PNQ is a generalized process that is impacted by equity considerations (Connerly et al., 1985; Campbell et al., 1972). However, the current study is the first to explore relations between social identities, social locations, critical consciousness (e.g., awareness of inequity and efforts to create social change) and perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ) among young Black urban-residing adults. Guided by the Black Spatial Imaginary (Lipsitz, 2011), Black Sense of Place (McKittrick, 2011), and Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006), the current study explored how generalized critical consciousness (e.g., a general awareness of societal inequities) may be related to Black emerging adults' perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality. These three theoretical frames argue that Black people's understandings, experience, and perceptions of, and their responses to place are shaped by their historical experiences of inequities. Further, these theories suggest that Black men and women's gendered experiences of inequity inform different experiences of place.

The results regarding social identities and social locations contributes to the literature on PNQ. The full sample results partially supported hypothesis 1, as income was positively related to PNQ for Black emerging adults, but education was not. Further, age was positively rather than negatively related to PNQ. Partner status was significantly related to PNQ such that young Black adults with partners rated their neighborhood quality higher than their unpartnered counterparts. Parental status was not related to PNQ for Black emerging adults. These findings add to the previous literature that has examined social identities in relation to PNQ. The positive relation between income and PNQ is well-supported by previous literature (Connerly & Marans, 1985; Galster & Sharkey, 2017). However, the null finding regarding the relation between education

and PNQ is surprising as previous research has connected socioeconomic status in general, and education in particular, to higher ratings of neighborhood attributes (Roosa et al., 2009; Stokes, 2019). Findings regarding age and PNQ have found contradictory results regarding whether older or younger people have higher PNQ (Carp & Carp, 1982; Stokes, 2019). The parental and partner status findings represent important contributions given that neither social location has been examined in relation to PNQ generally or among young Black adults in particular.

Neighborhood and residential home choice may be a factor that ties the income, age, and partner status findings together in the current study. It may be the case that older Black (mostly middle-class) partnered emerging adults have been able to choose their neighborhoods and homes, whereas younger single Black emerging adults have not. Black adults in the later years of emerging adulthood may have achieved greater independence from family and may have started in their career paths and be earning more which may allow them to choose neighborhoods. In contrast, younger Black emerging adults may still be somewhat dependent on family and may be pursuing goals (e.g., education, vocational training) that may influence both the neighborhoods where they live and the ways that they experience those neighborhoods (Arnett, 2016; Furstenberg, 2016). Also, older Black emerging adults who may be earning more money than their younger counterparts and who may be in partnerships that provide them with more disposable income may have been able to meet their standards of neighborhood quality. Interestingly, education and parental status were not significantly related to PNQ for young Black adults in the study. These non-significant findings are contrary to previous research which suggests that more educated people have higher PNQ (Stokes, 2019) and that parents may have more critical views of the features of their neighborhoods (Galster & Santiago, 2006). It is

possible that critical consciousness might heighten parents' concerns regarding their neighborhood if they live in an underresourced place. However, the sample in this study is more materially secure than most Black Americans so this may not be an issue for the parents in the sample. Future research would benefit from examining whether parents have unique or additional standards for evaluating their neighborhood's quality, and whether critical consciousness plays a role in these standards.

Interestingly, partner status and age are related to PNQ in the full sample but not in the gender stratified analyses. The intercorrelations of the variables included in the study also did not reveal significant relations between these social positions and PNQ. It may be the case that age and partner are suppressor variables, or variables that are not independently related to PNQ but instead are related to a third factor which is related to PNQ. While age and partner status were not directly associated with PNQ at the bivariate levels among Black women and Black men, regression findings suggest that when other factors were controlled, older and partnered Black emerging adults rated the quality of their neighborhood higher. Existing research suggests that younger Black emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 25 may have unique considerations for their finances and careers than older Black emerging adults, such as developing steady saving habits or preparing to move away from home (Furstenberg, 2016). Measurement invariance techniques that assess whether partnered Black emerging adults between the ages of 25 and 30 respond to PNQ measures differently than their single and younger counterparts using measurement invariance techniques.

The findings of this study offer empirical evidence that there is a link between critical consciousness and evaluations of place for young Black people. These findings lend preliminary support to arguments in Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006) and Black Spatial

Imaginaries (Lipsitz, 2011). Young Black adults in this sample scored average or higher than the midpoint on the included critical consciousness measures. This descriptive finding challenges research that depicts young Black adults as apathetic and politically pessimistic due to systemic forces that work to politically disenfranchise them (Delli Carpini, 2000; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Lipsitz (2011) articulated the awareness of societal inequity, agency to enact changes to inequitable systems, and engagement in actions to eradicate social inequity as key elements in the Black Spatial Imaginary. These tenets align with the operationalization of critical consciousness and each element was significantly related to PNQ in the current study. The significant relations between these constructs provide initial support to the claims advanced in the Black Spatial Imaginary, that critical social analysis and actions are related to the ways that Black people experience and evaluate urban spaces. Yet, there are nuanced aspects of the Black Spatial Imaginary that are not explicitly measured in the current study and should be investigated in future research. For example, the Black Spatial Imaginary posits urban spaces as the object of critical analysis and that Black urban residents engage in coalitional actions to mitigate the impact of oppressive spatial practices and improve neighborhood quality. Future research that explicitly examines a spatial critical consciousness would advance the work of the current study. Specifically, quantitative measures of critical reflection and critical agency that center awareness of spatial inequities (e.g., segregation, disproportionate siting of environmental hazards) and agency to work against spatial inequities (e.g., beliefs in the importance and possibility of eradicating inequitable living conditions for urban residents) could be developed and examined in relation to PNQ. Optimism and hope may also be worthwhile constructs to investigate, as spatial critical reflection and critical agency may be encouraged or inhibited by the belief in the

possibility for positive change in general. This exploration would elucidate if perceptions of neighborhood conditions are positively related to spatial critical reflection and critical agency to eradicate spatial injustice. Qualitative methods would also be useful to examine how young Black adults critically analyze the conditions of the urban neighborhoods in which they live and how these analyses play a role in their PNQ. Further, exploring if and how Black emerging adults engage in coalitional organizing to address neighborhood quality will contribute to both the literature on PNQ and local community organizing efforts.

The results of the current study support the notion that social identities (e.g., gender and income) as well as social locations (i.e., partner status) play a role in the relations between critical consciousness and PNQ for young Black adults. Gender stratified analyses provide one viable intersectional approach that allows us to examine how experiences unfold differently for Black men and Black women separately (Godfrey & Burson, 2018). Notably, the regression analyses indicate that critical reflection and critical agency are positively related to PNQ for young Black men, but not for young Black women. Young Black men may have received unique socialization messages from family, friends, and other social agents that 1) lead them to place high value on the particular aspects of neighborhood quality that are measured in this study, and 2) inspire them to believe that it is particularly important and possible for them to address societal inequities. Social justice-oriented groups, such as the Black Panthers, were represented as predominately Black and male and addressed issues of social inequity and neighborhood quality in tandem (Marable, 1983). Qualitative data from urban-residing Black men also suggests that themes of responsibility for one's family and community, leadership in community efforts, and strongly participating in community outreach efforts were all defining features of manhood

(Powell Hammond & Mattis, 2005). These themes may relate to the identification of social inequities and one's perspectives on their urban neighborhood's conditions and may be aligned with critical agency as measured in this study. Critical reflection and critical agency may be positively related to PNQ for young Black men because their neighborhoods represent proximal spheres in which they can both engage in social analysis and influence change.

Limitations. As with all studies, there are limitations to the current study. First, the participants in the current study are highly educated, higher income, and child-free. Their reported levels of education and household incomes place them above the average on these indices compared to the Black Americans in general (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The economic privilege that the young Black adults in the sample experience may have had an impact on their PNQ if they interact with the neighborhood differently, had greater choice in selecting their home, and were better to access resources in and outside of the neighborhood to meet their wants and needs (Lee & Guest, 1983; Owens, 2017). Future research would benefit from purposive sampling designs that allow for separate analyses by class groups. In doing so, PNQ research could more closely examine the ways in which race, class, and disproportionate privilege interact and impact young Black people's perceptions of and experiences in urban neighborhoods.

The second set of limitations in this study relate to the current study's design. The study was cross-sectional, used gender-stratified regression models, and employed a new PNQ measure. Given the cross-sectional design, I cannot make claims about the directionality of the significant relations found. As such, it is possible that young Black adults bring critical consciousness to their urban neighborhoods, which impacts their PNQ, or young Black adults' urban neighborhoods are places where they cultivate an awareness of social inequity and a

positive sense of agency to make social change. Similarly, it is possible that the negative relation between critical action and PNQ reflects a pattern wherein people who evaluate their neighborhoods negatively respond by getting engaged in social action. Alternatively, it may the case that people who are socially engaged are more critical of the neighborhoods where they live.

The current study's findings regarding the positive relation between age and PNQ raises questions about what lifestyle changes may occur for young Black adults as they age, such as moving away from home, finding a partner, or having children that may explain their higher ratings of the quality of their neighborhood. A longitudinal study with young Black adults would provide more robust evidence regarding whether PNQ increases as people age. Another design choice in the current study was to prioritize gender-stratified analyses to examine the proposed relations separately for young Black women and Black men. These analyses allowed for examination of the differences within Black women and within Black men that were related to PNQ, but future research would benefit from more specifically gendered analyses. For example, considering the unique ways in which young Black women and young Black men may navigate urban spaces to maximize their experiences of neighborhood quality would allow us to better understand the ways in which race and gender interact to create unique perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality. Specifically, gender-specified models that identify and include different constructs for men and women based on the particular lived experiences for these gender groups may reveal further insight to the intersectional nature of PNQ. These gendered analyses will also address the problematic assumptions that have characterized the interpretations of gender differences in PNQ, such as equating women to mothers and assuming that neighborhood safety is more of a priority to women than men (Carp et al., 1982; Kasl et al.,

1972). It is also vitally important to examine PNQ within models that take non-binary approaches to gender in both qualitative and quantitative research. Lastly, the current study used a PNQ measure developed for the larger data collection study where items were based on existing literature and related studies. Cronbach's alpha for this measure in the current sample was .64. A measure of PNQ developed with and validated for Black urban-residing people may produce a more psychometrically sound scale. Future research on subjective PNQ would benefit from measure design and validation that prioritizes Black urban residents' perceptions of the distinguishing or essential features they would highlight in their neighborhoods (Bonaiuto et al., 2004).

Conclusion

The current study highlighted the importance of critical consciousness and action to young Black adults' perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ). Critical reflection on inequity and critical agency to address inequity were related to higher PNQ, while actions to enact social change were related to lower PNQ for young Black adults in the sample. There are both research-focused and policy and intervention-focused implications to consider in light of these findings. Regarding research, these findings suggest that previous conceptualizations of PNQ as a generalized process that is impacted by a "black box" of individual standards are overlooking residents' critical social analysis and agency, which are relevant to their evaluations of neighborhoods. Critical consciousness, as articulated by Freire (1973) and operationalized by multiple scholars (Diemer et al., 2015; Watts et al., 2011), is one starting point for examining young Black adults' critical perspectives of urban neighborhoods. Certainly, explorations of the

psychometric properties of critical consciousness among Black emerging adult samples are needed as part of the next steps in clarifying these gender findings. The conceptualization and measurement of spatial critical consciousness and action will further this investigation. The critical consciousness processes and actions that are related to PNQ are also of interest to policymakers and interventionists interested in supporting urban quality of life (Weden et al., 2008; Wen et al., 2006). Young Black adults involved in making social change in their communities may need specific supports in addressing the issues impacting their neighborhood's quality, given the negative relation between critical actions and PNQ. Supporting awareness of and agency to address inequity is important to the development of engaged young Black people and adults as well (Watts et al., 2007). Thus, critical reflection and critical agency may be specific points of intervention that not only support urban neighborhood quality, but also well-being among this group.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for Independent and Dependent Variables

Measure	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	26.5	3.23	--									
2. Gender	1.51	.50	$-.22^{***}$	--								
3. Education	3.35	.92	$.17^{***}$	$.12^{**}$	--							
4. Household Income	4.18	1.82	$.15^{**}$	-.02	$.17^{**}$	--						
5. Parental Status	.46	.50	$.47^{***}$	$-.11^{*}$	-.04	$.29^{***}$	--					
6. Partner Status	.51	.50	$.47^{***}$	$-.11^{*}$	$.14^{**}$	$.22^{***}$	$.70^{***}$	--				
7. Critical Reflection	4.16	1.02	$-.36^{**}$	$.20^{**}$	$.18^{**}$	$-.12^{**}$	$-.39^{**}$	$-.22^{**}$	--			
8. Critical Action	2.34	.86	$.22^{***}$	-.07	$.14^{**}$	.05	$.25^{***}$	$.29^{**}$	$-.19^{**}$	--		
9. Critical Agency	3.53	.80	$-.34^{**}$	$.17^{**}$	$.23^{**}$	-.10*	$-.30^{**}$	$-.18^{**}$	$.68^{***}$	-.03	--	
10. PNQ	3.23	.54	.05	-.05	$.16^{**}$	$.13^{**}$	-.00	.09	$.23^{**}$	$-.10^{*}$	$.24^{***}$	--

Note. Pairwise *N* ranges from 461 to 521. $^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$.

Table 4: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality (PNQ) for Young Black Adults with Critical Consciousness and Critical Action

	PNQ-Overall Sample			PNQ-Black Women			PNQ-Black Men		
Predictor Variable	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*
Age	.13*	.02*	.01	.15	.02	.01	-.07	.03	.01
Education	.07	.04	.03	.09	.06	.05	.05	.03	.04
Gender	-.09	-.08	.05	--	--	--	--	--	--
Household Income	.15**	.05**	.01	.21**	.06**	.02	.01	.02	.02
Parental Status	-.07	-.07	.07	-.09	-.19	.12	.01	.01	.09
Partner Status	.14*	.15*	.07	.14	.15	.11	.13	.13	.09
Critical Reflection	.16*	.08*	.04	.03	.09	.05	.34***	.20***	.05
Critical Action	-.15**	-.10**	.03	-.18*	-.13*	.05	-.13*	-.08*	.04
Critical Agency	.17**	.11**	.04	.12	.08	.06	.13*	.19*	.06
R^2	.14***			.12***			.26***		
N	439			225			214		

**p* < .05 ***p* < .01

Chapter 4 Gender, Race, and Space: A Qualitative Exploration of Young Black Women's Perceptions of Urban Neighborhoods

Introduction

Perceptions of neighborhood quality (PNQ) contribute to Black residents' quality of life (Gutman et al., 2005; Stokes, 2019; Woldoff & Ovadia, 2009), however, we know little about how Black residents make evaluations of their neighborhoods. Indeed, PNQ research has tended to focus on researchers' criteria for neighborhood quality rather than on Black residents' subjectively determined criteria for evaluating their neighborhoods (Bonaiuto & Fornara, 2004). Yet, evidence suggests that researchers and residents have different priorities in evaluating the quality of neighborhoods (Craik & Zube, 1976; Eyeles, 1990). Further, the generalized conceptualization of PNQ does not allow for the exploration of the ways in which social identities and social locations shape perceptions and evaluations of neighborhoods. Sociologists and Black feminist geographers posit that Black people, and Black women in particular, have unique relationships with physical spaces that inform their perspectives on those spaces. Specifically, scholars such as Lipsitz (2011) and McKittrick (2006) have argued that Black people have unique, situated experience of space and place. As such, it is critical that Black people's narratives are centered in any space or place-based study of Black people's lives. In sum, the focus on researcher priorities, the relative absence of attention to race, social identities and social location, and the lack of focus on Black adults in research on PNQ may obscure the aspects of neighborhoods that Black residents use to make evaluations about the spaces they inhabit. This qualitative study advances research on PNQ by taking a Black feminist epistemological approach (Dotson, 2015; Collins, 2009) and by centering young Black women as

authoritative knowledge producers regarding neighborhood quality. Two research questions guide this study: 1) What aspects or features of the neighborhood do Black emerging adult women discuss when asked to describe their urban neighborhoods? and, 2) How does gender play a role in urban-residing Black emerging adult women's descriptions of their neighborhoods? In addressing these questions, I aim to address gaps in our current understanding of young Black women's perceptions and evaluations of their neighborhoods.

Literature Review

Empirical Approaches to Race, Gender, and Class in PNQ. Studies of perceived neighborhood quality (PNQ) have not attended to residents' priorities in evaluating neighborhoods and have been plagued by racist, sexist, and classist biases. An early definition of PNQ defined the construct as the subjective experience of objective attributes in one's immediate environment (Campbell et al., 1976). Galster (2001) improved upon this generalized definition by highlighting "spatially based attributes", or characteristics of a geographic unit that directly impact the perceived quality of that space to both residents and nonresidents, like public services and social interaction. However, researchers have focused on understanding the relationship between predetermined "objective" elements of the neighborhood (i.e., neighborhood elements that people can perceive) and subjective neighborhood quality. In these studies, "subjective" neighborhood quality reflects participants' ratings of predetermined markers of objective neighborhood quality. For example, Connerly and Marans (1985) found that neighborhood evaluations are impacted by objective neighborhood attributes, like the percentage of Black residents. Other studies have implicated property ownership, poverty, adult and juvenile crime rates, educational attainment, occupation prestige, architecture, separation between homes, and space from the street to the doorway as key in assessing neighborhood quality (Elo et al., 2009;

Hur, Nasar, Chun, 2010; Kasl & Harburg, 1972; Stipak & Hensler, 1983). There are at least two central problems with the existing research on PNQ. First, residents and researchers do not prioritize the same things when they evaluate neighborhoods. For example, Craik and Zube (1976) note that researchers trained in architecture will pay attention to whether neighborhoods have adequate variation in the structure of buildings when assessing a neighborhood while participants are not usually attuned to the details of architecture. Second, evidence demonstrates that researcher priorities are often plagued by assumptions that are racist, classist, and sexist. Objective indicators (e.g., crime and poverty) are often used without rationale as to what threshold indicates a low-quality neighborhood and with the assumption that people do perceive these neighborhood elements (Kasl & Harburg, 1972). For example, Kasl and Harburg (1972) categorized neighborhoods into high and low stress areas, such that higher stress neighborhoods had high adult and juvenile crime rates and low education, income, and occupation prestige scores. However, the authors did not elaborate as to what the chosen cut-offs were or specify a rationale for those points. Additionally, neighborhood quality indicators such as marriage rates and racial composition are biased in that they define male-headed households and White neighborhoods as high quality (Kasl & Harburg, 1972; Weden, Carpiano, & Robert, 2008). Similarly, prioritizing separation between homes or space from the street to the doorway reveals a bias toward valuing middle-class or suburban neighborhoods (Elo et al., 2009; Hur, Nasar, Chun, 2010). The over-reliance on researcher priorities in research on neighborhood quality is problematic both because they are rooted in potentially racist, classist, and sexist assumptions, and because research illustrates that researchers and residents do not prioritize the same factors in their evaluations of neighborhoods (Craik & Zube, 1976; Eyeles, 1990). Further, the existing research that explicitly addresses PNQ has not focused on Black emerging adults' or within-

group variation such as gender that may contribute to perceptions and descriptions of neighborhood quality.

To my knowledge, there are no studies that have focused on Black emerging adults' (ages 18-30) perceptions and descriptions of neighborhood quality. However, studies have explored how Black adolescents conceptualize and understand their neighborhoods, usually as a part of their involvement in organizations or programs aimed at improving their neighborhood quality (Richards-Schuster & Dobbie, 2011; Teixeira, 2015; Teixeira, 2016). Youth noticed when abandoned homes and vacant lots proliferated in their neighborhoods, remarking on the feeling that no one cares that things are falling apart (Teixeira, 2015). Participants also discussed feeling "empty" when looking at abandoned buildings or standing in vacant lots where their family or friends previously lived and remarked on the smell and aesthetic of molding houses. The small body of action-oriented research with Black adolescents has highlighted some potentially important features of neighborhood quality (i.e., abandoned buildings, smells, and transitory neighbors). However, this research has focused on Black youth from predominately racial/ethnic minority and underresourced neighborhoods. These gaps limit what conclusions can be drawn about the nature of PNQ for young Black people in a variety of urban settings or for Black emerging adult women in particular. It is worthwhile to explore young Black women's descriptions of a variety of urban neighborhoods to better understand what the essence of PNQ is for this population.

Current approaches to the study of PNQ are also limited in that although they pay some attention to race and class, they pay relatively little attention to the role of gender in people's perspectives and experiences of physical spaces. Existing research that does examine gender in the study of PNQ has focused on gender differences and relied on problematic assumptions to

explain these differences. For example, Carp and Carp (1982) found that women were more concerned with safety in their neighborhoods than men in their sample and interpreted these findings using problematic assumptions about women's lesser strength and meager preparation to fight or flee in a dangerous situation. The gender comparisons between men and women in PNQ research has flattened the exploration of the role of gender. Not only are safety concerns unique for women and men, but socialization processes may differ for Black men and Black women in ways that impact their priorities for neighborhood quality. Before gender comparisons will be useful for understanding Black men and Black women's PNQ, the exploration of the complex and unique ways that racism, sexism, and classism interlock and impact Black women's lives in urban spaces in their own right is warranted. The erasure of gender as a meaningful social position from which PNQ is formed has left a gap in the study of subjective neighborhood assessment literature. As a result, researchers implicitly assume that men and women perceive and interact with physical spaces in the same way (i.e., that spaces are genderless or people's gender does not matter as they navigate spaces). When gender is not conceptualized as a framing social identity that shapes how spaces are perceived and experienced, gendered urban inequity and its psychological impacts are understudied. However, Kemp astutely posited that "environments actively construct women's identities, opportunities, and social relationships" (pg. 19; Kemp, 2001). Kemp argues that fully understanding women's perspectives on their environment necessitates listening to and exploring their narratives of the spaces they inhabit. Building on Kemp's (2001) propositions, I ground this study's analysis of Black emerging women's PNQ in conceptual frames from Black feminist geography and sociology that offer historical context and attention to racialized sexism in Black women's experience of space.

Critical Conceptual Frames on Race, Gender, and Space. Empirical research on Black residents' perspectives on urban neighborhood quality have generally not been rooted in conceptual frames that center the lived experiences and perspectives of Black people. However, Black feminist geography and sociology suggests that Black people's histories must be at the center of any study of their understandings and experiences of space. Lipsitz's (2011) Black Spatial Imaginary, McKittrick's Black Women's Geographies (2006), and Black Sense of Place (2011) are instructive concepts in centering and prioritizing Black people's perspectives on their urban neighborhoods. These frames draw attention to the diversity within Black people's perspectives of urban spaces when gender is considered more closely and to the historical particularity of Black people's relationship with physical spaces. Lipsitz (2011) argues that Black people's perspectives on urban spaces are informed by America's history of slavery, sharecropping, and segregation. The Black Spatial Imaginary is a critical ideology and perspective on urban spaces that encourages coalition to address social issues (e.g., crime and homelessness) that may affect perceptions of neighborhood quality. The Black Spatial Imaginary has limitations. First, the Black Spatial Imaginary is articulated as a singular response that Black people formed in opposition to oppressive systems operating in predominately racial/ethnic minority and underresourced neighborhoods. McKittrick (2011) disrupts the notion of a singular response from Black people by suggesting that a Black Sense of Place is a diverse and varying set of perspectives. As such, McKittrick (2011) highlights the importance of representing Black people's perspectives as expansive rather than monolithic. The current study attempts to extend the concept by exploring perspectives of Black residents outside of predominately minority or underresourced neighborhoods. Second, the Black Spatial Imaginary does not explicitly examine other framing social identities, like gender, in the analysis of race and place.

McKittrick's Black Women's Geographies (2006) offered a more specific analysis of gender in Black women's perspectives on urban spaces. In Black Women's Geographies, McKittrick (2006) argues that Black women's unique experiences in physical spaces are informed by racist-sexist oppression and yet Black women have agentic and resistant perspectives and experiences of physical spaces. Black Women's Geographies highlight the importance of gender, motherhood, and other familial ties in shaping Black women's perspectives and uses of physical space. Some empirical evidence indicates that social identities and social locations are related to PNQ (Bowlby et al., 1989; Carp & Carp, 1982; Kemp, 2001). However, Black Women's Geographies and a Black Sense of Place encouraged researchers to think about social identities in a critical way. Black Women's Geographies and a Black Sense of Place suggest that Black women's social identities are not merely internal influences impacting how Black women see and use physical spaces. Instead, these frames put social identities in the midst of a social hierarchy, highlighting the ways that social identities and social locations influence how the world reacts to Black women and shapes their experiences within physical landscapes. A primary goal of this study is to extend existing research and theory that highlights unique experiences in space for Black women by connecting participants' narratives to the concept of perceived neighborhood quality.

The current study

This qualitative study contributes to the literature on neighborhood quality by examining the factors that young Black women subjectively highlight in their evaluations of the quality of their neighborhoods. Particular attention is paid to the ways that gender is implicated in PNQ for young Black women.

The current study has two research questions:

RQ1: What aspects or features of the neighborhood do Black emerging adult women discuss when asked to describe their urban neighborhoods?

RQ2: How does gender play a role in Black emerging adult women's descriptions of their neighborhoods?

Method

Participants. The data source for the current study is called The Life in the City Study (Principal Investigator: Jacqueline Mattis). The Life in the City study is a mixed methods (survey and interview) study of prosocial engagement and prosocial development among urban residing African American/Black adults. A total of 1214 Black urban residents completed the survey and 42 Black urban residents completed the interview. For the purposes of our study, participants were encouraged to participate if they lived in a city with 10,000 people or more. These criteria meet the U.S. Census Bureau's classification of an urbanized area. The sample for this study is limited to women ages 18-30 as this range constitutes the emerging adulthood life stage articulated by Arnett (2001). Participants (n = 9) identified as African American/Black (n=8) or as Continental African (n=1). All participants were born in the United States. Participants varied in educational attainment. Three participants have a college degree and were graduate students, two were high school graduates and not currently in school, two participants were seniors completing their undergraduate degrees, one participant had a college degree and was not currently in school, and one participant had completed a graduate. Most participants reported that their households made between $20,000-$39,999 (n = 5). One participant reported a household income of less than $19,999, two participants reported between $40,000-$59,999, and one participant reported a household income of $100,000-$149,999. Most participants (n = 8) were not parents, but one participant had four children. Participants were mostly long-time residents in

the cities in which they lived. Four participants had lived in their current city for 6 to 10 years and three had lived in their city for their entire lives (20 years or more). Two participants had lived in the city for less than 5 years. However, participants were mostly newcomers to their particular neighborhoods. Indeed, five participants lived in their neighborhoods for fewer than 5 years. Two others had only been in their neighborhood for 6-10 years, while one participant lived in their neighborhoods for 11-15 years, and one participant did not disclose how long they had lived in their current neighborhood.

Procedure. Participants for the larger study were recruited online via social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), and in urban community settings such as Black-owned and/or Black-run businesses. Participants indicated if they were interested to participate in the interview portion of the study at the end of the survey by checking a box. If participants indicated interest, they were prompted to enter their email in an open-ended text box to be contacted for scheduling at a later date. Participants were scheduled to be interviewed via email and were interviewed either in person or via video conferencing (e.g., BlueJeans, Zoom). All interviews were conducted by Black/African-American graduate students or by the Principal Investigator. The interviews ranged between 1 hour and 3 hours, with an average interview being approximately 90 minutes long. Each participant received a $30 Amazon gift card for interview participation. Interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed, and transcripts were edited for accuracy by a racially-diverse team of undergraduate research assistants. In the accuracy checks, research assistants listened to the digitally recorded interviews while reading the transcripts in order to ensure that errors in transcription were identified and addressed.

Participants were asked interview questions about their neighborhood and city because urban residents traverse multiple areas and dynamics within surrounding geographical areas are

relevant (Sampson, 2003). Questions included: 1) If you had to describe the neighborhood/city that you are living in to someone who doesn't know it, how would you describe it?; 2) What do you like most about the city?; 3) What do you find most challenging or stressful [about the city]?; 4) How has the city changed? How is it changing now?; and 5) How would an outsider describe your neighborhood? The interviews discuss neighborhoods and cities with the understanding that urban residents traverse multiple areas every day for work, leisure, and necessities (Sampson, 2003). The full interview protocol is included in the Appendices section.

Analyses. I conducted a thematic analysis (TA) that had elements of the reflexive and codebook schools articulated by Braun and colleagues (2019). The authors described the reflexive school of TA as underpinned by a qualitative orientation to research, which views meaning as situated and contextual and researcher subjectivity as a resource to the research process. I was active in the knowledge production process, as is emphasized in the reflexive school of TA, by bringing existing theory into conversation with the patterns and meanings we noticed within participants' narratives and developing themes as meaning-based patterns rather than domain summaries. The codebook school of TA shares the structured approach to coding with the coding reliability school of TA and the broadly qualitative approach to research emphasized in the reflexive school of TA (Braun et al., 2019). In line with the codebook school of TA, a coding team consisting of me and 4 trained Black women undergraduate research assistants chunked and coded the data. A fifth trained Black woman undergraduate research assistant and I developed multiple iterations of codebooks and we applied the codebooks to the chunks independently. We discussed disagreements in our application of codes in order to hone existing code definitions rather than to maximize coding reliability. Though we used a codebook and a code resolution process, our goals were not in line with the coding reliability approach to

TA, which is characterized by attempting to bracket subjectivities and apply the codebook as "correctly" as possible. The reasons for diverging from these goals have to do with the epistemological underpinnings of the current study.

In their review of the different approaches to thematic analysis, Braun and colleagues (2019) highlight the importance of addressing divergent epistemologies that are present when blending different approaches to thematic analysis. Thus, it is important to note that this analysis was conducted within Black feminist (Dotson, 2015) and feminist critical realist epistemological frames (Parr, 2015). According to Dotson (2015), Patricia Hill Collins' (2009) Black feminist epistemology has 4 tenets: 1) lived experience and practical images are important for grounding and making knowledge claims, 2) knowledge is to be assessed and vetted through conversation with and among one's community/communities, 3) members of a given community of knowers must be competent according to that community, and 4) those making knowledge claims must have moral or ethical connections to those claims in addition to their competence. Feminist critical realist epistemology also attends to who produces knowledge and how to distinguish among multiple knowledges. Parr (2015) highlighted that critical realism holds that even though knowledge is socially constructed and dependent upon discourse, it is possible to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful accounts of the social concepts under study and to produce reliable knowledge. Feminism has a broad goal of validating women's lived experiences and using these experiences as the base of knowledge production that challenges oppressive conditions and enacts social change (Parr, 2015). Taking up both of these fundamental tenets creates possibilities and challenges within feminist critical realist epistemology, such as reflecting the situated nature of knowledge production and upholding women's lived experiences as valid forms of knowledge. In the current study, both Black feminist and feminist critical

realist epistemological frames were embedded in the intentional composition of the research team and analyses of the interview data.

The composition of the research team was intentional, as it was important to analyze the data with a variety of trained young Black women who could bring experiential familiarity to the experiences being described by participants. This intention is aligned with the tenets of Black feminist epistemology (Dotson, 2015) as the research team's lived experiences were utilized to analyze the interview data and interpretations were produced and vetted in conversation with one another. Further, the team received qualitative analysis training by the Life in the City's Principal Investigator, Dr. Jacqueline Mattis, who is also a Black woman with moral and ethical connections to the knowledge claims produced by the current study. This training highlighted the importance of expressing when we were not familiar with the meanings or experiences present in the narratives. This analytic approach uplifts the reality that Black women are not monolithic, and utilizes the subjectivities brought to the coding process to enrich our understanding of the participants' narratives and to elaborate on assumptions each of us brought to the coding process. Thus, multiple Black women's input on the process helped to avoid a single Black woman's perspective shaping what was deemed relevant to code. A feminist critical realist approach brings attention to the balance between representing participants' voices and the role of the researcher in shaping the analyses (Parr, 2015). One related tension in this study is the goal of highlighting what is missing from research on subjective neighborhood assessment while also representing the important aspects of neighborhoods according to young Black women in the sample. Thus, the codes and themes relied on repetition and commonality among the young Black women's narratives as well as attending to how the narratives offer challenges and new insights to existing theoretical and empirical trends within this content area.

During the chunking phase, the research team attended to the semantic level of participant's narratives, and identified the smallest units of meaningful ideas comprising relevant responses to the research questions. This data reduction process is aligned with Watkins' RADaR (2017) technique in which relevant data is determined using specific analytic questions. Two analytic questions were used to pull relevant data: 1) what aspects of neighborhood life do Black emerging adult women name when asked about their urban neighborhoods; and 2) How do mentions of gender and other social identities relate to neighborhood perceptions and evaluations? After the chunking process was completed, the second coder, a fifth Black woman undergraduate research assistant and I read through the chunks and created semantic codes that attempted to reflect the words of the participants as closely as possible. First, we inductively coded the chunks by creating loose coding categories from which to build a codebook (Braun & Clarke, 2013, pg. 207). With our analytic questions in mind, we coded for aspects and features of neighborhood life that young Black women indicated are important to the way that they experience the neighborhoods and cities where they live. We also coded for mentions of gender, class and other social identities to answer the second research question. While our initial interest was to understand how gender was implicated in PNQ for young Black women, participants' narratives consistently highlighted the interplay between gender and other social identities, such as class and race. We chose to reflect those perspectives by coding for multiple social identities rather than only mentions of gender. Researcher-derived or deductive coding was important to codebook formation, as we sought to group ideas from participants' narratives in ways that helped us to see physical and social features of neighborhoods in relation to one another and without labeling those features as good or bad unless participants explicitly defined them as good or bad. I also looked for the latent ways that gender was implicated. For theme review, I

presented my candidate themes, definitions, and exemplar quotes to one of the Black woman undergraduate research assistants who assisted in the initial chunking as a means of internal member-checking (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011). She provided feedback and asked clarification questions based on her familiarity with the data and I revised the themes to address the ideas she raised. Delve tool, a qualitative research software package was used to analyze the narrative data. Google Sheets and Google Docs were used to organize codes, maintain the codebook, and make notes about candidate themes.

Results

The first research question is "What are the aspects or features that young Black women discuss when asked to describe their urban neighborhoods?" I developed 3 themes to answer the first research question: 1) Black placemaking, 2) outsiders' perceptions versus our realities, and 3) urban spatial critical consciousness (see Table 5). The aspects and features that young Black women in the current study discussed were not as concrete as amenities or elements of the built environment, such as greenery and architecture. Instead, neighborhood aspects and features were more abstract, such as communal social aspects tied to physical settings, and were viewed from multiple perspectives. Black feminist and feminist critical realist epistemologies emphasize the narratives and knowledge of Black women, especially those who have moral and ethical connections to the knowledge claims they make (Dotson, 2015; Parr, 2015). Thus, the multi-perspective and abstract ways in which young Black women in the current study described their neighborhoods were important to share in relation to their neighborhood assessment.

Black Placemaking. The communal and social aspects of neighborhood life that urban-residing Black Americans engage in to resist, belong, and endure comprise the first theme called Black Placemaking. These understudied social and communal features enacted by Black urban

residents are inextricably tied to the physical urban spaces young Black women described. Renee[3], 27 years old, offered a story of Black placemaking when asked to describe her neighborhood. When she took a walk up the street to clear her head, she remembered that two kids walked by that she didn't know. Seeing her upset, they asked if she wanted some candy. She said,

> [The girl child] said uh, 'hey, you okay?' And I look and I [thought], what the heck? And she said, 'you okay, you want some candy?' And I was like, "No, thank you, but thank you." And um, I just instantly smile and you know, I was like, "Thank you baby, but I'm okay." And then, um, like a week later she brings a cat to my door …They said, "We think you might like this cat." And um, I was just like, wow, that's beautiful. Yeah …and the little boy and they said, 'We thought you may like this cat right here and we named it Sugar'…Believe it or not, I still don't even know what those kids live at. I still don't know exactly where they live or any of that. I feel like the kids is, they watching, like them kids knew more about me than I even knew about them in the environment that we was in.

In this story, Renee highlights that the children on her block knew where she lived and must have been aware of who their neighbors were more than she was. Thus, the care that her young neighbors demonstrated felt particularly communal given their deep spatial and emotional awareness. Renee remarked on the kindness of the kids who she understood to be trying to cheer her up, saying "Oh my God…They must like care…whoever they parents [are] is beautiful." Kerri, 24 years old, also remarked on the Black placemaking on her grandmother's block. She said,

[3] Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities throughout this paper (see Table 6).

> My grandma's block, like it was a family…everyone's neighbors' kids knew each other. I remember just like being able to be on my grandma's block and everyone's house was your house. Like you could just go in and like say hi, use the bathroom or get some food.

The behaviors that both of these young Black women highlight not only created sources of endurance among neighbors, but also kinship communal ties that are rooted in the physical spaces of those urban communities.

Young Black women named commonly assessed features as markers of evaluation for their neighborhoods, like attractions or safety in the area. However, participants focused their evaluative criteria on the communal experiences these features facilitated. For example, young Black women described attractions as activities and places that enabled participants to spend quality time with their loved ones or feel connected to social groups more broadly (i.e., experiencing Black culture or spaces). Jill, age 30, reflected on all the activities that she shared with her close friends in the city, such as going out for happy hours getting regular manicures. This evaluative criterion stands out when juxtaposed with the "attractions" that participants' urban communities are known for, but that residents rarely use. For example, 21-year-old Leela says, "[We're known as] the place where that stadium is and [a famous doughnut shop]. That's definitely (laughter), that's what we're known for, but there's a lot more to it. Like I said, there's a lot of history." Leela highlights the shared history and communal experiences that bonds people in her urban community and resists efforts to define her community by the popularized attractions she mentioned. Like attractions, safety is another example of a commonly assessed feature that young Black women in the sample considered with close others in mind. Safety was not just evaluated for young Black women's individual feelings of safety, but also for how safe their friends and family are in the area. When discussing police brutality and harassment in her

neighborhood, Leela said, "…especially knowing that [the police] they're not only after me but they're after my brothers too, they're after my sisters too." Leela's quote highlights the communal element of the criteria by which young Black women evaluated the safety of urban spaces. This evaluation of communal safety illustrates another source of resistance and endurance that is implicated in young Black women's neighborhood perceptions and evaluations.

Outsiders' Perceptions versus Our Realities. The second theme focuses on the differences between participants' experiences and perceptions of urban areas and outsiders' perceptions of those same spaces. In describing and reflecting upon their urban neighborhoods, young Black women in the sample noted a general mismatch between the discourse surrounding overall neighborhood quality of the areas in which they lived and their experiences within these urban spaces. Evaluations of the neighborhood were often entangled with generalized discourses about the area and participants' experiences and evaluative criteria. For example, when Grace, age 28, was asked where she would take someone visiting her, she said,

> "So, I would show them like some of the quote unquote 'good' and the 'bad' because it is a contrast of like, 'Oh this is the quote unquote ghetto closer over to [university], down the street.'"

When she was asked if there are places she would avoid with her visitor, Grace clarified, "No, because the places that I felt like other people would not take somebody, I would take [them] because those are places I feel comfortable." Grace's quote illustrates that her neighborhood evaluation may differ from others and exposes the possibility of hidden assumptions in subjective neighborhood assessment. Language like "good", "bad", or "ghetto" that is commonly used by residents and nonresidents to describe urban areas assumes that everyone has the same standards and understanding of what a good or bad neighborhood is. Within the specific realm of

safety, there was a particular mismatch between generalized discourse and young Black women's experiences in urban neighborhoods. Safety is a notion that travelled across themes because it was a multifaceted construct for young Black women in the sample. Participants discussed safety through the prism of generalized discourses about urban areas as well as a commonly assessed feature of neighborhoods with their own communal criteria in the first theme. Young Black women in the sample commonly reflected on the ways they were careful but not fearful as they traversed urban areas. Rather than feeling in danger and unsafe as outsiders might expect, young Black women articulated feelings of being at home, safe, and familiar with the area. For example, 22-year-old Simone said, "[The neighborhood] feels safe and it feels like home, even though…other people wouldn't necessarily view it as safe." Simone clarified that there are certainly issues in her neighborhood, but goes on to say, "I've never had like a experience in which I've had to like fear for my life, thankfully." While there are issues impacting their neighborhoods, young Black women did not operate in a space of fear regarding their homes and challenged the narratives that these spaces are unsafe. Leela labeled these narratives as "false perceptions" and "misconstrued", representing the ways that young Black women identify the space between their realities and the outsider perspective. These perceptual differences regarding safety contribute to how young Black women evaluate urban spaces and represent a standard by which to compare their experiences and perceptions.

Urban Spatial Critical Reflection. In the third theme, young Black women articulated a social analysis of inequitable conditions in urban areas. Simone mentioned issues impacting her urban neighborhood that may be stereotypically understood to be social problems endemic to cities, such as human trafficking and drug activity. However, participants also highlighted structural problems as important to the ways they experience and evaluate their neighborhoods,

such as poverty, homelessness, gentrification, and a lack of public services. Their awareness of the differences in structural conditions in their neighborhoods as compared to other neighborhoods in the city informs their evaluations. For example, Jill said

> Things like all of the potholes in parts of West [city] that are historically Black, right? Or like that when you're around, you know, downtown [specific area], these tourist areas, the city has street cleaning, right? When you're out in West [city] where it's like majority Black [and] Brown populations, there's no street cleaning…and I think those are signals of like, institutionally the city does not back the individuals who live here.

This quote highlights that young Black women's urban spatial analysis identifies responsible parties for the systemic issues impacting their urban communities. From the government to police to city council, young Black women moved from recognizing and contending with generalized public discourses that impact outsiders' perceptions of their urban communities represented in theme two. Instead, they identify particular ways in which the public entities charged with supporting quality of life and well-being of urban-residing Black and Brown residents are failing.

The second research question is "How does gender play a role in urban-residing Black emerging adult women's descriptions of their neighborhoods?" There are 2 themes that answer this research question: 1) gendered safety and 2) visibility of young Black women.

Gendered Safety. Young Black women described the ways they were socialized to think through their safety across environments, and the ways they thought about gender creating unique safety priorities for Black men and Black women. One way that gender informs young Black women's understandings of their neighborhoods comes through the implicit and explicit messages that people around them communicate through their actions. For example, some

participants discussed the ways that others in their community taught them that being a young woman put them at risk from multiple types of danger by insisting on giving them rides home. For example, Leela reported that people would give her rides home from after school activities even though she lived nearby, “just because they knew that as a young woman….it’s probably not best for you to walk out on the street”. Grace discussed avoiding certain places not because of the city, but “just because of intersectional identities of being Black and being a woman. It's just places I don't go in general.” She continued, “So I don't think it's specific to the city of like, ‘Oh yeah, I don't go to that place in the city.’ But it's just, you know, how women are taught to socialize.” Grace highlights the point that Black women are socialized to attend to their unsafety, not as a result of any one particular city or the reputation of cities broadly, but because of constant systemic violence directed toward Black women across physical landscapes.

While women in the sample articulate their awareness that as women, they are not safe in society, they note that Black women are not the only group that has this concern. Indeed, they discussed the notion that gender creates different priorities in safety for Black men and Black women. For example, Leela said

> So, men don't necessarily have to worry about being raped in the same regard as [women], do but they do have dangers. They do have things that they have to worry about, [like] getting jumped or getting mugged, or getting shot, or whatever have you. As women do too, but it's not in the same regard as men. So, I think there are differences that we have to face based on our genders. I wouldn’t say that it's easier or that it's harder, it’s just different.

According to Leela's analysis, safety is not simply more of a concern for women living in cities. Instead, Black men and Black women may have different priorities as to what they are

safeguarding themselves against, even as she acknowledges that Black women also worry about the dangers that Black men face. The dangers that young Black women highlighted in this theme are serious bodily violations and threats to one's life rather than incivilities such as catcalling or structural inequities. Thus, young Black women's analysis of gendered safety highlights the constancy of multiple types of danger for Black women that is present across physical landscapes while also attending to the diversity within urban-residing Black people that creates different priorities in safety while navigating the city.

Visibility of Young Black Women. The second theme that addresses the link between gender and neighborhoods is about the visibility of young Black women in urban spaces. This visibility, rooted in the racialized and classed notions surrounding Black women's bodies, generates misconceptions about young Black women in urban spaces: what they are up to, why they are there, and if they belong. For example, Grace said,

> If I'm going to go running especially, I'm going to make sure I have on all bright colors so we can see me, and please [be] clear [on] what I'm doing. I'm like, "I'm working out." It doesn't look like I'm up to something.

Grace is attentive to the importance of managing her appearance so that people do not take her presence as suspicious or dangerous. Grace's visibility management strategy highlights that her presence would be alarming or out of place to others, perhaps because she runs at night or she runs in a neighborhood where others do not expect a young Black woman to be. The implied consequence of these biased spatial perceptions is that someone could go out of their way to put her in a dangerous situation by calling the police or attempting to confront her. Jill also discussed wearing business casual clothing to ensure that when people saw her, they understood that she belonged in the district where she was working. She noted that her "physical signposting"

strategy demands respect, even as she thinks that this kind of signposting is “stupid” or something she should not have to do. These strategies reflect the work that young Black women do to make themselves legible in the urban spaces they traverse daily. More importantly, these strategies point out the ways that racialized, classed, and gendered notions make young Black women’s presence at once hypervisible as noticeably wrong and invisible (misunderstood or overlooked).

An example of this invisibility comes from Leela who mentions the ways in which White and affluent people interact with her in her workplace. She says,

> It's just kind of like not jarring but sometimes shocking just to see the amount of wealth that people do have and how they navigate that, especially being in work. Like their possessions of their cars, just the way they walk around, the way they engage with you. For example, in an elevator or in a restaurant in those areas, it's kind of like ‘What are you doing here?’ kind of thing ‘Who are you?’ kind of thing and they don't really see you or they render you invisible.

The White and affluent people that frequent Leela’s workplace seem to notice young Black women and question their presence in the space because of the ways in which young Black women do not fit their understanding of who should be in that space. At the same time that young Black women’s “out of place”-ness is perceived, the interactions they have with others function to erase them by 1) not acknowledging that young Black women belong in any space they are in and 2) by refusing them tiny niceties, such as smiling or saying hello, and rendering them invisible. Leela said

> It's just kind of like as a Black woman oftentimes in these spaces you are virtually invisible. When you walk on an elevator, you see people and they don't speak to you. You could be giving them a largest smile possible and it's still no interaction.

Leela names her Black woman-ness as implicated in other people's reactions to her but also attributes these microaggressions to race and class. She says, "I'm not wearing the business suit and I don't necessarily look like the most wealthiest person in the room." Bridging these narratives, the ways that young Black women's bodies are read by others creates a need for strategies to manage their appearance in order to reinforce and communicate their humanity. Young Black women's resistance to attempts to not see them, or to incorrectly categorize them as potential dangers or not belonging highlights the ways that Black women agentically navigate the urban spaces they traverse daily.

Discussion

In the current study, I aimed to understand what could be learned if I positioned young Black urban-residing women as authoritative knowledge producers regarding urban neighborhood quality. I asked two research questions, which were: 1) What aspects and features of neighborhoods do young Black women discuss when asked to describe their urban neighborhoods? and 2) How does gender play a role in urban-residing Black emerging adult women's descriptions of their neighborhoods? Three themes were developed to answer the first research question: 1) Black Placemaking, 2) Outsiders' Perceptions versus Our Realities, and 3) Urban Spatial Critical Reflection. Two themes were developed to answer the second research question: 1) gendered safety and 2) visibility of young Black women. Across the two research questions, young Black women offered a unique and contextualized perspective of urban spaces, which points to the lack of specificity of existing subjective neighborhood assessments. Their

narratives offer insight to the previously invisible work they are doing to note and reconcile hegemonic perspectives of urban areas. If positionality is the place from which Black women see the city, young Black women in the sample have shown that others in the city see them in their social positions and use discourse about Black women in urban spaces to act accordingly. The safety and visibility concerns that young Black women have as a result of these (mis)readings are a part of their evaluations of the city at the same time that participants understand them to be a larger issue. The themes I developed to answer these questions highlight gaps in the existing conceptualization subjective neighborhood assessment, including a generalized notion of neighborhood evaluation and the lack of attention to dominant narratives regarding marginalized groups and urban spaces.

Young Black women's narratives in the current study highlight the importance of relationality in Black placemaking. The concept of placemaking has roots in urban planning and design and was intended to be a bottom-up, person-centered process that involves collaboration among residents and planners to improve the experience of living in cities (Toolis, 2017). However, placemaking rarely occurs as a collaborative and inclusive process that improves livability for all residents. In particular, placemaking efforts have been critiqued for focusing on beautification efforts and attracting investment while displacing marginalized residents. Thus, Toolis (2017) proposed critical placemaking, or social justice-oriented efforts that disrupt systems of domination and create inclusive, plural, and participatory public places. Critical placemaking is made specific to Black and African American sociopolitical history with Hunter and colleagues' (2016) definition of Black placemaking: the efforts of urban-residing Black Americans that represent resistance, belonging, and endurance in remaking public spaces. The authors highlighted Black little league games and block parties in honor of demolished housing

communities as Black placemaking efforts that allowed urban-residing Black people to create sites of belonging and persist in the face of indignifying structural conditions and practices in urban areas. Black placemaking intertwines social and physical aspects of neighborhoods and was used as key descriptors of neighborhoods by young Black women in the current study.

The psychological approach to studying perceptions of neighborhood quality has compartmentalized the communal and social elements of urban neighborhoods in some ways. Connerly and Marans' (1985) test of the PNQ model found that social interaction was not related neighborhood evaluations and was only weakly related to neighborhood satisfaction. As such, the authors concluded that social interaction is not a strong contributor to cognitive aspects of subjective neighborhood quality, such as neighborhood perceptions and evaluations. Yet, the narratives of the young Black women in the current study suggest otherwise: that their experiences of Black placemaking inform their understanding of the character and essence of their neighborhood, or its quality. Young Black women's accounts of Black placemaking were explicitly tied to the physical spaces they were in and indicated that participants evaluated non-social features of the neighborhood with these social elements in mind. From summer block parties to holding church in their grandmother's yard, young Black women highlighted the specifically spatial elements of their experiences of Black placemaking, which help to form the standards by which they evaluate their neighborhoods. These placemaking behaviors are what gives a place its character. Placemaking behaviors should not be abstracted from the physical spaces which foster or hinder them. Thus, future examinations of perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality should examine the complex interdependence of the built environment and relational Black placemaking as inextricable aspects that support urban communities.

In their efforts to clarify the factors that are most important to the ways that they evaluate the neighborhood/city, young Black women sometimes worked to reconcile the difference between the realities of their experiences in urban areas and the ways that "outsiders" perceived those same areas. At times, the young women imagined the outsiders to be White and middle- to upper-class people who utilized racialized and classed stereotypes to make conclusions about the urban spaces in which young Black women lived. However, for the most part, the outsider was a generalized other which signaled young Black women's awareness of the discourse surrounding urban areas where there are Black and Brown residents. Young Black women highlighted that their global evaluations of urban areas were not diminished in the presence of issues that impacted its quality and that they felt safe and at home in areas where others would not. Du Bois' (1903/1994) articulation of double consciousness is a useful lens through which to view the narratives organized in this theme. Du Bois described double consciousness as "…the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (pg. 5). Participants point out that the hegemonic perspective in which Black people are regarded is also applied to spatial contexts in which Black people live, work, and play. However, young Black women in the current study indicate a resistance to this perspective of themselves and their urban communities. Underlying assumptions about what makes an area "good" or "safe" cannot be taken as universal, according to the Black emerging adult women in the current study. Thus, the hegemonic perspective does not have to be integrated into one's self or one's neighborhood evaluation; it can be analyzed, challenged, debunked, and resisted. This theme highlights the ways in which young Black women identified racist and classist assumptions that underpin assessments of both global neighborhood quality and specific neighborhood features, such as safety. Young Black women's

articulations of this mismatch formed part of a larger critical perspective on the spatial injustices facing urban communities.

Participants described issues in their neighborhoods, such as drug activity, disinvestment in the environment, and police brutality with attention to the legislators and policies that allow these issues to proliferate in certain urban communities. Young Black women's urban spatial critical analysis in this study highlight some of these issues of quality as shaping their evaluations of the places where they live. However, what is clear is that these women read these features not as meaningful in the abstract, but as factors that reveal a particular kind of systemic and political disinvestment in people because of race, class, and gender. These findings emphasize the point that measures of neighborhood quality that simply list problems and assets in a neighborhood or space, may be too simplistic to capture the reality that Black women evaluate space not by what is present or absent, but by the relational meanings attached to assets, and by the system blaming attributions that explain spatial risks and challenges. Further, the findings of this study highlight the reality that Black women may attend not just to observable features (e.g., parks), but to less overtly observable sociostructural factors including human trafficking, and policies (e.g., unfair policing) that disproportionately plague marginalized and minoritized populations.

Jill, age 30, raised the notion that "Black people have Black experiences of cities", which emphasizes the unique perspectives that the Black Spatial Imaginary (Lipsitz, 2011) outlined and that Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006) challenges and deepens. Lipsitz (2011) highlighted how Black urban residents challenge the prioritization of individual value over communal value in the use of physical spaces. He reconceptualizes misunderstood aspects of Black life in the city as responses to oppressive efforts to contain racially marginalized people,

such as boisterous musical parades that took routes through White neighborhoods. McKittrick's (2006, 2011) arguments deepen the Black Spatial Imaginary's study of Black life in the city to consider misunderstood or overlooked experiential elements of Black women's relationships with physical space. Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006) offers that Black women's deep familiarity with racial/sexual domination in physical spaces created unique perspectives on ways to navigate and use spaces to subvert those forces. The young Black women in the sample are intentional in the ways they navigate urban spaces to subvert oppressive discourses and practices that work to devalue urban spaces and constrain Black and Brown communities within them. Examples such as changing their manner of dress and insisting to go to places in the city where others are too afraid to go are among the ways that young Black women in the sample resist the impacts of spatial oppression. Additionally, McKittrick (2006) argued that Black women's relationships also structure their perspectives on and uses of physical spaces. Young Black women in the current study offer evidence to this assertion, as Black placemaking efforts that were often used to describe their neighborhood character are fundamentally communal. Thus, the current study contributes to the understanding of how these theoretical and conceptual assertions are enacted and understood by young Black women in urban communities.

Participants' narratives supported McKittrick's (2006) assertions that Black women have a unique relationship to physical spaces. Participants noted that in addition to harm that Black men may be at risk for in urban areas, Black women are also often concerned with sexual and gendered violence. Though young Black women resist the notion that cities are particularly dangerous for young women, participants' strategies to be safe while walking down the street or going to specific places in the city highlights the importance of space in safeguarding one's self as a young Black woman. Previous research on women's socialization regarding gendered safety

has found that harassment in public places is an experience that reinforces the message that women should fear public places (Kern, 2005). Young Black women in the sample attended to potential serious bodily violations for themselves as well as for Black men, suggesting that safety may be evaluated in communal terms rather than individual. The gendered safety theme helps us to consider how young Black women understand their bodies to be endangered and enact measures that safeguard themselves while preserving their sense of comfort in their urban communities. Further, participants viewed safety through the prism of generalized discourses about urban areas, as a commonly assessed feature of neighborhoods with their own communal criteria, and in relation to gendered embodiments across several themes in the current study. Thus, assessing safety as a feature of neighborhoods may be more comprehensive if assessed in relation to feelings of safety for residents, their close others, and in relation to how their navigation strategies provide or diminish a sense of safety. This approach is more nuanced than interpreting safety concerns in neighborhood assessments as more prominent for women than men in cities due to the inherently dangerous nature of cities, assumed smaller stature of women, or without explanation.

Young Black women highlighted the intersectional discourses that rely on gendered, racialized, and classed discourses to shape the ways that people and institutions respond to young Black women in the city. These discourses and interactions shape young Black women's experiences as well as evaluations of their neighborhood and city quality. In the current study, one way that gender and space are both implicated in women's experience and evaluation of space is through the management strategies they have to perform. Young Black women described using these strategies to prevent others from dehumanizing them, exposing them to dignity violations, rendering them invisible, or making them unsafe. Embodied identity

management strategies have been studied extensively with Black women who are expected to respond to a host of racialized and classed stereotypes that shape how others understand them (Jackson, 2002a; Jackson, 2002b). Young Black women in the current study responded to these attempts to misread or erase them by employing embodied identity management strategies, like wearing business causal clothing in casual work settings and bright colors when running through other neighborhoods. This pattern is aligned with previous research on vigilance and shifting behaviors that Black women engage in to prepare and protect themselves from gendered racism across contexts, like their workplace (Hicken et al., 2018; Dickens et al., 2019). The current study recontextualizes the management of Black women's bodies in the urban spaces they traverse. The extent to which young Black women felt comfortable in spaces depended on their legibility both socially and in physical spaces and was related to how they evaluate various spaces throughout the cities in which they lived. These signifiers that participants were in welcoming or unwelcoming spaces are not simply matters of neighborhood attachment, but also informed young Black women's neighborhood evaluations and analysis of urban inequities.

Limitations. There are six limitations that shaped the current study's analyses and future directions to highlight. The first three limitations are related to the nature of secondary data analyses. First, the interview questions were not fully designed with these research questions in mind. As such, young Black women were not asked to explicitly name the most important aspects of their neighborhoods or the ways their social identities impact their perspectives on urban spaces. Future work should investigate these questions with urban-residing young Black women. Second, although I endeavored to focus on neighborhoods, participants discussed neighborhoods, cities, and specific places throughout, such as restaurants. Given the reality that urban residents are extremely mobile (Jensen, 2009) for employment, recreation, and necessities,

it is important to recognize that quality was assessed across multiple geographic scales in the current study. Residents may not imagine themselves in static spatial terms that are common to traditional neighborhood studies. This is both a limitation of the current study and a contribution to recent calls for multi-spatial approaches to the study of urban life (Mattis et al., 2020; Galster, 2001). Third, young Black women in the study were living in 5 different cities in the Midwest West Coast, and Northeast regions of the U.S. at the time of the study. Because they reside in very disparate areas of the country, the participants discussed a range of neighborhood racial and class compositions with those attending universities or in large metropolitan areas describing a greater mix of race and class demographics. Across these urban demographic variations, young Black women were attentive to the disparities between areas based on race and class differences as well as public reputations of those areas that privileged the more affluent, White, or university-adjacent areas. The differences in social and political histories across cities may be important context for understanding the narratives that young Black women shared. Focusing on one city will allow for a deeper examination of the specific contextual aspects of young Black women's experiences and the relations these aspects may have with their evaluative criteria.

The next three limitations are centered on specific considerations of the sample. First, all the young Black women in the study were between the ages of 18 and 30. The sample was constrained in the current study to investigate the unique social position of young Black urban-residing women in relation to subjective neighborhood assessment. The developmental life stage of emerging adulthood is conceptualized as a time of exploration and change for young adults, and the young Black women in the sample discussed many life changes. From starting and finishing college, to entering graduate school, to moving across the country for new jobs, and moving away from parents into one's own home in their hometown, young Black women in the

current study seemed to experience a lot of change during this life stage. Their perspectives on neighborhoods and cities seemed to be related to their evaluations of the cities they grew up in or moved through in their younger years. Further, younger and older Black women than the emerging adult women in the sample may have specific developmental considerations that impact their neighborhood assessments as well. Future research would benefit from purposive sampling across the life span to examine if and how neighborhood assessment shifts based on life events, such as moving, and developmental events, such as retirement. Second, contextual factors, such as the cost of living and housing (in)stability, contributed to disparate experiences among the young Black women in the sample. Some of the women were explicit about having experienced unstable housing or homelessness previously, which may have been related to extremely high rent prices, gentrification, or sudden shifts in socioeconomic status. These factors may have played a role in participants' very different conceptualizations of attractions or interactions with others based on other people's assumptions about participants' class and housing status. However, differences in what was considered an attraction may not be solely attributable to the differences in contextual factors between young Black women in the sample. The next iteration of this work could focus on contextual and socioeconomic factors, such as rent prices, housing stability, and cost of living, in relation to PNQ to explore these differences more. Lastly, young Black women's attention to the safety and visibility of Black women's bodies point to the importance of thinking through gender beyond the binary in future research. The Black women participants self-identified as women who were born female, but feminine embodiments and gender nonconformity, regardless of sex, is endangered across physical environments. It is imperative to take up a fuller spectrum of gender to investigate what

evaluation and perception is like for young Black people across gender presentations in future research.

Conclusion

The current study's qualitative analysis was guided by the Black Spatial Imaginary (Lipsitz, 2011), Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006), and existing measures and models of perceptions of neighborhood quality. Building upon the conceptual frames, I positioned Black women urban residents as authoritative knowledge producers and in the case of Black urban residents, this is a group whose reality is too often ignored. Young Black women's narratives supported and nuanced aspects of the Black Spatial Imaginary by offering communal evaluative criteria for assessing neighborhoods and by emphasizing intersectional analysis as key to their critical reflections on space. Findings from this study also support McKittrick's (2006) historical analysis of Black women's relationships with physical spaces by emphasizing relationality and efforts to subvert oppressive forces in relation to subjective spatial assessment. While aspects of existing measures and models of PNQ were discussed by the participants in this study, such as safety and attractions, it is imperative that researchers studying subjective neighborhood assessment take more of a participant-driven approach to understanding urban neighborhood quality. Young Black women living in urban areas offered several key insights to the study of subjective neighborhood assessment that can inform theory, intervention efforts, and policy regarding Black life in the city. First, Black placemaking efforts outlined in the current study warrant renewed investigation into the interdependence of social aspects of cities and the built environment with special attention to sociopolitical context of geographic areas and social communities within them. Second, the relational and communal aspects of Black placemaking and gendered safety considerations suggest that individualized notions of perceived

neighborhood quality are partial constructs. The findings from young Black women's narratives indicate that subjective neighborhood quality should allow residents to report their evaluative criteria that extends beyond personal safety or comfort to one's broader community. Third, young Black women's analysis of outsiders' perceptions and of inequitable conditions across neighborhoods illuminates the key role of positionality in perspectives of and experiences in urban spaces. Through their analyses of social identities in urban spaces and Black placemaking, young Black women offer models of evidence-based intervention and policy solutions, such as providing street cleaning across neighborhoods and opportunities to engage with animals for distressed urban residents.

Table 5: Research Questions and Theme Descriptions Table

Research Question	Theme	Description	Exemplar Quote(s)
What aspects and features of the neighborhood do young Black women discuss when describing their urban neighborhoods?	Black Placemaking (Hunter et al., 2016)	Communal and social efforts to resist, belong, and endure in urban spaces are Black Placemaking. Participants noted how these efforts are commonly overlooked but represent the essence of the urban areas in which they reside.	[My aunt] opened our grandma's house for like church so she would have like church on the block… we had a whole ministry. She would like have all the young Black men come who are kind of getting into the gang scene. Well, for this hour, you're gonna come here and we're going talk about God and scriptures and everything and she would always provide a meal for everyone after that was like a big thing…everyone will just like tell their friends to come. The block was very close knit - Renee
	Young Black women's Realities versus Outsider Perceptions	Participants noted and worked to reconcile the difference between their perceptions of and experiences in urban areas and the generalized discourse about those same spaces. There is particular mismatch within the particular realm of safety and a more generalized mismatch regarding the overall quality. Across the content of the mismatch, young Black women note that racialized and classed misconceptions underlie the discourse surrounding the urban areas they discussed.	I think they just think like, people like with guns in their hands, (laughter) like, "I'm going to shoot everyone that walks by" (laughter)… they're probably like, "oh, it's a lot thugs", quote unquote thugs. And it's like, yeah. But I'm like, no, that's not how it works. – Kerri I remember when I was still in undergrad, I had a roommate who, we had literally moved from here to the other like around the corner. But because of like, the new composition of people that we were living around, she was just like, "Oh no, I can't, like, I can't jog anymore" but when we lived around the corner, you were like running up and down the street every day. So, what is the difference here? And that perception, even when you're moving like just one street down…But then you still kind of have those people [that] hold

			these views, “Well, I'm okay with this Black person that's in my class, but if I'm living in the one Black community on south campus, then it's an issue.” - Amara
	Urban Spatial Critical Reflection	Young Black women offered an overarching analysis of urban spaces that attended to urban inequities and who was responsible. The resulting authentic perspective that this critical social analysis allows for offers insight to evidence-based solutions to urban inequities.	Gentrification is a huge problem in many of the areas of [city] that are historically Black and Brown right now…even the people that they're moving in as gentrifiers, they're not building the buildings in a way that even signals to them that they want them to stay for a long time…Your landlord doesn't care about you either… any more than your landlord cares about the Black family that used to live there before. – Jill …but like I still wouldn't, I still wouldn't rather live in a city than a suburb…I would be willing to fight for whatever I need to do to live in the city. Like, you can't move me. This is my home…and when you think about like White flight and all that stuff that happens, we were always in the city. There's a lot of things that come with living in the city. But if we don't stay and try to change it how will it ever get better? - Kerri
How does gender play a role in Black emerging adult women’s descriptions of their neighborhoods?	Gendered Safety	Participants noted the ways in which safety is a constant concern for Black women across physical landscapes, not due to inherently dangerous conditions in the city. Further, gender creates different priorities among Black women and Black men, even as Black women	Some of my teachers offered to take me home. I mean, I lived five minutes from the school, but I stayed after school for the dance team or I stayed after for the track team and my teachers will offer to drive me home just because they knew as a young woman, 12, 10, 13, whatever, how old I was, it's probably not best for you to walk out on the street. - Leela

		must consider the same dangers that Black men face.	
	Young Black women’s visibility	Young Black women noted that their bodies were both hypervisible and invisible to others in urban areas. Young Black women’s visibility as noticeably out of place or not there at all is a manifestation of the racialized, gendered, and classed assumptions that surround them as they navigate physical spaces.	It's really like physical signposting [wearing business casual clothing]. It's stupid but I'm like ‘I am respectable’. - Jill It's just kind of like as a Black woman oftentimes in these spaces you are virtually invisible. When you walk on an elevator, you see people and they don't speak to you. You could be giving them a largest smile possible and it’s still no interaction. - Leela

Table 6: Participant Pseudonyms and Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Income	Education	City Residence Length	Neighborhood Residence Length	Partnered?	Children?	Region of the U.S.
Leela	21	$20-39k	Senior in college	lifetime	11-15 years	No	No	West Coast
Grace	28	$40-59k	Graduate degree	>5 years	>5 years	No	No	Midwest
Jill	30	$100-149k	Grad Student	6-10 years	6-10 years	Yes	No	Northeast
Kerri	24	$40-59k	Undergrad degree	>5 years	>5 years	No	No	West Coast
Amara	23	$20-39k	Undergrad degree	6-10 years	>5 years	No	No	Midwest
Dee	23	$20-39k	High school/GED	6-10 years	>5 years	Yes	No	West Coast
Renee	27	>$19k	High school/GED	lifetime	>5 years	Yes	Yes	West Coast
Melanie	25	$20-39k	Grad Student	6-10 years	6-10 years	No	No	Midwest
Simone	22	$20-39k	Senior in college	lifetime	did not respond	No	No	West Coast

Chapter 5 : Discussion

The Intersectional Nature of Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality: Summary of Findings

Across three studies, this dissertation examined the factors that are associated with and the factors that inform perceived neighborhood quality among Black emerging adults. Study 1 investigated whether social identities (i.e., age, gender, income, and education) and social locations (i.e., parent status and partner status), neighborhood sociostructural factors (i.e., perceived racial composition of Black residents' communities, objective racial composition of Black residents' communities, population density, poverty density, and Gini income inequality index), and neighborhood social capital (i.e., length of residence in the city and neighborhood) associated with perceptions of neighborhood quality for Black emerging adult men and women. Study 1 also examined to what extent are the relations between social identities and social locations, neighborhood socio-structural factors, neighborhood social capital, and perceptions of neighborhood quality the same or different for Black emerging adult women and men. Regarding the first research question, I found that partnered Black emerging adults with higher levels of educational attainment, more combined household income, and with no children reported significantly higher PNQ than their unpartnered, less educated, less well-resourced counterparts with children. Neighborhood sociostructural factors, namely lower perceived percentage of Black neighbors, higher objective percentage of Black residents in the zip code, and lower objective percentage of poor or struggling residents in the zip code, were related to higher PNQ. Regarding the second research question, the proposed model was significantly related to PNQ for Black emerging adult women but not for their male counterparts. Specifically, education,

combined household income, perceived percentage of Black neighbors, objective percentage of Black residents in the zip code, and objective percentage of poor or struggling residents in the zip code were related to PNQ for Black emerging adult women. For Black emerging adult men, education was the only significant construct related to PNQ. In Study 2, I asked if critical consciousness was related to PNQ above and beyond the contributions of social identities and social locations and if these relations were similar or different for young Black men and women. I found that some social identities and social locations were related to PNQ in the context of critical consciousness, namely age, combined household income, and partner status were positively related to PNQ. Also, each element of critical consciousness, namely critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action, was related to PNQ. Yet, in the gender-stratified analyses, combined household income and critical action were the only constructs significantly related to PNQ for young Black women. None of the social identities or social locations included in this model were related to PNQ for young Black men, but each element of critical consciousness was related to PNQ. In Study 3, I explored what aspects and features of neighborhoods young Black women discussed when describing their neighborhoods and how gender played a role in their neighborhood descriptions. Themes developed to answer these questions suggest that the communal and social aspects of neighborhood assessment, generalized discourse about young Black women's urban communities, and critical reflections on inequitable social conditions were key to young Black women's neighborhood assessment. Also, gender was particularly salient as young Black women reflected upon the notion of safety and visibility throughout urban spaces.

Social Identities, Intersectionality and PNQ

Taken together, the findings of these three studies illustrate the intersectional nature of perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality. Cooper (2016) reminds readers that intersectionality was not articulated to fully or wholly account for Black women's experiences of subordination due to the interlocking systems of racism, sexism, and classism. Rather, intersectionality as articulated by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) is a starting place for examining structural erasures that foreclose opportunities for justice to Black women, who fall outside of the legible social and structural intersections of other groups lobbying for social change (i.e., White women and Black men). Theoretical arguments from Black feminist geography have utilized intersectionality as a frame to argue that social identities, societal structures, and built environments all interact with one another and curate experiences and perceptions of physical spaces for urban residents (McKittrick, 2006, 2011; Mollett & Faria, 2018). However, psychological research has taken a more singular axis approach in the few examinations of these relations by comparing groups along one dimension of difference at a time and collapsing across within group variation. In psychology research, social positions (e.g., gender, race, class) are included as peripheral factors that act upon neighborhood perception and evaluation (Connerly & Marans, 1985). This dissertation demonstrated that the social identities of young Black urban residents, particularly gender and income, were associated with not only how participants perceive and evaluate structural and social aspects of urban spaces, but also their experiences within those spaces. Using the intersectional sensibility advanced by Crenshaw and reiterated by Cooper, the findings of this dissertation can be understood as a commentary on the structural implications of social positions and how these implications manifest in young Black adults' perceptions of their urban neighborhoods.

Study 1 sets the groundwork for understanding the diversity within young Black adults' perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality according to their social positions, the demographic profiles of their neighborhoods, and the time they lived in the area. In the full sample analyses, combined household income, education, parental status, partner status, the percentage of Black residents in the zip code, the percentage of poor or struggling residents in the zip code, and perceptions of the percentage of Black people in the neighborhood were related to young Black adult's PNQ. Young Black adults who reported higher educational attainment, higher combined household income, who did not have children, and who were partnered, reported higher PNQ than their less educated, lower-income, parent, and single counterparts. Black emerging adults who lived in neighborhoods where they perceived higher percentages of Black neighbors and those who lived in zip codes where more residents were poor or struggling financially reported lower PNQ, while Black emerging adults who lived in zip codes with more Black residents reported higher PNQ. Gender stratified analyses found that education, combined household income, perceived percentage of Black neighbors, objective percentage of Black residents in the zip code, and objective percentage of poor or struggling residents in the zip code were significantly associated with PNQ for young Black women. For young Black men in the sample, education was the only significant independent variable included in the model and was positively associated with PNQ. Given the variation in findings by gender in study 1, it is worthwhile to examine these findings in light of existing theoretical arguments, empirical research, and young Black women's narratives in study 3.

The findings that young Black women's educational attainment and household income, is related to their PNQ is not surprising. Higher educational attainment and combined household income may allow Black women to move to neighborhoods that they prefer or that they find to

be high quality. It is possible that young Black adults may evaluate neighborhoods more positively when those neighborhoods provide amenities that they value (e.g., parks, schools). However, Study 3 suggests that Black women may rate neighborhood quality more favorably if those neighborhoods provide them with more opportunities for socializing and building relational ties with others including extended family. Young Black women are commonly socialized to value relationality (Leath et al., 2019) and their proximity to kinship ties and familial concerns positions them to attach value to their neighborhood.

Sociostructural factors and PNQ

The findings regarding sociostructural variables (i.e., perceived and actual percentage of Black residents and residents living in poverty) highlight the importance of assessing the ways in which PNQ is informed by perceptions versus reality. Despite the fact that Black people do not necessarily live in disadvantaged urban spaces (Lacy, 2007), young Black adults in general and women in particular who perceive that they live in contexts with a larger number of Black neighbors tended to score lower on PNQ. Young Black women may perceive higher numbers of Black neighbors as a harbinger of reduced neighborhood quality given the public discourses that conflate the presence of Black people with problematic urban spaces and ways of life. One way to interpret this finding is to presume that the association between perceived percentage of Black residents and lower PNQ reflects a disdain for these groups and a fear that these groups will behave in ways that compromise the quality of life in a neighborhood. An alternative reading is that Black women may be aware of the historical reality that structures of power tend to withdraw resources from, and neglect spaces occupied by larger numbers of marginalized group members. This latter reading is supported by the findings of Study 3 where women discussed 1) the tendency of outsiders to assume that neighborhoods were of low quality because of the

presence of Black and Brown people, and 2) the poor and unsafe living conditions at the neighborhood and city levels caused by governmental and corporate disinvestment from neighborhoods in which Black people live. The real and expected pattern of disinvestment may explain why the actual proportion of poor or financially struggling people in a zip code was also associated with lower PNQ among participants (Galster & Sharkey, 2017). Living in urban communities where there are higher proportions of poor or financially struggling people may also proxy reduced neighborhood quality.

Spatial critical consciousness

Study 3 also provides some evidence to this point, in that young Black women were attentive to class and race of urban communities. Black emerging adult women described the reality that spaces that seemed attractive to outsiders were often spaces in which businesses, universities, and land developers disempowered Black and Brown residents. Young Black women reported that their embodied presence in these physical spaces was read as not belonging because of their race and presumed class. In these spaces, the problematic perspectives of mostly White and affluent urban residents were a catalyst for anti-Black racial microaggressions against them. Young Black women highlighted that the social identities of urban residents are not the root causes of the microaggressions that they faced. Instead, the problematic biases of privileged urban residents and the structural conditions which reduced neighborhood quality for marginalized people were the targets of young Black women's critiques. Women's critical consciousness about these issues was also evident in Study 2.

In Study 2, the full sample results suggested that critical consciousness was related to PNQ for Black emerging adults. As Black emerging adults in the study more strongly endorsed beliefs that marginalized groups experience social disadvantage, they also reported higher PNQ.

Similarly, Black emerging adults who believe that it is possible and important for them to address societal inequity, also reported higher PNQ. However, Black emerging adults who reported more frequent engagement in civic and political actions, such as writing a letter to a government official, reported lower PNQ. This was the case for young Black men as well, yet, for young Black women in particular, critical action was the only element of critical consciousness that was related to PNQ, and it was negatively related to PNQ. It may be the case that young Black women who notice problems in their neighborhoods may be prompted to engage in social action either locally or in broader contexts. It is also possible that young Black women who are oriented towards being social active, the engagement in activism may lead them to be particularly sensitive to problems in their neighborhoods. In sum, critical actions may be negatively related to PNQ because the measure is capturing awareness of issues related to neighborhood quality, which can inspire Black emerging adult women and men to act. The positive relations between critical reflection, critical agency, and PNQ, and the negative relation between critical action and PNQ is worth further exploration. Perhaps there is an experiential difference between people who are critically conscious and those who are socio-politically engaged. For this fairly well-resourced sample of Black men and women, the cognitive awareness of injustice and the belief that they can influence social change may lead them to appreciate their neighborhoods, which may be spaces where they feel empowered and supported to act. However, people who are engaged in the hard work of trying enact social change may be more attuned to issues of unsafety, risk, and challenges in the places where they live, even if those spaces are relatively highly resourced.

Study 3 also complicates what the quantitative findings offered us in Studies 1 and 2. In the first two studies, neighborhood social capital (i.e., length of residence in the city and

neighborhood), critical reflection, and critical agency were not related to young Black women's PNQ. However, narratives in Study 3 suggest that time in the community as well as critical analytic work about urban spaces are related to young Black women's perceptions of and experiences in urban areas. Specifically, young Black women discussed being able to discern between outsider discourses about their communities and their lived experience of those settings. Their understanding of these disparities were due, at least in part, to the time they had spent in their places or residence and their awareness of the histories of those areas. It may be the case that the form of social capital that is most related to PNQ is not the length of time people have lived in the neighborhood or city, but the level of familiarity and knowledge that they have about the places where they live, and the positive memories that they are able to cultivate in these places. Young Black women also exercised urban spatial critical consciousness, especially regarding reflection on urban inequalities. It may be the case that the quantitative operationalization of critical consciousness, wherein the items measure single aspects of interlocking oppressive systems, does not map onto the ways in which young Black women evaluate their neighborhood quality. Young Black women engaged in intersectional critical reflection in which they attended to how social identities and structures combined to create divergent lines of discourse about specific urban spaces and residents. In sum, Study 3 does not simply map or contradict the findings in Studies 1 and 2 but also adds richness, depth, and nuance.

Theoretical Implications

The findings offer preliminary empirical evidence that support Black Spatial Imaginary (Lipsitz, 2011) and Black Women's Geographies (McKittrick, 2006). In the Black Spatial Imaginary, Lipsitz (2011) argues that (in)equity across physical spaces informs perspectives of

urban spaces for urban-residing Black Americans. The findings from each study suggest that interlocking oppressive systems (i.e., racism, classism, and sexism) are associated with Black emerging adults' evaluations of their urban neighborhoods. In Study 1, results indicate that social identities and social locations of young Black adults and others in their community contribute to their perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality. The negative relations between perceptions of the percentage of Black neighbors, the percentage of poor or struggling people in the zip code, and PNQ suggests that raced and classed disparities do impact young Black adults' PNQ. Whether urban material conditions are "objectively" negatively impacted by the presence of these groups or whether the perception of their presence is a signal of reduced quality to young Black adults in the sample, these findings suggest the manifestation of interlocking systems of oppression in urban spaces. In Study 2, this dissertation finds preliminary support for another fundamental tenet of the Black Spatial Imaginary—the notion that awareness of social inequity and a sense of possibility to enact social change (i.e., critical consciousness) inform the way that Black people understand spatial conditions. Young Black women in Study 3 offered narratives that connect aspects of critical social analysis, which undergirds the Black Spatial Imaginary, and PNQ. Future research should explore empirical examples of aspects of the Black Spatial Imaginary that this dissertation did not explore, such as attitudes about democratic utilization of urban space and coalitional efforts that create radical and inclusive solutions to social issues.

One contribution of this study is that I explore the possibility of a Black Spatial Imaginary outside of a White Spatial comparison. Lipsitz (2011) articulated the Black Spatial Imaginary in relation to a White Spatial Imaginary to highlight the coalitional and democratic perspectives of space that (mostly Black) Americans living in inequitable urban areas. This

Black perspective on space developed in contrast to the individualistic and defensive perspective of space that (mostly White) privileged Americans developed. I focused on the perspectives of Black urban-residing emerging adults without a White comparison group to explore the diversity within potential Black Spatial Imaginaries. The notion of multiple Black Spatial Imaginaries addresses potential pitfalls of the original articulation of the concept, which could be misunderstood to suggest an essentialized and monolithic perspective of place among those living in disadvantaged urban spaces in particular. This study broadens the scope of Lipsitz's theoretical work in that Study 1 examines the possibility of multiple Black Spatial Imaginaries and provides evidence to suggest that multiple social positions of young Black urban residents (i.e., gender, household income) and social positions of those in their community (i.e., Black residents in the zip code and neighborhood, poor or struggling residents in the zip code) are important contributors to their neighborhood perspectives. The Black Spatial Imaginary most explicitly focused on race and class of urban residents as relevant to the Black Spatial Imaginary. This study suggests that multiple social positions of Black Americans and their neighbors, including gender, education, and parental status, may inform their perceptions and evaluations of urban spaces. Evidence from studies 2 and 3 suggest that critical perspectives on urban material and social conditions exist for young Black men and women, but that Black Spatial Imaginaries may also operate differentially across gender for Black urban residents. The next iteration of this work should seek to further elucidate the role of gender in urban spatial critical consciousness.

Where the Black Spatial Imaginary falls short in examining the central role of gender, McKittrick's (2006) Black Women's Geographies served as a guiding theoretical frame for this dissertation. McKittrick (2006) argues that racial-sexual domination creates unique constraints for Black women as these women navigate spaces. Specifically, McKittrick (2006) argues that

the ways that racial-sexual oppression manifests often limit Black women's mobility and reinscribes the seemingly natural hierarchy where Black women are both at the bottom of the social order and stuck in physical spaces that reflect that social position. However, Black women's agency and ability to navigate physical spaces to accomplish their goals despite these forces creates new geographies, or new ways of understanding and utilizing physical space that challenge the naturalness of existing geographies (i.e., maps that depict particular routes and not others). McKittrick's (2006) claims are fundamentally experiential and highlight that the social production of space creates material conditions that reproduce inequitable social hierarchies. The evidence yielded from this dissertation suggests that gendered positionality does, indeed, matter for perspectives of and experiences in urban neighborhoods. In studies 1 and 2 gender stratified analyses revealed that PNQ is differently related to social locations and structural realities for young men and women.

More directly related to McKittrick's points about the role of racial-sexual domination in Black women's experience of space, Study 3 offers compelling evidence for the intersectional awareness of inequity that young Black women bring to understanding the social and material conditions in the urban neighborhoods in which they live. Reducing Black Women's Geographies to an examination of positionality and experience of physical space is an exploratory application used in this dissertation. Future research could explore Black women's spatial navigation practices more deeply by using daily diary or photovoice methods which would allow researchers to have rich visual and time-bound data regarding how Black women perceive and evaluate spaces as they are navigating them. This exploration of Black women's route-finding, or strategies to successfully navigate spaces with dignity, is key to understanding how Black women are creating new geographies, challenging existing geographies, and how

these practices are related to their psychological outcomes, such as self-concept and neighborhood involvement.

The findings from this dissertation also offer concrete insight as to how the claims McKittrick advances in *Demonic Grounds* can be studied in contemporary urban areas and bring Black Women's Geographies to a specifically psychological realm. McKittrick (2006) notes the importance of moving away from language that represents Black women's perspectives and uses of spaces as unknowable or invisible. This dissertation named aspects of neighborhoods that inform Black women's spatial literacy, or meaning making related to space. Specifically, the social identities of young Black women and/or their neighbors in the current study impacted their PNQ in each study. Having these insights about the role of social identities moves us closer to understanding the particular factors that inform Black women's route-finding, or spatial navigations tactics that protects their dignity as they move across physical spaces. This dissertation also helps us to think of the specifically psychological uses of Black (Women's) Geographies. The racial-sexual domination that McKittrick attends to manifests in a variety of ways in contemporary urban areas, and empirical research with Black women will help to illuminate the ways these interlocking systems of oppression impact Black women's everyday lives. Evidence from this dissertation highlights how aspects of socioeconomic class, such as income and education, interact with racial-sexual oppression and formulate different perspectives and uses of space among young Black women. Future studies that build upon these insights should examine what the spatial manifestations of racial-sexual-classed oppression look like according to Black women and how it impacts their psychological well-being, quality of life, behaviors, and future aspirations.

Practical and Research Implications

Practitioners such as urban planners and interventionists who aim to support a positive quality of life for Black urban residents may be interested in the practical implications of this dissertation. One of the key takeaways from the collective findings of this project is that young Black adults perceive neighborhood quality lower in urban areas where there are substantial numbers of Black people in close proximity and poor or financially struggling people in the broader community at the same time that the actual number of Black people living in the zip code is related to higher PNQ. Scholars have long attended to the empirical trends that suggest that racial/ethnic minorities and people with lower socioeconomic statuses experience a lower quality of life in urban areas than their racially and economically privileged urban-residing counterparts (Cutrona et al., 2005; Galster, 2001). Particular efforts to advocate for public services to provide wraparound services to urban residents and engage in community-based improvements to urban neighborhood quality may be especially fruitful starting places. Young Black residents may be an important group to mobilize on behalf of the neighborhood since this dissertation suggests they are identifying issues of quality in urban neighborhoods where there are sizable Black populations and are engaged in a wide range of community-informed efforts to address these issues. Black emerging adults can offer authoritative knowledge and person power to community-driven efforts to improve urban neighborhoods in partnerships with urban planners and public health officials. Additionally, urban planners might be able to emphasize the amenities and relational assets in an area where Black people live as ways of optimizing young Black people's experience and evaluation of those areas.

The focus on gender in this dissertation offers some potential focal points for practitioners as well. Young Black women in this dissertation highlighted the ways in which

their embodiments and the social positions of others shape their perceptions of and experiences in urban spaces. Feminist geography has long attended to the interactions between social identities, especially gender, and the built environment (Jacobs, 1961; Mollett et al., 2018). However, the intersectional nature of the interaction between people and places has proven harder for geography and urban planning disciplines to hold in focus (Mollett et al., 2018). Practitioners may benefit from working with community organizations and groups that focus on particular neighborhood aspects that act as barriers for young Black women. The women participants in this dissertation mentioned the microaggressions that they face while navigating urban spaces, which are partly encouraged by the lack of affordable and culturally relevant gathering spaces. It may be useful to study and address the ways that city amenities communicate exclusivity to its residents and how that subtle communication works to stigmatize Black urban residing women in particular. Urban planners, in particular, have real opportunities to work with White business owners and agents of power to sensitize them to the ways that everyday practices of alienation and bias impact young Black people—particularly young Black people who are potential consumers. The focus on social embodiments in the findings of this dissertation also raise questions about what is visible along daily routes and the interactions that young Black adults have while navigating urban environments. While young Black women were particularly attentive to race and class of others in their community, young Black men's educational attainment and critical consciousness process were related to their PNQ. As such, young Black men's daily routes may be starting places for both practitioners and researchers to gain a better understanding of what is informing their PNQ. Perhaps their experiences while navigating to and from educational settings in particular are implicated in shaping young Black men's perceptions and evaluations of urban spaces.

The concept and measurement of PNQ as well as its psychological effects remain to be adequately explored and explicated. It is vitally important to clarify what perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality represent to urban-residing Black people. The PNQ scale used in this dissertation could represent residents' critical evaluation of public systems that are failing, their lived experience of encounters with various systems and amenities (e.g., police, parks), perceptions of what outsiders may think of their neighborhood, or some combination of these factors. It is worthwhile to parse the experiential and perceptive aspects of urban neighborhoods and to explore the ways these elements inform participant's global evaluations of urban neighborhood quality. The psychological effects of PNQ should be more fully explored. The study of the psychological correlates of PNQ has focused on mental and physical health outcomes (Cutrona et al., 2005; Cutrona et al., 2006). Is it possible that urban neighborhood conditions also impact how urban residents think of themselves, their futures, and the futures of the cities in which they live? These questions are key to explore for young urban-residing Black adults and adolescents in particular because of the links between educational attainment, future aspirations, and aspects of self-concept (Ceballo et al., 2004; McCoy & Bowen, 2015). The implications of exploring these questions are also tied to residential trends in urban areas, resident mobility or how particular cities undergo shifts in racial and income demographics associated with gentrification (Ding et al., 2016).

Future directions and research implications: Toward a psychological exploration of Urban Black Geographies

There are four major contributions of this dissertation to the study of subjective neighborhood assessment. First, safety cannot be reduced to crime statistics as an objective neighborhood attributes or solely conceptualized on an individual level. Young Black women

who participated in the qualitative study have nuanced and deepened the concept of safety to move beyond simplistic notions of safety that rely on assumptions about the markers that communicate dangerous conditions. Instead, Black emerging adult women offered insight as to how safety is multifaceted and can be used as a referent to outsiders' evaluations of urban spaces, to evaluate the comfort and well-being of close others, and as a specific site to negotiate their own visibility. Second, gender stratified analyses revealed important within group variation worth further investigation and potential between-group variation to assess in the future. Separating models by gender and examining variation among Black men and Black women offered insight that including gender as an independent variable did not. While statistically significant group comparisons were not assessed by these particular analyses, the variation among what was related to PNQ for Black men and Black women separately suggests that social identities, social locations, neighborhood sociostructural features, and critical consciousness ideologies and actions may operate differently within and among these groups. Third, sociohistorical contexts of social groups matter in the study of neighborhood assessment. Generalized discourses about Black people residing in urban spaces and critical social analysis of spaces are embedded in and related to neighborhood evaluations for young Black adults. Thus, PNQ research should move away from models that focus on individual-level assessments of neighborhoods and instead allow for residents to evaluate neighborhoods in ways that involve residents' close others and that include public discourses that may impact residents' evaluations. Fourth, multimethod and interdisciplinary explorations of subjective neighborhood assessment are greatly needed. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods in this dissertation allowed for greater contextualization of findings and richer suggestions for future work. Conceptual frames from outside of psychology guided my inclusion of previously unstudied but significant

contributors to PNQ, such as parent and partner status, as well as Black women's experiential and communal evaluative criteria of urban communities. Incorporating relevant interdisciplinary frames as well as using participant-driven multiple and mixed methods will allow for the richness of residents' evaluative criteria and priorities to be reflected in the literature on urban neighborhoods.

This dissertation positioned young Black adults as authoritative knowers of the quality of their urban neighborhoods. However, much more data collection needs to be done to assess the issues that are most immediately impacting the neighborhood quality and quality of life in their communities. My research highlights the need for a psychological approach to urban Black geographies that will pursue three important aims: 1) consider hegemonic discourses on predominately Black and Brown urban spaces; 2) examine structural policies and discourses that shape how racial and income neighborhood composition impacts perceptions and evaluations; and 3) explore how urban residing Black people's particular knowledges and perspectives of urban spaces inform their spatial evaluation processes. This work can and should build on the seminal work on ecological systems theory advanced by Bronfenbrenner (1992/2005), and Mattis and colleagues' (2020) urban socioecological transactional model of positive development. In Mattis and colleagues' (2020) model, power and identity-related discourses are conceptualized as part of the structural elements that flow through urban environments and impact urban-residing people's psychological outcomes.

I propose a multiple method data collection effort that involves scale development and validation of an urban neighborhood quality scale, a neighborhood quality item bank, qualitative interviews with cognitive debriefing about existing neighborhood assessment measures, and policy and media data regarding neighborhood and city quality. The goal of this data collection

effort would be to create a participant-informed perceptions and evaluations of neighborhood quality item bank and scale. Purposive sampling across neighborhoods and age groups can help to shed light on how urban neighborhood quality may inform Black adolescents' and emerging adults' understanding of themselves in relation to the city and what that might mean for what they should hope to accomplish in the future. Further, scale validation using measurement invariance models could be used to examine the ways in which urban neighborhood quality operates differently within Black communities according to various social positions, like gender, parental status, and class.

Appendix

#LIFE IN THE CITY

(Jacqueline Mattis, Principal Investigator)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions ask about kindness, compassion and goodness among people who live in cities. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. I am interested in your opinions and experiences. If you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, please let me know and we will skip to the next question. Please also remember that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. As such you can end this interview at any time.

Background-Community Life and Experience:

What city do you live in? How long have you lived there? What neighborhood do you live in? How long have you lived there?

Probe: Were you born and raised in this city? If not, where were you born?

Probe: In what cities have you lived?

Probe: What city(ies) do you call home? What leads you to think of those places as home?

Probe: In what city do you work?

If you had to describe the city that you are living in to someone who doesn't know it, how would you describe it?

Probe: What do you like most about the city?

Probe: What do you find most challenging or stressful? What do you like the least about the city?

Probe: How has the city changed? How is it changing now?

Probe: How have the changes in the city affected you, your family and friends, other people who live in the community?

Does the city where you live have areas that are segregated? If so can you tell me about those places?

Probe: Can you tell me about those places? Do you ever go to these places? How do you deal with being there?

Does the city where you live have areas that feel unwelcoming? If so, what makes them feel unwelcoming?

Probe: Where are these places? Are there particular people who are unwelcome there? Do you ever go to these places? If so, how do you deal with being there?

Does the city where you live have areas that feel welcoming? If so, what makes them feel welcoming?

Probe: Where are these places?

Probe: Were these areas always welcoming? What differences do you notice about how yourself (e.g., how you think, how you act) when you are in these areas?

Individuals in the City and Kindness

Now, I'd like to ask about kind things that you have seen other people do. Sometimes people go out of their way to do kind things like giving money to someone who is homeless, or paying for

someone's groceries, or standing up for someone who was being mistreated. Have you seen or heard about people in your city do things like that for others? Please tell me about 1 or 2 circumstances like that that stand out for you.

Probe: Where were you? What happened? Were there other people around? What did others do?

Probe: What makes these events stand out for you?

Probe: How were you affected by seeing these events? What emotions did you experience? What did you do?

Probe: Did seeing these acts of kindness affect the way you think about or see the city? If so, how?

Do you have family (e.g., children, parents, siblings, a partner) or close friends here in the city? Are there kind or helpful things that people have done for your family or close friends? Can you tell me about that?

Probe: What makes those things stand out for you?

Probe: What do you think motivated them to do those things?

Probe: How have those experiences affected you?

Probe: Do those things affect you differently because they happened to people you care about instead of to you directly?

Probe: How have those experiences affected the way that you or they feel about the city?

Probe: How have those things affected the way that you think or feel about the future?

Are there people you know or know of who live in this city who you think are particularly kind or helpful? Why would you say that?

Probe: Can you tell me about these people (who are they?)?

Probe: What do you think motivates these people to do these things?

Probe: How, if at all, do these peoples' actions affect people around them?

Probe: How, if at all, do these peoples' actions affect you?

Giving help

Now, I'd like to ask about things that you and your friends and family may have done for others. When you were growing up were there close friends or people in your family who went out of their way to do things to help others? Can you give me some examples?

Probe: What kinds of things did they do?

Probe: What do you think motivated them to do these things?

Probe: How, do you think that these acts of kindness that you saw in your close friends or family affected you and others around you?

Are there times while you have lived in this city where you have done small acts of kindness for someone (e.g., for a neighbor, or someone you encountered in public)?

Probe: Can you tell me about what happened?

Probe: What makes this situation stand out for you?

Probe: What motivated you to do what you did?

Probe: How did the person that you helped react?

Probe: What effect do you think your actions had on your neighbors or the people you helped?

Probe: What effect did doing this have on you, or on people close to you?

Has there ever been a time while you have lived in this city, when you saw someone who needed help and you stepped in to help them, speak with them, or speak up for them? Please tell me about that situation.

Probe: Where were you? What happened? Were there other people around?

Probe: What were you feeling and thinking? What did you do? What did others do?

Probe: What made you decide to step in?

Probe: Were there moments when you wondered about whether you were doing the right thing? Please tell me more. (What worried you? How did you go from those thoughts to deciding to help?)

Probe: How did your decision to step-in or help in this situation affect you?

Have there been times when you saw someone who needed help when you didn't reach out, or step in or you speak-up for them? Please tell me about that situation?

Probe: Where were you? What happened? What were you feeling and thinking? Were there other people around? What did you do? What did others do?

Probe: What led you to decide not to step in? *(*Was there something about the situation or people involved that made you decide not to step-in or made you decide not to say anything?) Please tell me more.

How did your decision not to step-in affect you (e.g., your thinking about yourself, about people and their needs)?

Have there been times when you have joined a protest, or signed a petition or reach out to a city official to address something you thought of as unjust?

Probe: What led you to do that?

Probe: Are there times when you wanted to protest or sign a petition or reach out to a city official but you hesitated or chose not to? Can you tell me about that (e.g., what made you hesitate)?

Probe: In moments when you have decided not to get involved in protests, petitions etc. did you do other things to deal with the injustice (e.g., dealt with it yourself, talk to others, look up information)? Can you tell me more about that?

Seeking and receiving help

If you or someone else were in trouble or needed help, do you feel people here in the city would help? What makes you say that?

Probe: What kind of help do you think people would be most likely to provide? Can you tell me more about that?

Probe: What do you think would influence peoples' decisions about whether to help or not help?

Probe: Do you think that race, gender, religion or other social identities would affect whether someone helps or affect who gets help? Can you tell me more about that?

If you needed help, how comfortable would you be to go to the local hospitals, or the police, or call a local service agency for help? Can you tell me about that?

Probe: Do you think that your race, gender, or other social identities would affect whether or not you get help?

Probe: Do you think that your race, gender, or other social identities would affect the kind of help you would receive?

Are there times while you have lived in this city where you or someone you cared about needed help but where you didn't get the help you needed?

Probe: Can you tell me about what happened?

Probe: What makes this situation stand out for you?

Probe: How do you make sense of why you didn't get the help that you needed?

Probe: What effect did this situation (i.e., not getting the help you need) have on you?

Responses to helpfulness:

Sometimes when we help others the person we help (or try to help) responds favorably. Sometimes they don't. Have there been situations when you helped someone or tried to help someone and they responded in a way that you saw as negative? Can you tell me about that?

Probe: How did that affect you?

Probe: Have there been situations when you saw people responding negative reactions to you or to someone who was trying to be helpful? Can you tell me about that? How did that affect you?

Have there been situations when other people had what you saw as positive reactions to you or to someone who was trying to be helpful? Can you tell me about that?

Probe: How did that affect you?

Beliefs about helpfulness

In your opinion, what are reasons why people in the city choose to help others, or to speak up or step in to help others? What are the reasons some people may choose not to speak up or step in to help others?

Each of us has a lot of identities. How, if at all, do you think your identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, religion, how you dress) have affected your decisions about when to step in and when not to step in when someone needs help?

Probe: Has there ever been a situation where you wanted to help someone but then hesitated or changed your mind because you thought your race, religion, gender or other social identity might matter? Please tell me about that.

Probe: Has there ever been a situation where you helped someone specifically because of your race, religion, gender or other social identity? Or because of that person's race, religion, gender or social identity? Please tell me about that.

In your time living in this city, have you had an experience that was so unexpected and so wonderful that it really had an effect on you? It can be an experience that you had or that someone else had. Please tell me about those.

Probe: What makes these experiences stand out in your mind?

Probe: How did these experiences affect you?

RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND LOVE:

Do you think of yourself as a religious or spiritual person?

How have religion or spirituality affected your decisions about helping others?

Probe: How has your spirituality or faith shaped your thinking about kindness, compassion and love? Please tell me about that.

Probe: Can you tell me about a situation when your religious/spiritual beliefs led you to be compassionate or loving?

Probe: Can you tell me about a time when you hesitated about doing something compassionate or kind or helpful, but your spirituality led you to do the good thing?

How, if at all, has your sense of faith been affected by your family?

How do these beliefs affect how you choose interact with the injustice you see in the world?

Structures of power:

Has there ever been a time when something happened in the city that involved the police, city workers, or other such figures that you thought was unfair, unjust or problematic in some way? Can you tell me a little about that?

What makes those circumstances stand out for you?

Were there times when those things happened where you felt compelled to speak up or do something to change the situation? What did you say or do? What led you to say something or get involved?

Were there times when you didn't speak up or didn't get involved? What led you not to say something or not to get involved?

Has there ever been a time when something happened in the city that involved private businesses, or people who worked for a store or company in the city that you thought was unfair, unjust or problematic in some way? Can you tell me a little about that?

What makes those circumstances stand out for you?

Were there times when those things happened where you felt compelled to speak up or do something to change the situation? What did you say or do? What led you to say something or get involved?

Were there times when you didn't speak up or didn't get involved? What led you not to say something or not to get involved?

Recently we have seen events in the news (i.e., events in this country or in the world) like the killings of unarmed black kids, men and women, mass shootings, racist events like people having the police called on them when they weren't doing anything wrong. Have those events affected the ways that you think about justice or fairness, or human goodness?

Probe: Have they affected the way that you interact with people? Have they affected the kinds of things you talk about and don't talk about with people?

Probe: Have they affected the places in the city where you go or what you do in certain places in the city?

Probe: Have they affected the way that you think about protesting, or being politically involved etc.?

Probe: Have they affected your sense of optimism or your outlook on life?

Has there ever been a time when *something positive* happened involving the police, or city workers, or private businesses in the city. Please tell me about that.

What makes those events stand out for you?

How did these experiences affect you or others around you?

Probe: Have you ever called or written a letter to someone to praise something positive that the police or a city worker etc. has done? Please tell me about that. What made you call/write or not call/not write?

Online Kindness

Sometimes people hear about or see acts of goodness or acts of kindness on social media or in online communities. Please tell me about a specific situation on social media (Facebook,

Instagram etc.) in which you saw or heard about a someone who went out of their way to do something kind for someone else… or where someone did something kind for you.

Probe: Please describe the story or situation.

Probe: What makes these stories/postings stand out in your mind? (Why do you think you remember them?)

Probe: Are there particular people or groups that you follow online because they share uplifting stories? If yes, please tell me more about which people/groups you follow and why you follow them.

Probe: Are there particular times when you find yourself seeking out stories of goodness and kindness on line? Please tell me about that.

Probe: How, if at all, do these postings affect you? (How, if at all, do you think it changed the way you think, act, the kinds of things you search for online etc.?)

Probe: What do you do when you see these stories online? (Do you tend to share or like them?) Do you think that these actions have an impact on others? If so, what impact?

How do you think that seeing these acts of kindness online and in social media affect other people? Please tell me about that.

DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Now, I would like to talk with you about experiences of dignity and respect.

Can you tell me about a time while you were in the city (it could be on the street, in a store etc.) when you saw or heard about someone being treated in a way that was disrespectful, dehumanizing or made them feel 'less than'?

Probe: What happened? Who were the people involved?

Probe: Where were you? (Describe the location)

Probe: How did the person respond to the situation?

Probe: What makes that situation stand out for you?

Probe: How do you think being in that place affect the reaction of the people involved?

Probe: How did that situation affect you?

Can you tell me about a time in the city when someone treated you in a way that was disrespectful, dehumanizing or in a way that made you feel less than? It can be something that happened in a store, at work, in a doctor's office, school, on the street… anywhere.

Probe: What happened? Where were you? (Please describe the location)

Probe: Were there other people around?

Probe: What makes that situation stand out for you?

Probe: How did you respond to that situation? What led you to respond that way?

Probe: How do you think being in that place affect the reaction of the people involved?

Probe: Would you have changed anything about the way that you responded if you had a chance? If yes, what would you change? Why?

When you have felt disrespected, how have you typically dealt with it?

Probe: Are there things that you do or say to make yourself feel better? If so, what do you do?

Probe: How does doing or saying those things help you?

Probe: Are there times when those things don't help?

Probe: Is there something that someone did that made you feel respected again? Please tell me what they did.

Probe: Have there been times when you experienced disrespect or humiliation, and no matter what you or anyone said or did, you just couldn't make yourself feel better? Please tell me about that.

Can you tell me about a time when <u>you treated someone else</u> in a way that was disrespectful, dehumanizing, or in a way that may have made them feel 'less than'?

What happened? Where were you? Were there other people around?

What makes that situation stand out for you?

What was most painful about that situation?

How did you respond to that situation? What led you to respond that way?

What lesson did you take away from that situation? What did the situation teach you?

There are various ways that people can be shown that they are not respected. What are the aspects of life in this city or neighborhood that make it clear that people here are respected or <u>not</u> respected? Please tell me more.

What makes that stand out for you?

What do those circumstances tell us about the meaning of dignity and respect?

Are there things that you do or don't do, or places where you go or don't go so that you can make sure that you are treated with respect? Can you tell me about that? (Ask for specific examples)

Are there things you do or don't do at work to make sure that you are treated with respect?

Are there things you do or don't do when you are in public to make sure that you are treated with respect?

Are there things that you do or don't do when you are shopping or interacting with the police or in school to make sure that you are treated with respect?

Can you tell me about 1 or 2 situations when someone treated you with such humanity and respect that you remember it even now? What happened?

What makes those situations stand out for you?

How did that experience affect you?

CLOSE: We are done with the interview. **Are there things that you wanted to add that you did not have a chance to mention earlier?** If "yes", let's take the last five minutes to talk about those things. If, "no", I want to thank you for participating in the interview.

References

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood. *American psychologist*, *55*(5), 469-480. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469

Arnett, J. J. (2016). Emerging adulthood and social class. *Emerging Adulthood*, *4*(4), 244–247. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696815627248

Assari, S., Caldwell, C.H., & Zimmerman, M.A. (2015). Perceived neighborhood safety during adolescence predicts subsequent deterioration of subjective health two decades later; Gender differences in a racially-diverse sample. *International Journal of Preventive Medicine, 6*, 117. https://doi.org/10.4103/2008-7802.170431

Assari, S., Smith, J., Caldwell, C., & Zimmerman, M. (2015). Gender differences in longitudinal links between neighborhood fear, parental support, and depression among African American emerging adults. *Societies, 5*(1), 151–170. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc5010151

Baba, Y., & Austin, D.M. (1989). Neighborhood environmental satisfaction, victimization, and social participation as determinants of perceived neighborhood safety. *Environment and Behavior, 21*(6), 763–780. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916589216006

Batson, C.D., & Monnat, S.M. (2015). Distress in the desert: Neighborhood disorder, resident satisfaction, and quality of life during the Las Vegas foreclosure crisis. *Urban Affairs Review (Thousand Oaks, Calif.), 51*(2), 205–238. https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087414527080

Bonaiuto, M., Aiello, A., Perugini, M., Bonnes, M., & Ercolani, A.P. (1999). Multidimensional perception of residential environment quality and neighbourhood attachment in the urban environment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 19*(4), 331–352. https://doi.org/10.1006/jevp.1999.0138

Bonaiuto, M., & Fornara, F. (2004). Residential satisfaction and perceived urban quality. *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology.*

Bowlby, S., Lewis, J., McDowell, L., & Foord, J. (1989). The geography of gender. In Peet, R. & Thrift, N. (Eds.), *New models in geography: The political economy perspective* (pp. 157-175*)*. Unwin Hyman.

Boyd, R. L. (1996). The great migration to the north and the rise of ethnic niches for African American women in beauty culture and hairdressing, 1910–1920. *Sociological Focus*, *29*(1), 33-45. https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.1996.10571070

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. SAGE Publications.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., Terry, G. (2019) Thematic analysis. In Liamputtong, P. (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in health social sciences* (pp. 843-860). Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_103

Campbell, A., Converse, P.E., & Rodgers, W.L. (1976). *The quality of American life.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Carp, F.M., & Carp, A. (1982). Perceived environmental quality of neighborhoods: Development of assessment scales and their relation to age and gender. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 2*(4), 295–312. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-4944(82)80029-7

Charles, C. Z. (2000). Neighborhood racial-composition preferences: Evidence from a multiethnic metropolis. *Social problems*, *47*(3), 379-407. https://doi.org/10.2307/3097236

Clark, J. (2003). Urban culture: Representations and experiences in/of urban space and culture. *Agenda*, *17*(57), 3-10. https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2003.9674461

Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. *Social problems*, *33*(6), 14-32. https://doi.org/10.2307/800672

Collins, P. H. (2009). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment.* Routledge Classics.

Combahee River Collective. (1983). The Combahee River Collective statement. In Smith, B. (Ed.) *Home girls: A Black feminist anthology* (pp. 264-274). Rutgers University Press. (Original work published in 1977).

Connerly, C.E., & Marans, R.W. (1985). Comparing two global measures of perceived neighborhood quality. *Social Indicators Research, 17*(1), 29–47. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00354111

Cooper, B. (2016). Intersectionality. In Disch, L. & Hawkesworth, M. (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (pp.1-23). https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199328581.013.20

Craik K.H., & Zube E.H. (1976). The development of perceived environmental quality indices. In Craik K.H., & Zube E.H. (eds) *Perceiving environmental quality: Environmental science research* (Vol. 9). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4684-2865-0_1

Crenshaw, K.W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University*

of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1), 139–167. http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

Crenshaw, K. W. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1299. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039

Cutrona, C.E., Russell, D.W., Brown, P.A., Clark, L.A., Hessling, R.M., & Gardner, K.A. (2005). Neighborhood context, personality, and stressful life events as predictors of depression among African American women. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 114*(1), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.114.1.3

Cutrona, C.E., Wallace, G., & Wesner, K.A. (2006). Neighborhood characteristics and depression: An examination of stress processes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science : A Journal of the American Psychological Society, 15*(4), 188–192. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2006.00433.x

Dahmann, D.C. (1981). Subjective indicators of neighborhood quality. *Measurement of Subjective Phenomena*.

Davis, D., Harris, C., Johnson, V., Pennington, C., Redus, C., Sanders, T., Ta-Nesert, N., Sofola, G., Morrison, V., Harris, J., Gulilat, E. (2020). Black women's perspectives on neighborhood safety: Reflections from the women of northeast Oklahoma city photovoice project. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *27*(7), 917-943. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2019.1611547

Delli Carpini, M. X. (2000). Gen.com: youth, civic engagement, and the new information environment. *Political Communication*, *17*(4), 341–349. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600050178942

Dickens, D. D., Womack, V. Y., & Dimes, T. (2019). Managing hypervisibility: An exploration of theory and research on identity shifting strategies in the workplace among Black women. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *113*, 153-163.

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

Diemer, M.A., Rapa, L.J., Park, C.J., & Perry, J.C. (2017). Development and validation of the critical consciousness scale. *Youth & Society, 49*(4), 461–483. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X14538289

Donovan, J. (2017). *Designing the compassionate city: creating places where people thrive*. Routledge.

Dotson, K. (2015). Inheriting Patricia Hill Collins's black feminist epistemology. *Ethnic and Racial studies*, *38*(13), 2322-2328. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1058496

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1994). *The souls of Black folk*. Random House Value Publishing. (Original work published 1903)

Echeverria, S. E., Diez-Roux, A. V., & Link, B. G. (2004). Reliability of self-reported neighborhood characteristics. *Journal of Urban Health*, *81*(4), 682–701. https://doi.org/10.1093/jurban/jth151

Elo, I. T., Mykyta, L., Margolis, R., & Culhane, J. F. (2009). Perceptions of neighborhood disorder: the role of individual and neighborhood characteristics. *Social Science Quarterly*, *90*(5), 1298–1320. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00657

Eyles, J. (1990). Objectifying the subjective: The measurement of environmental quality. *Social Indicators Research, 22*(2), 139–153. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00354837

Farley, R., Fielding, E. L., & Krysan, M. (1997). The residential preferences of blacks and whites: A four-metropolis analysis. *Housing Policy Debate*, *8*(4), 763–800. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.1997.9521278

Frank, L.D., Sallis, J.F., Saelens, B.E., Leary, L., Cain, K., Conway, T.L., & Hess, P.M. (2010). The development of a walkability index: Application to the neighborhood quality of life study. *British Journal of Sports Medicine, 44*(13), 924–933. https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsm.2009.058701

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

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed). (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans). Continuum. (Original work published 1968).

Furstenberg, F. (2016). Social class and development in early adulthood. *Emerging Adulthood*, *4*(4), 236–238. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696815625142

Galster, G. (2001). On the nature of neighbourhood. *Urban Studies*, *38*(12), 2111–2124. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980120087072

Galster, G.C., & Santiago, A.M. (2006). What's the 'hood got to do with It? Parental perceptions about how neighborhood mechanisms affect their children. *Journal of Urban Affairs, 28*(3), 201–226. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2006.00289.x

Galster, G. & Sharkey, P. (2017). Spatial foundations of inequality: A conceptual model and empirical overview. *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *3*(2), 1-33. https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2017.3.2.01

Ginwright, S., & Cammarota, J. (2007). Youth activism in the urban community: Learning critical civic praxis within community organizations. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 20*(6), 693–710. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390701630833

Godfrey, E. B., & Burson, E. (2018). Interrogating the intersections: how intersectional perspectives can inform developmental scholarship on critical consciousness. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*. https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20246

Gould, J. & Marlin, A.T. (2019). Quality of life in American neighborhoods: Levels of affluence, toxic waste, and cancer mortality in residential zip code areas. Routledge. (Original work published in 1986)

Greenberg, M.R. (1999). Improving neighborhood quality: A hierarchy of needs. *Housing Policy Debate, 10*(3), 601–624. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.1999.9521345

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2011). *Applied thematic analysis*. Sage Publications.

Gutman, L.M., McLoyd, V. C., & Tokoyawa, T. (2005). Financial strain, neighborhood stress, parenting behaviors, and adolescent adjustment in urban African American families. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *15*(4), 425–449. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2005.00106

Hale, L., Hill, T.D., Friedman, E., Nieto, F.J., Galvao, L.W., Engelman, C.D., Malecki, K.M., & Peppard, P.E. (2013). Perceived neighborhood quality, sleep quality, and health status: Evidence from the survey of the health of Wisconsin. *Social Science & Medicine, 79*(1), 16–22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.07.021

Hammond, W. P., & Mattis, J. S. (2005). Being a man about it: Manhood meaning among African American men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *6*(2), 114–126. https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.6.2.114

Handal, P.J., Morrissy, E., & Barling, P.W. (1981). Development of perceived and preferred measures of physical and social characteristics of the residential environment and their

relationship to satisfaction. *Journal of Community Psychology, 9*(2), 118–124. https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629(198104)9:2<118::AID-JCOP2290090203>3.0.CO;2-B

Harcourt, B. (2001). *Illusion of order: The false promise of broken windows policing*. Harvard University Press.

Hicken, M. T., Lee, H., & Hing, A. K. (2018). The weight of racism: Vigilance and racial inequalities in weight-related measures. *Social science & medicine*, *199*, 157-166. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.03.058

Higginbotham, E., & Weber, L. (1992). Moving up with kin and community: *Gender & Society*, *6*(3), 416–440. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124392006003005

Hunter, M. A., Pattillo, M., Robinson, Z. F., & Taylor, K.-Y. (2016). Black placemaking: celebration, play, and poetry. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *33*(7–8), 31–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416635259

Hur, M., Nasar, J.L., & Chun, B. (2010). Neighborhood satisfaction, physical and perceived naturalness and openness. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*(1), 52–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.05.005

Hutchinson, J. (2004). Social capital and community building in the inner city. *Journal of the American Planning Association. 70*(2), 168–175.

Hutchinson, R. N., Putt, M. A., Dean, L. T., Long, J. A., Montagnet, C. A., & Armstrong, K. (2009). Neighborhood racial composition, social capital and black all-cause mortality in Philadelphia. *Social Science & Medicine*, *68*(10), 1859–1865. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.02.005

Itzigsohn, J., & Brown, K. (2020). The sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois: Racialized modernity and the global color line. New York University Press.

Jacobs, J. (2016). *The death and life of great American cities.* Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. (Original work published 1961).

Jackson II, R. L. (2002a). Cultural contracts theory: Toward an understanding of identity negotiation. *Communication Quarterly*, *50*(3-4), 359-367.

Jackson II, R. L. (2002b). Exploring African American identity negotiation in the academy: Toward a transformative vision of African American communication scholarship. *Howard Journal of Communication*, *13*(1), 43-57.

Jensen, O. B. (2009). Flows of meaning, cultures of movements – urban mobility as meaningful everyday life practice. *Mobilities*, *4*(1), 139–158. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450100802658002

Jones, N. (2014). “The regular routine”: Proactive policing and adolescent development among young, poor Black men. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2014*(143), 33–54. https://doi.org/ 10.1002/cad.20053

Kasl, S.V., & Harburg, E. (1972). Perceptions of the neighborhood and the desire to move out. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 38*(5), 318–324. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944367208977628

Kemp, S.P. (2001). Environment through a gendered lens: From person-in-environment to woman-in-Environment. *Affilia, 16*(1), 7–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/08861090122094118

Kendall, F. E., & Wijeyesinghe, C. L. (2017). Advancing social justice work at the intersections of multiple privileged identities. *New Directions for Student Services*, *2017*(157), 91–100. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20212

Kern, L. (2005). In place and at home in the city: Connecting privilege, safety and belonging for women in Toronto. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *12*(3), 357-377. https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690500202590

Krysan, M. (2002). Community undesirability in black and white: Examining racial residential preferences through community perceptions. *Social problems*, *49*(4), 521-543. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2002.49.4.521

Kullberg, A., Timpka, T., Svensson, T., Karlsson, N., & Lindqvist, K. (2010). Does the perceived neighborhood reputation contribute to neighborhood differences in social trust and residential wellbeing?. *Journal of community psychology*, *38*(5), 591-606. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20383

Lacy, K. (2007). *Blue-chip black: Race, class, and status in the new Black middle class.* University of California Press.

Lansing, J.B., & Marans, R.W. (1969). Evaluation of neighborhood quality. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35*(3), 195–199. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977953

Lee, B. A., & Guest, A. M. (1983). Determinants of Neighborhood Satisfaction: A Metropolitan-Level Analysis. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *24*(2), 287–303. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1983.tb00703.x

Lee, B. A., Oropesa, R. S., & Kanan, J. W. (1994). Neighborhood context and residential mobility. *Demography*, *31*(2), 249. https://doi.org/10.2307/2061885

Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years?. *Journal of environmental psychology*, *31*(3), 207-230. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.10.001

Lichter, D. T., Parisi, D., & Taquino, M. C. (2012). The geography of exclusion: Race, segregation, and concentrated poverty. *Social Problems, 59*(3), 364-388. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2012.59.3.364

Lipsitz, George. (2011). *How racism takes place*. Temple University Press.

Mahatmya, D., & Lohman, B.J. (2012). Predictors and pathways to civic involvement in emerging adulthood: Neighborhood, family, and school influences. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 41*(9), 1168–1183. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9777-4

Malega, R. (2019). Understanding the neighborhood concentration of affluent Black households in the 1990s. *Urban Science, 3*(1), 6. https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci3010006

Marable, M. (1983). *How capitalism underdeveloped Black America: Problems in race, political economy, and society*. South End Press.

Marans, R.W., & Rodgers, W. (1975). Toward an understanding of community satisfaction. In A. Hawley and V. Rock (Eds.), *Metropolitan America in contemporary perspective*. Halstead.

Martinez, M.L., Black, M., & Starr, R.H. (2002). Factorial structure of the Perceived Neighborhood Scale (PNS): A test of longitudinal invariance. *Journal of Community Psychology, 30(*1), 23–43. https://doi.org/ 10.1002/jcop.1048

Mast, B.D. (2010). Measuring neighborhood quality with survey data: A Bayesian approach. *Cityscape, 12*(3), 123-142. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20868761

McKittrick, K. (2006). *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*. University of Minnesota Press.

McKittrick, K. (2011). On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *12*(8), 947-963. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/14649365.2011.624280

McWhirter, E.H., & McWhirter, B.T. (2016). Critical consciousness and vocational development among Latina/o high school youth. *Journal of Career Assessment 24*(3), 543–558. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072715599535

Mello, Z.R., & Swanson, D.P. (2007). Gender differences in African American adolescents' personal, educational, and occupational expectations and perceptions of neighborhood quality. *Journal of Black Psychology, 33*(2), 150–168. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798407299514

Melvin, P.M. (1985). Changing contexts: Neighborhood definition and urban organization. *American Quarterly, 37*(3), 357-367. https://doi.org/10.2307/2712662

Merriam-Webster. (January, 2020). *Quality*. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/quality?

Michney, T.M. (2017). *Surrogate suburbs: Black upward mobility and neighborhood change in Cleveland, 1900-1980.* University of North Carolina Press.

Mollett, S., & Faria, C. (2018). The spatialities of intersectional thinking: fashioning feminist geographic futures. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *25*(4), 565–577. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2018.1454404

Moore, K. S. (2009). Gentrification in Black face?: The return of the Black middle class to urban neighborhoods. *Urban Geography*, *30*(2), 118-142. https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.30.2.118

Moos, M. (2016). From gentrification to youthification? The increasing importance of young age in delineating high-density living. *Urban Studies, 53*(14), 2903–2920. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098015603292

Moos, M., Filion, P., Quick, M., & Walter-Joseph, R. (2019). Youthification across the metropolitan system: Intra-urban residential geographies of young adults in North American metropolitan areas. *Cities (London, England), 93*, 224–237. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2019.05.017

Nicotera, N. (2007). Measuring neighborhood: A conundrum for human services researchers and practitioners. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 40*(1–2), 26–51. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/s10464-007-9124-1

Ohmer, M.L., & Owens, J. (2013). Using photovoice to empower youth and adults to prevent crime. *Journal of Community Practice 21*(4), 410–433. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2013.842196

Osborne, K., Ziersch, A.M., Baum, F.E., & Gallaher, G. (2012). Australian aboriginal urban residents' satisfaction with living in their neighbourhood: Perceptions of the neighbourhood socio-cultural environment and individual socio-demographic factors. *Urban Studies, 49*(11), 2459–2477. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098011428179

Owens, A. (2017). Racial residential segregation of school-age children and adults: The role of schooling as a segregating force. *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *3*(2), 63-80. https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2017.3.2.03

Pattillo, M. (2005). Black middle-class neighborhoods. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *31*(1), 305–329. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.095956

Parr, S. (2015). Integrating critical realist and feminist methodologies: Ethical and analytical dilemmas. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *18*(2), 193-207. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2013.868572

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* Simon & Schuster.

Reardon, S.F., Townsend, J. & Fox, L. (2017). A continuous measure of the joint distribution of race and income among neighborhoods. *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *3*(2), 34-62. https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2017.3.2.02

Richards-Schuster, K., & Dobbie, D. (2011). Tagging walls and planting seeds: Creating spaces for youth civic action. *Journal of Community Practice, 19*(3), 234–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2011.595283

Rollings, K.A., Wells, N.M., & Evans, G.W. (2015). Measuring physical neighborhood quality related to health. *Behavioral sciences (Basel, Switzerland), 5*(2), 190–202. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs5020190

Roosa, M.W., White, R.M.B., Zeiders, K.H., & Tein, J.-Y. (2009). An examination of the role of perceptions in neighborhood research. *Journal of Community Psychology, 37*(3), 327–341. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20298

Sampson, R. J. (2003). The neighborhood context of well-being. *Perspectives in biology and medicine*, *46*(3), S53-S64. https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.2003.0073

Sampson, R.J., & Raudenbush, S.W. (2004). Seeing disorder: Neighborhood stigma and the social construction of “broken windows.” *Social Psychology Quarterly, 67*(4), 319–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/019027250406700401

Shabazz, R. (2015). *Spatializing blackness: Architectures of confinement and black masculinity in Chicago*. University of Illinois Press.

Spielman, S. E., & Singleton, A. (2015). Studying neighborhoods using uncertain data from the American community survey: a contextual approach. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 105*(5), 1003-1025. https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2015.1052335

Snedker, K. A., & Hooven, C. (2013). Neighborhood perceptions and emotional well-being in young adulthood. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing , 26*(1), 62–73. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcap.12016

Sng, O., Neuberg, S. L., Varnum, M. E., & Kenrick, D. T. (2017). The crowded life is a slow life: Population density and life history strategy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 112*(5), 736. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000086

St. John, C. (1987). Racial differences in neighborhood evaluation standards. *Urban Affairs Quarterly, 22*(3), 377–398. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/004208168702200302

St. John, C., & Clark, F. (1984). Racial differences in dimensions of neighborhood satisfaction. *Social Indicators Research*, *15*(1), 43–60. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00300477

Stewart, Q.T., & Sewell, A.A. (2016). Quantifying race: On methods for analyzing social inequality. In Stanfield II, J.H. (Ed.), *Rethinking race and ethnicity in research methods* (pp. 209-234). Taylor & Francis.

Stipak, B., & Hensler, C. (1983). Effect of neighborhood racial and socioeconomic composition on urban residents' evaluations of their neighborhoods. *Social Indicators Research, 12*(3), 311–320. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00319807

Stokes, J.E. (2019). Trajectories of perceived neighborhood quality across the life course: Sociodemographic determinants and implications for well-being. *Social Science Research, 79*, 181–193. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.11.001

Suttles, G. (1972). *The social construction of communities*. University of Chicago Press.

Swisher, R. R., & Warner, T. D. (2013). If they grow up: exploring the neighborhood context of adolescent and young adult survival expectations. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *23*(4), 678-694. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12027

Talen, E. (2019). *Neighborhood*. Oxford University Press.

Talen, E., & Shah, S. (2007). Neighborhood evaluation using GIS. *Environment and Behavior, 39*(5), 583–615. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916506292332

Taylor, H. L., McGlynn, L., & Luter, D. G. (2013). Neighborhoods matter: the role of universities in the school reform neighborhood development movement. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *88*(5), 541–563. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2013.834793

Teixeira, S. (2015). "It seems like no one cares": Participatory photo mapping to understand youth perspectives on property vacancy. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 30*(3), 390-414

Teixeira, S. (2016). Beyond broken windows: Youth perspectives on housing abandonment and its impact on individual and community well-being. *Child Indicators Research*, *9*(3), 581–607. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-015-9327-1

Teixeira, S., & Gardner, R. (2017). Youth-led participatory photo mapping to understand urban environments. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *82*, 246–253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.09.033

Thompson-Summers, B. (2019). *Black in place: The spatial aesthetics of race in a post-chocolate city.* University of North Carolina Press.

U.S. Census Bureau (2018). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

van Kamp, I., Leidelmeijer, K., Marsman, G., & de Hollander, A. (2003). Urban environmental quality and human well-being. *Landscape and Urban Planning, 65*(1–2), 5–18. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-2046(02)00232-3

Vartanian, T.P., & Gleason, P.M. (1999). Do neighborhood conditions affect high school dropout and college graduation rates? *The Journal of Socio-economics, 28*(1), 21–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-5357(99)00011-6

Watkins, D. C. (2017). Rapid and rigorous qualitative data analysis: The "RADaR" technique for applied research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917712131

Watts, R. J., Diemer, M. A., & Voight, A. M. (2011). Critical consciousness: Current status and future directions. In C. A. Flanagan & B. D. Christens (Eds.), Youth civic development: Work at the cutting edge. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *2011*(134), 43–57.

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

Weden, M.M., Carpiano, R.M., & Robert, S.A. (2008). Subjective and objective neighborhood characteristics and adult health. *Social Science & Medicine, 66*(6), 1256–1270. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.11.041

Wen, M., Hawkley, L.C., & Cacioppo, J.T. (2006). Objective and perceived neighborhood environment, individual SES and psychosocial factors, and self-rated health: An analysis

of older adults in Cook County, Illinois. *Social Science & Medicine, 63*(10), 2575–2590. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.06.025

Wickrama, K. A. S., & Noh, S. (2010). The long arm of community: The influence of childhood community contexts across the early life course. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, *39*(8), 894-910. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/s10964-009-9411-2

Williams, R. Y. (2004). *The politics of public housing: Black women's struggles against urban inequality.* Oxford University Press.

Wilson, J. Q., & Kelling, G. L. (1982). Broken windows. *Atlantic monthly*, *249*(3), 29-38. http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/198203/broken-windows.

Woldoff, R.A., & Ovadia, S. (2009). Not getting their money's worth. *Urban Affairs Review, 45*(1), 66–91. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1078087408328947

Wood, J. T. (2005). Feminist standpoint theory and muted group theory: Commonalities and divergences. *Women and language*, *28*(2), 61. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/feminist-standpoint-theory-muted-group/docview/198819291