Making a Place for Justice: Spirituality and Placemaking in the Sociopolitical Development of Black Emerging Adult Women in Urban Contexts

by

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Dedication

To all the families that have raised, supported, and adopted me as their own. To my parents and sister, the Cervantes family, Dan, Kim, and Isabel Lijana, and Roger and Shelia Bouchard. I would not be here without you most of all.

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I told someone a few weeks ago that completing a dissertation is likely the closest I will come to being a billionaire. Billionaires often profit from the labour of countless others while being the person with claim to a specific title. This PhD journey, while far more ethical, is also due to the labour of so many, even though I get to claim the title. I am, and continue to be, the product of a rather large village of blessings that have carried me when I could not move, fed me when I was hungry, and otherwise cared for me when I could not see past the looming deadlines or the bleak Michigan winters. In naming people, I know that I will miss other dear others, but charge it to the deadline and not to my heart. Before moving on, know that I love you all and cannot wait to catch up on a walk, over coffee, or on an adventure so very soon.

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Abstract

Emerging adulthood (ages 18-29) is a developmental period in which individuals explore their identities, achieve status markers (e.g., marriage), and become able to participate more fully in democracy (Arnett, 2000). There has been substantial exploration of emerging adulthood broadly, but relatively little attention has been paid to emerging adult aged Black women and the ways they navigate the world, their identities, and their sociopolitical development. This dissertation investigated the role of social identities (e.g., race and gender), cultural ideologies (i.e., religiosity/spirituality), and spatial context (i.e., cities and urban higher education institutions) in the SPD of Black emerging adult women (BEAW). Across three studies, I used conceptual frames linking SPD, urban place, religiosity/spirituality (SET- RS Urban; Mattis et al., 2019), Black placemaking, and Black feminist geography (Hunter et al., 2016; McKittrick, 2006) to address three intersecting questions. Study 1 used survey data to address the question: To what extent are religiosity/spirituality and urban place associated with SPD (measured by critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action) among BEAW? In Study 2, I used a qualitative approach and asked: How, if at all, does the religiosity/spirituality of BEAW influence their sociopolitical development? In Study 3, I used a qualitative approach informed by Black feminist epistemology to address the question: How do the ways that BEAW "make place" (i.e., experience, perceive, and imagine urban places—especially urban universities) inform their sociopolitical development? Taken as a whole, these three studies produced new understandings of the ways that urban places and identity engender sociopolitical reflection, efficacy, and action among BEAW. First, Study 1 demonstrated that the various manifestations of religiosity and

spirituality are associated with different domains of SPD among BEAW. These findings offered a call to researchers to 1) more thoroughly investigate the dimensions of religiosity and spirituality through communally based measures, and 2) investigate broader denominational, ideological, and regional differences in the socialization of BEAW and how these relate to SPD. Study 2 highlighted that BEAW used religiosity/spirituality as a source of efficacy and motivation as they pursued social justice. Participants placed their actions in a larger and narrative of Divinely-guided justice. This enabled them to undertake the work of justice as a moral good and a as an effort tied to divine purpose. Finally, participants saw themselves as a part of a spiritual sisterhood which allowed them to collectively reflect and engage in critical actions. In Study 3, participant narratives highlight that BEAW critically reflect on and navigate spatial manifestations of oppression in their cities and campuses while at the same time endeavoring to ameliorate these ills through Black placemaking. Further, BEAW not only resist oppressions in these places. They actively cultivate joy and celebrate their everyday existence as Black women.

Chapter 1 -Introduction

"my love has been known to perform miracles."

— Ijeoma Umebinyuo, Questions for Ada

The motivation for this inquiry comes from my own personal experience observing women perform what could be called miraculous interventions both in my own life and in the lives of others. In graduate school I have, time and again, seen the deep and expansive amounts of labor that emerging adult Black women, in particular, perform in order to make the graduate school and community experience better for us all. When I ask, they often tell me that the motivation in doing this has come from a place of deep love and care. I have also seen how love and religiosity/spirituality come together to make for an incredible motivation in their actions. In urban places outside of the educational environment, I have observed emerging adult Black women protest injustice and organize local movements to act altruistically in the care of others. In all of this I have been challenged to more fully understand the sociopolitical realities of gender, race, and place in social change. More intimately, the love and care of my own mother, sister, mentors, and dear friends have made me more aware of the ways that power operates along the intersectional axes of racism, sexism, and gendered racism as women strive to rectify historical injustices, parent their children, and live in the mundane and everyday that make up most of our days. The focus of this inquiry is on the mundane and everyday mechanisms of sociopolitical development (i.e., the critical reflection, political agency, and critical action involved in combating injustice), as well as the acute actions of Black emerging adult women take to fight injustice. In attending to everydayness, I choose to highlight the ways that Black

women, and particularly Black emerging adult women, continuously and consistently participate in social movements towards equitable community change.

Emerging adulthood (ages 18-29) is a key developmental period during which individuals explore their identities, achieve status markers (e.g., marriage), and become able to participate differently and more fully in democracy (Arnett, 2000; 2016). Although there is a substantial body of scholarship on emerging adulthood broadly, relatively little attention has been paid to emerging adulthood among people of color (POC), and the ways emerging adult POC navigate the world, their identities, and systemic oppression (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). In sum, the sociopolitical development (SPD) of POC is underexamined in the emerging adulthood literature.

Watts, Williams, and Jagers (2003) describe sociopolitical development (SPD) as the process through which "individuals acquire the knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and the capacity for action in political and social systems necessary to interpret and resist oppression. Equally as important is a vision of liberation that is an alternative to oppressive conditions" (p.185). SPD, as both a theoretical frame and field of study, is a burgeoning area of scholarship. Sociopolitical development (SPD) theorists note that social identities (e.g., gender, race), cultural ideologies (e.g., spirituality), and contexts (e.g., urban places, universities) contribute to commitment and action towards remedying systemic oppression (Watts et al.,1999; Watts & Guessous, 2006; Watts et al.,2003). However, research on the roles of these factors in the SPD of emerging adult POC is limited in four regards: 1) the research generally focuses on adolescents (e.g., Diemer 2009; Diemer & Lee, 2011) and on men and boys (e.g., Smith & Hope 2019) the limited work on religiosity/spirituality and SPD fails to focus on women even though women outscore men on measures of religiosity/spirituality (Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Taylor et

al., 2004); 3) beyond naming urban and school contexts, the work fails to account for how place influences SPD; and 4) research on SPD in higher education contexts fails to attend to women even though women make up a higher proportion of college attendees than men (National Science Foundation, 2017). The three studies that comprise this dissertation endeavor to address these gaps.

Study 1 quantitatively explores the association between structural conditions, spirituality, and SPD among a sample of urban-residing Black emerging adult women. Study 2 qualitatively explores how Black emerging adult women describe the association between cultural factors (i.e., religiosity and spirituality and cultural norms) and their social justice and change work. Study 3 qualitatively explores Black emerging adult college attending women's reflections on the ways that their experiences and perceptions as raced and gendered beings living and attending college in urban settings inform their sociopolitical development.

This introductory chapter presents a brief overview of the history of the strives for justice of women of color, generally, and Black emerging adult women specifically. I then examine emerging adulthood as a developmental period in which sociopolitical commitments and actions are especially likely to flourish. Next, I offer an overview of SPD with particular attention to how SPD is informed by social identities (e.g., race, gender). Finally, I explore the importance of spirituality and place as crucial, but understudied, aspects of sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult women.

Women of Color Pursuing Justice

"I have been woman
for a long time
beware my smile
I am treacherous with old magic
and the noon's new fury
with all your wide futures
promised
I am
woman
and not White."
— Audre Lorde, A Woman Speaks

Interlocking systems of domination (e.g., racism, sexism, misogyny, classism, etc.) permeate the experiences of women of color in the US and inform their relationships to formal sources of power (the nation state, education systems, criminal justice system, democratic political systems; Collins, 1990). Although women in the US, and especially women of color in the U.S., have been historically disenfranchised from participation political systems, women of color participate in democratic activities (e.g., voting, running for office) and engage in more communally accessible sociopolitical actions (e.g., protest, social media campaigns) to fight for a more equitable society (Anyiwo, et al., 2020; DeAngelo et al., 2016; Hope, 2019; Petrone, 2016). Indeed, history demonstrates that women of color in the United States have been actively organizing and protesting injustices from the American Revolution, through the Abolitionist Movement, through voting rights, through the Civil Rights Movement, the Chicana/o Student Movement, to contemporary movements like Black Lives Matter and Dreamers movements (Chen & Rhoades, 2016; DeAngelo et al., 2016; Hope et al.,2016; Leath & Chavous, 2017; Linder & Rodriguez, 2012; Payne, 1990; Rhoades, 2016).

The central role played by women in America's justice movements is particularly evident in Black communities. It is no secret that the success of the Civil Rights Movement was wrought

on the backs of Black women and girls. Yet, little empirical work is dedicated to their contributions in the largest freedom struggle in the modern United States (Barnett, 1993; Bell, 2018; Brown, 2018; Dixson, 2018; hooks, 1989; Nadasen, 2016; Nasstrom, 1999; Poirot, 2015). Black men led the Civil Rights movement in visible ways yet did not always share formal titles or share the spotlight with their female counterparts (Robnett, 1996). Black women organized more than men, "canvassed more than men, showed up more often at mass meetings and demonstrations, and more frequently attempted to vote" (Payne, 1990, p. 2). The historical record, however, is abysmally bare in reflecting the ways that Black women and girls fought both the racist and sexist oppressions they faced in a post-slavery USA (Crawford, 1990).

More recently, youth and emerging adult social movements have emerged that allow us to more fully explore the invisiblized role of Black emerging adult women in social change in the US. Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement after the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman who murdered Trayvon Martin, an unarmed, Black, 17-year-old teenage boy (Dixson, 2018; Garza, 2014). Although this movement was founded by three Black women, many have pointed out the erasure of Black women including Black queer women, from the narrative of BLM and from discussions of police violence. Movements such as #SayHerName have grown out of BLM as a way to deliberately highlight the intersectional invisibility of Black women both as victims of violence and as activists and changemakers (Webster, 2017).

Additionally, women's roles in on-campus movements (e.g., #BBUM a campus-based movement at the University of Michigan highlighting the experiences of Black students started in 2013) have also been underexamined (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Rhoades, 2016). This is especially true of Black emerging adult women. The sociopolitical experiences, sociopolitical

developmental understandings, and educational experiences of Black women are often overlooked and invisibilized in comparison to their male counterparts because of an intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibac, 2008) that generally renders the cultural and political lives of Black women invalid. Nell Irvin Painter (1992) said that "silence and invisibility are the hallmarks of black women in the imagery of American life" (p. 211). As people who belong to multiple subordinate-group identities Black women are often made invisible because they do not hold prototypical identities in that "'Black' [is] typically viewed as prototypically male, and the category 'woman,' [is] viewed as prototypically White" (Schug, et al., 2017, p. 223). From cradle to grave, this silence and invisibility lead to an overlooking of the experiences of Black women.

Importantly, some evidence does suggest that because of multiple marginalized identities, Black emerging adult women "do not participate in American politics in the same way as White women do" (Brown, 2014, p. 317). In the SPD literature, specifically, there are some signs that SPD does operate differently for women (e.g., Diemer, 2009). However, little attention has been given to identifying, theorizing and empirically examining, especially qualitatively, the ways that Black emerging adult women understand, develop agency in, and counter systemic oppression in their contexts (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012). This study seeks to redress gaps in research on the SPD of Black emerging adult women in the US by attending to the everyday ways that these women understand sociopolitical injustice, build agency, and act against oppression.

Emerging Adulthood

"At the age of 18
I know my color is not a warning, but a welcome.
A girl of color is a lighthouse, an ultraviolet ray of power, potential, and promise
My color does not mean caution, it means courage
my dark does not mean danger, it means daring,
my brown does not mean broken, it means bold backbone from working
twice as hard to get half as far.
Being a girl of color means I am key, path, and wonder all in one body.
At the age of 18
I am experiencing how black and brown can glow.
And glow I will, glow we will, vibrantly, colorfully;
not as a warning, but as promise,
that we will set the sky alight with our magic."
— Amanda Gorman, At the Age of 18: An Ode to Girls of Color

Emerging adulthood is relatively new concept and was introduced to explain societal changes and expectations in the transition to adulthood in western societies (e.g., rise in average age of marriage and parenthood, longer educational trajectories; Arnett, 2000). These changes in societal expectations have resulted in a delayed onset of the developmental markers and achievements (e.g., marriage) that historically defined adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2016; Arnett & Tanner, 2006; Nelson et al., 2007). Arnett (2000, 2016) theorized *emerging adulthood* as a distinct developmental period spanning the teenage years through the late-twenties. During this period, individuals explore their identities (e.g., race and gender), feel in-between childhood and adulthood, and may experience instability in identity and life roles. Importantly, as a developmental period, emerging adulthood is not an extension of adolescence. Emerging adulthood is characterized by an unpredictability stemming from experimentation with a wider span of possible activities (e.g., voting, cohabitation) than adolescents and are less constrained by role requirements (e.g., parenting) than older adults (Arnett, 2000).

Contemporary emerging adults (18- to 30-year-olds) are more educated than previous generations, yet, as a population, they face a future that is more uncertain than the future that

their parents faced (Bialik & Fry, 2019). They face a more uncertain job market despite being more educated; they are more likely to be living at home with parents (especially those without a college degree), are in more debt, and start families later than their counterparts in previous generations (Bialik & Fry, 2019; Furstenberg et al,, 2004; Shanahan et al., 2005). These generational changes have complicated the transition to adulthood (Nelson et al., 2011). For example, because many emerging adults today are less financially independent than in previous generations, they are less likely to achieve expected milestones such as moving away from their childhood home (Nelson et al., 2007; Shanahan et al., 2005; LeBaron, et al., 2018; Xiao et al., 2014). Consequently, both emerging adults and their parents have to reevaluate residential independence as a typical marker of the transition to adulthood (Shanahan et al., 2005). Importantly, these generational changes may leave emerging adults without the ability to truly consider themselves adults (Arnett & Tanner, 2006).

Although the research corpus examining emerging adulthood is expanding rapidly, the research seems to report on the lived experiences of largely racially homogenous samples of emerging adults (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). Further, scholarship on SPD in emerging adulthood, including how identities such as race and gender may be implicated in SPD, is nascent (e.g., Linder, 2011; Linder & Rodriguez, 2012; Hyde, 2004; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Research addressing the actions of people of color against injustice is generally focused on youth and youth action in adolescence. There is less information about how young adults of color, and Black women specifically, understand injustice and are oriented toward social change (Fernandez et al., 2018; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Hope et al., 2019). Empirical insight into these sociopolitical developmental processes of emerging adult Black women may elucidate theorized development pathways and shed light on more intersectional theoretical approaches to SPD.

Sociopolitical Development as a Lens

"stop writing about Indians
she told me again
only louder as if
I was hard of hearing
you have to allow authors
their subjects, she said
stop writing about
what isn't in the text
which is just our entire history"
— ***Cheryl Savageau, graduate school first semester: so here I am writing about Indians again***

—

Much of the work currently centered on sociopolitical development traces its intellectual lineage back to Paulo Freire. Freire (1970;2000) developed critical consciousness as a pedagogy that enabled "Brazilian peasants to learn to 'read the word' as well as 'read the world,' fostering literacy and the capacity for oppressed people to think critically about inequitable social conditions and take action to change them" (Diemer et al., 2017, p. 462). This reading of the world and the development of actions against inequitable social conditions (i.e., critical civic engagement) has been conceptualized in a variety of ways in psychology (Watts et al., 1999; Watts et al., 2003; Watts & Guessous, 2006). SPD is explicitly concerned with a critical analysis of the world as it impacts individuals and eventually groups or systems, the development of an efficacy to engage civically, and the internal commitment to social change with associated behaviors to enact that change—or critical consciousness. (see Figure 1). As Watts and Guessous (2006) note, SPD includes a worldview and critical sociopolitical analysis (critical reflection) that is a prerequisite for a step towards the ultimate outcome of societal involvement (critical commitment and action). Second, this relationship between analysis and societal involvement is moderated by a sense of agency (political efficacy) and opportunity structures (i.e., chances to be

involved in actions to challenge oppression). Finally, SPD is informed by early life experiences, venues, and socialization (e.g., familial upbringing and other elements of a child's community.

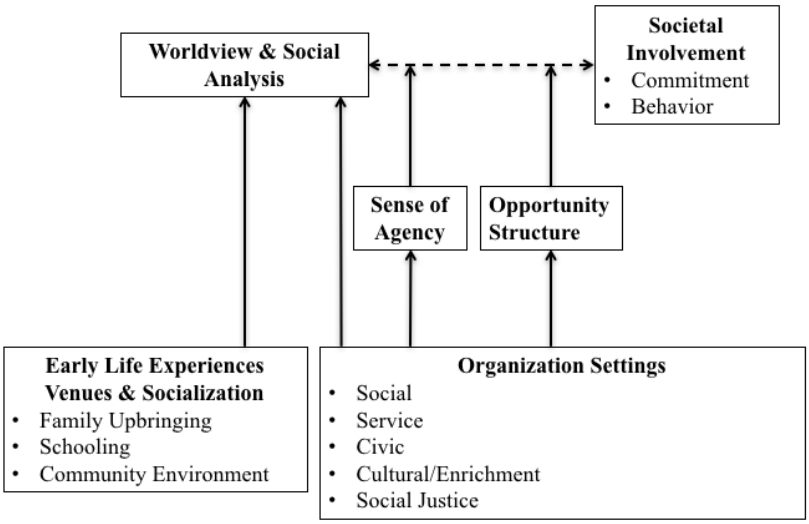

Figure 1. A Theory of Sociopolitical Development (Watts & Guessous, 2006)

Although Watts et al., (1999) mention that SPD happens when individuals are able to incorporate multilevel understandings of oppression, various scholars have noted that in the original conceptualizations of SPD the theory focused exclusively on African American men and boys. This unwitting exclusion of women flattens a complex and dynamic process that is dependent on context, history, identity, and culture (Carmen et al., 2015). Without paying particular attention to the specific experiences of women, SPD scholars have underexamined the specific ways that SPD is informed by multiple and mutually reinforcing systems of oppression (Ferber, 2009). This potential reduction fails to differentiate among intersectional positionalities and dulls our understanding of the multiple and multiplicative ways that the lived experiences of emerging adult Black women shape SPD (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1999; Carmen et al., 2015).

In fact, Chaudry and Bertram (2009) state that it is in the "very complexity of women's representations of identities and experiences that we can locate the possibilities of equitable and peaceful social change" (p.300). This project seeks to make plainer the ways that an intersectional framing of the lived experiences of emerging adult Black women might help us to understand the everyday sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult women. In particular, understanding how specific ideologies and practices (e.g., religiosity/spirituality) and the peculiarities of place may contribute to Black emerging adult women's SPD would allow us to more thoroughly evaluate the theoretical underpinnings of SPD and develop specific understandings of SPD for Black emerging adult women.

SPD, Religion, and Spirituality

> *"At the lips del mar you begin your ritual/prayer: with the heel of your left foot you draw a circle in the sand, then walk its circumference, stand at the center, and voice your intention: to increase awareness of Spirit, recognize our interrelatedness, and work for transformation."*
> ***—Gloria Anzaldúa, Light in the Dark***

Religiosity and spirituality have historically had a role in justice movements—particularly the social justice movements of Black people in the U.S. Religiosity— "the degree to which individuals adhere to the prescribed beliefs and practices of an organized religion" (Mattis, 2002, p. 310), and spirituality—"an individual's belief in the sacred and transcendent nature of life, and the manifestation of these beliefs in a sense of connectedness with others" (p. 310), are interrelated, but separate concepts. In this section, I keep to these definitions, but use the convention of "religiosity/spirituality" when necessary to reflect the interplay between these concepts in everyday life. This section first locates the connection between religion and social justice orientation, spirituality's connection to sociopolitical development, and the importance understanding place in these conversations.

Religion and religious institutions can often legitimize systemic oppression (e.g., the use of Christianity to legitimize chattel slavery and the genocide of Native peoples in the United States). Conversely, religion can also motivate and sustain both individual and collective strivings for justice through transcendent motivation, theologies that urge love, justice, peace, freedom, and equity, and having organizational resources (e.g., Calhoun-Brown, 1999; Smith, 1996). US religious institutions, in particular, have been at the forefront of sociopolitical engagement, particularly for Black Americans (Calhoun-Brown 1996; Dana et al., 2017; Glazier, 2019; Harris, 1994; Valenzuela, 2014). Although Black women have been important leaders in galvanizing sociopolitical change within the Black American religious tradition (Townsend-Gilkes, 1985), the ingrained patriarchy of most religious institutions undermines gender equality (Collins 2000; Dawson 2001) and has rarely celebrated these efforts. As such, the mechanisms underlying the relationship between religion and sociopolitical engagement for Black women remain under-examined (Glazier, 2015; Grayman-Simpson & Mattis, 2012). Further, while research has attended to gender differences in sociopolitical participation generally (e.g., Robnett, & Bany, 2011) we know little about how religion might inform women's critical analysis, commitments or action.

These oversights are important because religiosity/spirituality theoretically undergirds much of SPD and primary outcomes like critical consciousness. Tolliver and Tisdell (2002) note that spirituality is a critical piece of SPD and liberation in Watts et al.'s (1999) framework. In this framework, religiosity/spirituality is both a protective factor against the oppressions marginalized peoples face, and a means by which to ascribe meaning to the efforts of justice. Watts et al.' (1999) anchor much of their framing of SPD in a spiritual ethos that attaches the pursuit of justice and, to an extent, critical consciousness to notions of interconnectedness and

transformation inspired by a higher power. Specifically, seven spiritual dynamics permeate sociopolitical development (Watts et al.,1999). First, a *spiritual asymmetry* (i.e., the belief that although power may be inequitable distributed individuals are still worthy of dignity) affirms the worth of a person, and their ability to socio-politically act, beyond material possessions. Second, embracing *the concept of a higher power* allows people to draw from otherworldly power in hard situations. Third, Watts et al., (1999) name embracing *the concept of a higher purpose* as a spiritual dynamic of SPD that attaches the pursuit of justice to goals beyond the individual. This allows individuals to act for things that may be more socially beneficial than individually beneficial. Fourth, these scholars name *spiritual perspective-taking* as a spiritual dynamic of SPD that allows individuals to move beyond present circumstances. Another spiritual dynamic of SPD is *visualizing life that is in accordance with higher principles.* This vision allows us to act in accordance with and act towards more just futures. Sixth, Watts and colleagues name *tolerance and acceptance of diversity* as an important spiritual aspect of SPD. In this, a baseline appreciation of the interconnectedness of all humanity and the affirmation of human dignity means that because all humans are equal, individual differences and beliefs must be reconciled in the pursuit of justice. The final spiritual dynamic of SPD Watts and colleagues name is *purpose and destiny*. This is the notion that spiritual exploration may attach understandings of one's future to improving a larger societal fabric.

Watts et al., (1999) state that as individuals move into more complex sociopolitical development "shackles of oppression are no longer strong enough to restrain freedom of the spirit" (p.259). The freedom, and the liberatory imagination embedded in SPD theory, have distinct attachments to liberation theologies. Liberation theologies manifest in a spirituality that aims for "existential freedom [that] empower[s] people to fight for social and political freedom"

(Watts et al., 1999, p.260). One example of the ties between SPD and liberation theologies is articulated by Cornel West's idea of a prophetic spirituality wherein an individual can critically understand both the present socio-historical moment while at the same time transcending it to imagine and project the better 'not yet' (Dantley, 2003). This prophetic spirituality is grounded in a critical consciousness which is a manifestation of sociopolitical development. The link between critical consciousness and spirituality is further solidified by Mustakova-Possardt (2004) who argues that "critical consciousness is in essence optimal consciousness, characterized by the integration of the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of a human being" (p. 248).

Although the theoretical links between spirituality and SPD are articulated strongly by Watts and colleagues (1999), empirical investigations into the role of spirituality in SPD remain rare. For example, Yasuno (2004) found that spirituality enabled a multiracial group of college student activists to cultivate interconnectedness and empathy with other students, faculty, and staff, and this interconnectedness sparked critical action. Indeed, Yasuno argued that "a 'fundamental inner transformation' through educational and religious/spiritual reforms is critical in achieving social change" (Yasuno, 2004, p. 172). Investigations into spirituality and social change among women specifically mainly prioritize how spirituality informs specific and acute forms of activism (e.g., a protest) among women activists (see Faver, 2001; Gillespie, 1995; Iseke & Desmoulins, 2011; Spickard, 1998). In one of the few examples of empirically exploring spirituality's everyday role in helping people to move towards critical consciousness, Tisdell (2002) found that multiracial female adult educators who engaged in educating towards justice-based social change had spiritual commitments (religious and spiritual systems and beliefs that

inspired purposeful and critically conscious practices) that necessitated purposeful, social-justice oriented vocational work.

Studies demonstrate that activists working for social change see spirituality as a key part in their commitment to activism (Daloz et al.,1996; Lerner, 2000). Current work on the everyday nature SPD, that is, the everyday instances of critical reflection, the building of agency, and everyday actions towards justice, fails to focus on Black women's spirituality, even though Black women outscore men on measures of religiosity/spirituality (Taylor et al., 2004). In this dissertation, I will qualitatively explore how Black emerging adult women' spirituality/religiosity influences their sociopolitical development. Attempting to understand the ways that spirituality is influential in the everyday SPD of Black emerging adult women is an effort worth undertaking. That said, exploring the everyday nature of SPD in the lives of Black emerging adult women necessitates an understanding of the places that these women experience and how place is itself connected to SPD.

SPD, Context and Place

"During my last visit to Brooklyn, I found nothing where I left it.
This city doesn't stay still like it used to. They call it growth. Mami
calls it eviction. She is scared of the way the gringos are turning
her bodegas into gardens. She says flowers remind her of funerals…
There are words the thesaurus does not pair properly
with other words. Gentrification. Colonization. I am angry all the time now.
Really, I'm just loud. I don't know how to talk without sounding like
revolution."
— Elisabet Velasquez, New Brooklyn

Context matters in SPD. In an update to the original theorization of SPD Watts, Williams, and Jagers (2003) noted that their initial "theory did little to capture the role that settings, roles, and specific experiences played in their development" (p.190). In developing a more robust theoretical frame, Watts and colleagues (2003) integrated transactional and ecological

approaches to SPD. In doing so, these authors elevated the importance of developmental ecologies and the actions and experiences in them. Although the settings of sociopolitical actions and temporality of those actions is lifted up as important in this revised version of SPD theory, the revised theoretical frame has some shortcomings with respect to its understanding of context. Watts and colleagues (2003) updated framework is concerned with the actions that happen in settings/places. They prioritize a definition of place as "the relational nature among entities in the geographic environment rather than by coordinates and geometric properties" (Acedo et al., 2018, p. 3). However, Watts and colleagues (2003) attach particular settings (e.g., middle and high school, familial contexts) to associated developmental periods (e.g., adolescence) and prioritize the sociopolitical action in those settings over the setting itself. I argue that although Watts and colleagues name settings in their newer framework, they miss the ways that places operate as the "geographical context for the mediation of physical, social and economic processes" (Agnew, 2011, p. 4). In their exploration of the role of ecologies in SPD, Watts and colleagues also do not account for the particular ways that places (which are a "product of social relations that reflects the hegemony of dominant ideologies" (Mitchell, et al., 2010, p. 210) help to shape critical awareness, sociopolitical commitments, or critical action.

Casey (2009) notes that "however much we may prefer to think of what happens in a place, rather than the place itself, we are tied to place undetachably and without reprieve" (p.xiii). This point is important because while the dynamics that we study in social science take place in a place (e.g., cities, college campuses), place is a generally undertheorized factor in social science research and if mentioned at all, place is typically not engaged as a part of the analysis or methodology (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). This oversight causes social scientists to either miss or not consider the reality that places influence social practice, that places are often

bounded and demarcated by oppressive ideologies, and that the combination of these realities means that places are racialized, gendered, and classed in ways that means experiences in places are the result of not only individuals in the place, but also the spatialized and structured oppressions and advantages that influence individual and social reality (Lipsitz, 2011). In other words, places convey messages about safety, about who belongs and who does not, and, through their messages, places help to shape identities, experiences, and outcomes (Massey, 1994). This approach to understanding places requires a re-imagining of core ideas (e.g., social identity and SPD) as laced with placed based meaning. As McKittrick (2006) argues, place is bound up in, and created by, ideologies about gender and race that deny and misremember violence and displacement, which, in turn, continue racial-sexual domination.

Places reflect the social order by situating us in particular material conditions that we can see (e.g., buildings, security cameras, green spaces), hear (e.g., sirens, birds singing) and smell (e.g., a freshly cut lawn, pollution, fresh bagels). Places, beyond our senses, are bound up in histories and ideologies that structure the geographies we have access to (e.g., Whites only churches in the Jim Crow era). Further, understandings of place are bound up in how we experience settings in the everyday (e.g., perceptions of safety and belonging; Shabazz, 2015). A focus on place moves us "beyond the social" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015) into understanding how places force us to negotiate identities, relationships, and relationships with power (Massey, 2005). Places are gendered, raced (Massey, 1994), and developmentally demarcated. In order to understand how people understand, critique, act in and act on places, social scientists need to understand places as saturated in identities, histories, ideologies, and inequities (Lipsitz, 2011; Massey, 1994; McKittrick, 2006; Shabazz, 2015; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Taken together,

these points suggest that understanding how people experience and generally make meaning of place has implications for both theorization of SPD and the empirical examination of SPD.

In this study of SPD among Black emerging adult women, I focused on two specific places that feature prominently in the everyday lives of young Black women: urban college campuses and urban[1] centers generally. I chose these locales for specific reasons. Recent reports show that in the US, approximately 37% of Black 18–24-year-olds enrolled in college (Hussar et al., 2020), and in recent years Black women have earned two-thirds of the Bachelors degrees awarded to Black undergraduates (National Science Foundation, 2017). Importantly, the purpose of higher education, particularly in the United States, is one intrinsically tied to the development of persons capable of acting as citizens in democratic society. Ostrander (2004) states, "higher education has historically had a role in fostering democracy and citizen participation and providing social value through both its educative function and its production of knowledge" (p.77). Consistent with these goals, colleges and universities in the United States have long been heralded as sites that foster the civic engagement and sociopolitical knowledge of students (Gamson, 1997; Ostrander, 2004; Sirianni & Friedland, 2001). While the ideal aims of higher education are laudable, for marginalized students in the United States colleges have always been sites of inequality in regard to race, gender, etc. (Fine et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2013; Nicolazzo, 2015; Robbins & McGowan, 2016).

Campus environments themselves are laced with histories of racialized and gendered oppression that few institutions have begun to unravel (e.g., the very buildings we occupy being

[1] Mattis et al., (2019) assert that urban places are "densely populated, dynamic human settlements, whose spatial design, systems of organization, economies, culture, and practices of governance are rooted in ideologies and enactments of power that are raced, classed, and gendered in ways that have profound implications for the development of urban residents" (p.4).

built by enslaved Africans on land stolen from Native peoples; La paperson, 2017; Wilder, 2014). Brasher, Alderman, & Inwood, (2017) describe college and university campuses as "wounded places" that are shaped and harmed by histories of epistemic and physical state violence (destruction, displacement, etc.) that results in traumas to both the individual and society. Further Brasher et al., (2017) wrote that these places,

> emerged historically and geographically from racialized economic, political, and cultural institutional structures. Indeed, not only did many early university presidents and faculty members own slaves during the antebellum period, but a number of colleges (inside and outside the Southeast) used slave labor for the construction of their campuses and for work in their daily operations, (p. 294)

These places emerged in histories of state violence and are both embedded in and have benefitted from ideologies of White supremacy and gendered racism. They also continue to produce and sustain societal inequity (Brasher et al., 2017). To think that the mission of higher education is not bound up in place—beyond a setting for social relations—would be ill-informed at best. These places are charged with the production of citizens. Investigating how these ideologies and the educational place created by them interact to help shape and change SPD is critical. Specifically understanding these processes for Black emerging adult women would not only broaden our understanding of SPD, but would be beneficial for how we conceptualize the university as a place. This would also further our understanding of how racialized and gendered histories affect development generally, and sociopolitical development in particular.

In this study, I also chose to focus on urban places because 63% of the US population lives in cities and by 2050 this population will be 70% globally (UN DESA, 2018). Additionally, emerging adults, are disproportionately moving into urban centers contributing to a

"youthification" of cities in terms of both the people occupying them and the physical and policy change to accommodate the population (Lee, 2020; Moos 2016; Moos et al., 2019; Moos et al., 2017). This "youthification" means that cities need to be attuned to the ways that place, in its construction and change both materially and policy wise, influences the identities, safety, and thriving of their population. For psychologists interested in emerging adulthood, this youthification means that urban centers become rich sites to do the study of human behavior. Importantly, for psychologists with a lens on the disparities that affect the daily lives of marginalized peoples, cities become important places to study. Mattis, Palmer, and Hope (2019) argue that,

> To acknowledge that urban settings are raced is to acknowledge that race, ethnicity, and culture (e.g., Whiteness, Blackness, Latinx-ness, Asian-ness) have meanings and that those meanings are historically situated, contextual, complex, and fluid, and they have implications (some positive and some negative) for the ways that urban residents of all ethnoracial and cultural backgrounds live and develop…To acknowledge that urban places are gendered, is to recognize that sex and gender, and the public and private performance of these identities, matter in urban settings.

One aim of this study is to embrace a "Blackgirl geography [that] traces the conceptual, material, and affective dimensions of places created by Blackgirls" (Cahill, 2019, p.58) in order to trace the ways that places affect Black emerging adult women's understandings of justice and SPD. Studying SPD and urban place for Black women is likely to draw our focus to urban religious/spiritual places. Certainly, Black urban religious/spiritual places (e.g., Black churches) have long been an important part of Black Americans everyday and acute orientations towards justice (Payne, 1990, Smith, 1996). Spiritual places in urban contexts have also been historically

linked to justice movements. Payne notes, that that Black women in cities are more likely to be churched and a part of a movement largely supported by urban churches (Payne, 1990). Religious institutions also provide literal space for gathering and for individual and collective meaning making, transmission of values, communication of priorities, etc. (Smith, 1996). Importantly, however, my interest is in religiosity and spirituality as privately embraced cultural ideologies that may inform SPD for emerging adult Black women. Further, many religious and spiritual women do not attend and are not members of religious institutions. So, while I anticipate that religious places will emerge for some women, I opt not to focus on these places directly. To be clear, this investigation attends to religiosity and spirituality as ideological systems, but I remain open to analyze the ways that religious and spiritual places are and are not implicated in SPD for emerging adult Black women.

Plan of Study

This dissertation study explored the role of cultural ideology (i.e., spirituality), place (i.e., cities and urban higher education institutions), and identities in the socio-political development of Black emerging adult women (ages 18-30). I use Sociopolitical Development theory (Watts et al., 2003), the Socioecological, Transactional Model of Religiosity, Spirituality, and Positive Development in Urban Contexts (SET- RS Urban; Mattis et al., 2019), and work from critical geographies (e.g., Black placemaking: Hunter et al., 2016; McKittrick, 2006; Black Spatial Imaginary: Lipsitz, 2011; Critical Place Inquiry: Tuck & McKenzie 2015) to investigate a central question: How do gender, race, spirituality, and spatial context (college contexts and urban place) inform the sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult women who reside in urban settings? This question is investigated in three intersecting studies. In study 1 I asked: To what extent are religiosity/spirituality and urban place associated with SPD (measured by critical

reflection, critical agency and critical action) among Black emerging adult women? Data for Study 1 (n=222) come from a larger mixed-methods study aiming to understand prosocial development among people who live in cities. Participants were recruited from several urban centers across the United States and were compensated $10 for completing a survey. To investigate study 1, I performed a series of hierarchical multiple regressions to ascertain the relative contribution of demographic factors, indices of spirituality/religiosity, and subjective perception of urban place to SPD (i.e., critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action).

Studies 2 and 3 take a qualitative approach. In study 2 I asked: How, if at all, does the religiosity/spirituality of Black emerging adult women influence their sociopolitical development? In study 3 I asked: How do the ways that Black emerging adult women make place (i.e., experience, perceive, and imagine urban places—especially urban universities) inform their sociopolitical development? In study 2, I employed a thematic analysis adapted with consensual qualitative research (Braun & Clark, 2006; Hill et al., 2005) of interviews with six emerging Black adult college women. These women were recruited from a community-based organization that cultivates the leadership skills of women engaged in activist/social justice work in two northeastern cities. This study was anchored in a Black feminist epistemology that framed the way I worked with undergraduate students, conducted the analyses, and the final thematic findings. In study 3, I conducted narrative interviews with 12 Black emerging adult women enrolled in urban universities. As an emerging adult Black man studying the experiences of Black emerging adult women, I employed a critical narrative methodology (Huber et al., 2013; Rodriguez, 2010) that is informed by a Black feminist epistemology (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1989; Wingfield, 2015). I employed critical narrative analysis as described by Saldaña (2016) paired with ongoing reflexivity to help me locate my positionality particularly in the analytic and

interpretative phases of the work (Rodriguez, 2010). Altogether, these three studies allowed me to gain an understanding of how gender, race, spirituality, and spatial context (college contexts and urban place) inform the sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult women who reside in urban settings.

Positionality[2]

I am a cisgender, heterosexual, Jamaican immigrant man with a spirituality that, while Christian, is more syncretic by the day. As I grapple with the aspects of my identity that most define me, and through which I frame the origins of this work, I often return to my recognition that if anything, I am. Jamaican, My entire world (i.e., my ontological formation) began on the steps of my grandmother's old Jamaican house on top of a serene and beautiful hill. I remember the mango tree, the way the wind was always ready to help me fly a kite, and the way the stairs creaked as I made music with my steps. There, I was narrated into being by my mother and grandmother. Their stories and fables, their witness, and their teachings were incredible and formative anchors for me. They made sure that I knew Jamaica's musical history detailing the importance of joy, political struggle, and justice. They grounded me in deeply collectivist and religio-spiritual orientations towards upholding dignity, love, and justice. In all of this they also told me about the everyday ways that Jamaican people shaped philosophy and justice globally. Most of all though, they showed me the ways that they made joy and love happen in hard circumstances, the ways that they and other Jamaican women made place, and how to embody the stories they told me about spirituality, joy, and revolution. Narratives and storytelling, joy, spirituality, and resistance were central to my childhood. I am often now reflective about

[2] Because of the nature of this dissertation, I found it most pertinent to articulate my positionality here before moving into any of the analyses.

narrative as a part of societal upbringing and how my mom and other Jamaican women used stories to make a place for themselves and their children despite the obstacles they routinely faced. It is unsurprising to me, in reflection, that I wanted to use narrative methods to examine the ways that religiosity and spirituality, and spatial context (college contexts and urban place) inform the sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult women.

Through the narratives I learned in childhood from a community of Jamaican women, I built a wealth of cultural practices, lenses with which to view the world. As I grew older, I realized that the stories I heard from the women in my life were embedded in context, history, and place. These stories were not without background understandings of Jamaica's long history of misogyny. These stories were saturated with background understandings of the ways that the island had changed after independence. And these stories were not without background understandings of how my mother, grandmother, and aunties created joyful places for me, my sister, and my cousins, to live in. As I grew older, I came to realize that while the stories were edifying, and they contained gendered warnings, spiritual wisdoms, and joyful exhortations that were borne of an experience that I did not have at the moment, and experiences I would never have as a Jamaican boy or man (e.g., particular experiences of gender-based violence). Even as a child, I noticed the gendered warnings my younger sister would receive and the ways that places were coded, through language, as dangerous for her, yet perfectly fine for me. Those spaces where particularly safe for me if I displayed certain hegemonic understandings of masculinity. Place and gender became intimately intertwined. The Jamaica I came to know was a place of gendered inequity and a place of joy. Jamaica was complicated, and I recognized that I benefitted in spoken and unspoken ways because of gendered inequity.

When I moved to the United States on the cusp of adolescence, stories from America started to become my narrative. These new racial narratives ran counter to the ones my sister and I grew up with that had instilled pride in who we were and our culture. We were now "taught to view [our]selves and [our] experiences as negative, to be ashamed of, ignored, or discarded, instead of as a source of strength, knowledge, and pride, to be valued, protected, and shared" (Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998, p.215). This was, of course, incredibly jarring. I can viscerally remember the first time someone levied the "n-word" at me. I was less than a week into my US schooling experience. Although I knew about the US's racial history, I had somehow missed any explanation of what that word meant. However, no lesson was needed. Black friends immediately jumped to my defense. From that day forward, I started to belong to two very different worlds.

I had narratives from home that racially bolstered who I was, but my time in the US began to unravel these formative narratives as I moved into my teenage years. In her essay *How to Tame a Wild Tongue,* Andalzúa (1987) speaks about this when she writes: "This voluntary (yet forced) alienation makes for psychological conflict, a kind of dual identity. We are a synergy of two cultures … I have so internalized the borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one" (p.63). As I moved into and through my teen years I became aware of the ways that Black people, and particularly Black men, were being racialized as violent and unwanted, threatening and expendable. This ongoing racial development was even more complicated because of being a version of Blackness my peers were unfamiliar with at the time. I intentionally curtailed my accent for my safety and to reduce my visibility, only using my accent at home. This, interestingly enough, led to the quieting of my voice for almost two decades. As I grew older the same gendered inequity I

noticed from Jamaica differentially affected my peers and me along both raced and gendered lines. I began to notice that here too, in America, there were gendered expectations and gendered places.

Growing up in Jamaica I was surrounded by a faith system that, while predominantly Christian, still made room for animism, Obeah [3], Rastafarianism[4], and other religio-spiritual traditions that all, in some way, influence my own understanding of religion, spirit, spirituality today. I have vivid memories of Obeah women who lived nearby. I have several, mostly hilarious, stories about the threats I received from family if I was ever to become a Rastaman. And, of course, I have several stories about the ways that my grandmother instilled the tenets of the Jamaican Christian tradition in the core of my being. We used to sit on the steps of her home as she told us stories of faith. She always credited God for her accomplishments and our successes. God always made the struggle worth it. God was home and home was secure.

I attended an institution dedicated to the American Baptist tradition. Along with the required chapel services and the proselytizing on campus, there was a general understanding that all of us were a wonderful Christian family. However, in the grand stories of religiosity and spirituality championed in places of faith, the role of gender was always striking. In places that espoused the value and dignity of all persons, freedom was curtailed. Narratives became "complex" in that although as people of faith we espoused dignity and freedom, we often failed

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[3] Obeah is one of the many Afro-Creole religio-spiritual forms that are practiced throughout the Caribbean, particularly in the British West Indies (e.g., Jamaica) during and after slavery. It is associated with practices of ancestral veneration, healing, and divination.

[4] Rastafarianism is a syncretic religio-spiritual and political movement that came to prominence in the 1930's after the coronation of Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie I, whom many believe to be the second coming of Christ. The movement emphasizes a return to Zion (that is the African continent) and the seat of Jah (God). Further, adherents emphasize clean eating, meditation, and a balanced lifestyle. Reggae music, arguably Jamaica's most known cultural product, comes from the Rastafarians.

to reckon with the inequities in churches around gender (e.g., women being denied positions of authorities in the church). As I began to wrestle with these contradictions, my spirituality (specifically my Christianity) was shifted by racial violence.

In 2008, the day after the election of Barack Obama, several students at Baylor University decided to hang life-sized carboard cut out of him in effigy. They lynched him. However metaphorical this act was, this violence caused me to evaluate just how central my Christianity could be if fellow Christians did not seem me (or someone who shared my identities) as fully human and, again, an object to be expelled from this place (i.e., Baylor University) I held dear. Further, in concert with the oppressive notions of gender that were a part of the conservatism on campus, I openly wondered what this place meant for Black women and how they could find themselves in these spaces. How were they making a home or a joyful place on campus? These meditations also caused me to question much of the faith system I hold dear and pushed me to investigate other traditions (e.g., Islam and Buddhism). In questioning spirituality and faith, I found the long traditions of religiosity/spirituality being central to justice movements. I formed for myself a version of Christianity that aligned with everyday and acute acts for justice. I explored Rastafarianism, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and began to form a spirituality all my own. Although I still see much of the world with Christianity as a dominant lens, I have sought to more fully embrace a radical and transformative tradition that I saw embodied by my grandmother. My spirituality has become much more open and attuned to justice, and to the ways that justice might be made manifest in the world. My spiritual wanderings have inspired me to observe how others find motivation and solidarity in religiosity and spirituality in college. This is especially true in the ways that I saw my emerging adult Black women peers and family members navigating faith systems and their own political lives. More

so, this spiritual journey made me wonder if other people thought about and were motivated by the same motivations.

In the alleged free time during this PhD journey, I often think and write about land and place. I think about land and the places we make because I never feel at home in the US. Every time I have moved since coming to the US as a preadolescent, I fail to unpack my belongings. I am never sure I can make a home, never sure I can make this place my own. My first semester at Michigan I booked a trip back to Jamaica. I needed to leave a foreign land that was made even more foreign by being the only Black man in the graduate program at the time. When I got there, I wrote:

> There is something about the red clay of home,
>
> the way it feels as I run, smooth, my feet pressing into soft earth,
>
> the way that it gets slippery after a brief rain, earthworms tilling its surface,
>
> I miss that.
>
> Soft clay gives way to rough sand and then soft water filled beaches
>
> The run here is harder, it takes more effort.
>
> Laying down, I realize it's one of the only places I feel free,
>
> The ocean beckons me to come out, the tide pulling me in
>
> Wafting me, holding me, cradling me in this border.
>
> This place, this earth, it knows me.
>
> Earth meets sea, the tide moving in and out, a peace in constant motion
>
> I feel free here. I am home.
>
> It bothers me though, that I find peace here, in this border.

This border between land and sea, that for my ancestors, marked an entirely different existence. Where I find peace, the found rape, death, and slavery.

This place in which I find freedom was the start of generational oppression.

I wonder if we can end it.

Home, I guess, is a contradiction.

How do I find peace when my great grandparents found suffering?"

Home, and places generally, are often contradictions for me. I often wonder how people make home and make places while dealing with the discomfort. These thoughts became more concrete when I came to Michigan. I saw Black emerging adult women striving to make place, to make home, in everyday ways and through protest. I saw how gendered understandings of place limited access and opportunity, and I saw efforts to topple that oppression. I saw how all kinds of spiritual understandings undergirded activism and inspired a hope that these efforts would prevail. I saw how Black emerging adult women made joyful and loving places for so many. And, although I saw these phenomena, I was not quite sure how it all worked. I knew that place, identity, SPD, and religiosity/spirituality played a role, but I remained curious about how they worked together. Why was this collection of related phenomena so unknown in my favorite theories?

This work investigated the role of social identities (race and gender), religiosity and spirituality, and spatial context (i.e., cities and urban higher education institutions) in the sociopolitical development of college attending Black emerging adult women. I shared some identity markers with participants, (e.g., race and religiosity/spirituality) while at the same time I certainly differed from all participants in that I identify as a man who is seeking to understand the experiences of Black people who identify as women. Although I have been on a decades-long

journey to reclaim my own voice, I was keenly aware of gender dynamics and the ways that these dynamics might lead to the silencing of women's voices in these interviews. I endeavored to listen, not interpret for study participants, and listen in ways that counter patriarchal ways of engaging in conversation across gender (DeVault, & Gross, 2012). Truly, I hoped to fully engage in a feminist practice of interviewing and listening that "involves not only taking in information via speech, written words, or signs but also actively processing it. [I want to allow] that information to affect you, baffle you, haunt you, make you uncomfortable, and take you on unexpected detours… toward peoples, knowledges, and experiences that have been disavowed, overlooked, and forgotten" (DeVault, & Gross, 2012, p. 216).

I understood that my insider and outsider positionality may occur along many identities (e.g., faith, political affiliation, sexual orientation, immigrant status, etc.). As I proceeded into both the interviews and my analyses I adapted a reflexive approach because such an approach "helps researchers explore how our theoretical positions and biographies shape what we choose to study and the approach to studying it" (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 493). Constant reflexivity allowed me to be intentional about centering participants' stories about the experiences of marginalization and oppression they have faced with a particular eye to both structures that they encounter, and to the ways that gender has been implicated in their marginalization and oppression. In my own reflexive work, I had to attend to emergent religious and spiritual ideas and narratives that I might find seductive because they felt familiar, or offensive and triggering because they were so different. In my analyses and reflexive work, I listened to interviews soon after each interview to try to ensure that gender dynamics that often reflect patriarchal domination (e.g., speaking over participants or cutting them off) were not skewing the conversation. I journaled through these listening sessions to note when I heard and/or saw

gendered dynamics of power arising. I also enlisted the help of my research team—a team of women, including Black women—to evaluate and challenge gendered dynamics of power in later interviews (e.g., allowing for longer pauses in turn of talk). I also made sure that during the analysis of the data and interpretation of the data. I was very aware of my own gendered lens and power as the researcher in charge of the project. I consistently asked the undergraduate women working with me to challenge my own thinking and to challenge each other. Further, upon deriving final results, the undergraduate team critiqued and helped solidify my thinking.

Chapter 2 - Study 1:
Do Spirituality and Place Matter for Justice?: Investigating Spirituality and Place in the Sociopolitical Development of Emerging Adult Black Women

Piece by piece they shipped my body to this country
Now that I'm here, your people don't want me.
I'm a symbol of freedom, but I'm still not free
I suffer from class, race, and gender inequality.
I wear a crown of knowledge, 'cause I'm a conscious queen
My mask is one of happiness, though my history here is full of misery.
Done deliberately.
I am America's true statue of liberty.
You placed a bible under my arm, after you ripped me of my faith
And made me pray to a fictional imposter
So, if you were trying to maintain liberty
Too late, you just lost her
'Cause her torch is about to serve as the night light for truth
In the slums and the ghettos that you find so uncouth.
Education will be delivered not from the tree, but the root.
So, little black girls and boys will check their pockets
For spirituality rather than loot- ***Black Statue of Liberty, Jessica Care Moore***

The history of Black women in the United States is riddled with everyday raced, gendered, and racially gendered oppressions. For Black women in emerging adulthood (ages 18-29), everyday raced, gendered, and racially gendered oppressions are coupled with developmental tasks such as identity exploration (Arnett, 2000, 2016; Arnett & Tanner, 2006; Hope et al., 2015; Syed & Mitchell, 2013; Szymanski & Lewis, 2016) and a range of psychological distresses such as depressive symptoms (Lewis at al., 2013; Szymanski & Lewis, 2016; Thomas et al., 2008). However, far from being passive victims of oppressive circumstances, Black emerging adult women often work to respond agentically to challenge by disrupting oppressive structures and conditions. Throughout the history of the United States, the work of Black emerging adult women, while sometimes invisibilized, has transformed and

continues to transform the nation's landscape with respect to social justice (Anyiwo et al., 2020; Payne, 1999). Black emerging adult women's efforts to reflect on, respond to, navigate, and critically act against structural constraints on human agency are manifestations of their sociopolitical development (SPD; Fernandez et al., 2018; Watts et al., 1999).

Our knowledge about SPD among Black emerging adult women is evolving, yet plagued by four key limitations (Anyiwo et al., 2020). First, current SPD literature is primarily focused on adolescents. This focus leaves our understanding of SPD after adolescence underexamined. Second, SPD literature is limited by a lack of attention to the ways that SPD evolves for Black women, particularly, for Black emerging adult women. Third, although cultural resources such as spirituality and religiosity are historically important pillars in movements against injustice, particularly among emerging adult Black women (Collins 2000; Payne, 1999; Gilkes, 1985), we know relatively little about the ways that religiosity/spirituality inform SPD (Carmen et al., 2015; Watts et al., 2003). Finally, while we know that places influence our political power, who we are, and who we might become (Shabazz, 2015), scholarship regarding the role of context (e.g., place) in informing SPD is nascent (Carmen et al., 2015). In this study I examine how religiosity and spirituality, place (as represented by perceived urban structural arrangements), and individual factors (e.g., age, education) contribute to SPD among a sample of Back emerging adult women. Sociopolitical Development Theory (SPD), the Socioecological, Transactional framework for the study of Religiosity and Spirituality (SET-RS Urban; Mattis et al., 2018), and empirical research on critical consciousness serve as conceptual and empirical foundations for this study. Using hierarchical regression, I examine the concurrent contributions of individual factors, place (as perceived urban structural arrangements), and religiosity/spirituality to SPD among Black emerging adult women.

Sociopolitical Development

Watts, Williams, and Jagers (2003) define SPD as the process through which "individuals acquire the knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and the capacity for action in political and social systems necessary to interpret and resist oppression" (p. 185). Watts et al. (2003) note that although knowledge, analysis and emotions are central to SPD, "equally as important is a vision of liberation that is an alternative to oppressive conditions" (p.185). SPD is guided by four propositions: 1) an analysis of power and authority (i.e., a *critical reflection*) is essential to SPD; 2) a sense of *critical agency* (both individually and collectively) in sociopolitical development is critical in order for individuals to take any action to create change; 3) individuals take *critical action* when they are motivated to do so and have the requisite efficacy to see those actions through; and 4) SPD's outcomes of interest are commitment and action (Watts & Guessous, 2006). In sum, SPD happens when marginalized peoples engage in sociopolitical reflection and analysis, have opportunities to take sociopolitical action, and when individuals agentically engage in sociopolitical action.

Embedded within SPD theory's propositions is the related construct of critical consciousness (i.e., critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action). Specifically, Watts and Guessous' (2006) theoretical framework offers a robust process model to describe critical consciousness and psychological and contextual mechanisms (e.g., socialization, organizational settings) that help us to understand SPD as a process. SPD is rooted in, but conceptually distinct from, critical consciousness. However, in order to more fully elucidate SPD, a discussion of the components that SPD and the concept of critical consciousness share is merited.

"Critical consciousness" has been defined as the development of three specific components: 1) critical reflection/sociopolitical analysis, 2) political efficacy, and 3) critical

action (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Ginwright, 2010; Prilleltensky, 2012; Watts et al., 2011; Watts & Guessous, 2006). Each of these components is more fully described below:

Critical Reflection/Sociopolitical Analysis

Critical reflection/sociopolitical analysis is the recognition on the part of individuals that the disparities evident in society (e.g., disparities in health, gendered violence, disparate educational attainment, and racism) are the result of structural and institutionally marginalizing forces (Prilleltensky, 2012; Watts et al., 2011). Critical reflection can be further understood to be comprised of both a critical analysis of social inequity and an egalitarianism and outward embrace of equity for all peoples (Diemer, et al., 2017). This reflection and analysis of the various institutional forces (e.g., racism and sexism) that dictate societal outcomes on the part of individuals is also historical in that this kind of reflection seeks to examine the root causes of oppression, and the ways that policies and practices have shaped inequity over time (Watts et al., 2011). There is emphasis not so much on the individual actions that make this reality constant, but on marginalizing social structures that preclude full participation in democracy (Prilleltensky, 2012; Watts et al., 2011). Beyond the understanding of how individuals are affected by institutions, critical reflection and critical sociopolitical analysis also include the understanding that systems affect the groups with which one identifies (e.g., racial groups), and groups in which one participates (e.g., communities). Because critical reflection is concerned with the oppression experienced by certain identities, individuals engaged in critical reflection often interrogate their social identities, associated privileges, and associated aspects of marginalization. In sum, critical reflection can be thought of as the growing awareness of societal inequities, the understanding of systems of inequity, and the rejection of those inequities with an outward embrace of equity for all people.

Critical Agency/Political Efficacy

Critical reflection and sociopolitical analysis are important steps in SPD, but they are insufficient to create sociopolitical action or sociopolitical change. The movement to action requires a sense that one has the capacity to create change. Critical agency is the belief that one has "a moral concern with inequity, motivation to address it, and perceived ability to make a difference" (Diemer et al., 2015, p. 815). Political efficacy refers, in general, to an individual's perception or belief in their capability to act as effective sociopolitical actors both individually and collectively (Diemer et al., 2015; Morrell, 2005; Watts, et al., 2011). Political efficacy is also closely aligned with the concept of sociopolitical control, the perception that one can effect sociopolitical change (Watts et al., 2011; Zimmerman et al.,1999). This study will be one of very few that examines the potential correlates of critical agency, and certainly to my knowledge is the only study that examines this association among urban residing emerging adult Black women.

Critical Sociopolitical Action

Critical sociopolitical analysis and a sense of efficacy are important steps towards critical sociopolitical action, but we cannot think or believe ourselves to liberation, we must also take critical actions towards justice (Jemal, 2017; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). It is in building critical efficacy and in acting against oppressive systems that marginalized peoples can change socially and structurally oppressive societies (Diemer, & Li, 2011; Jemal, 2017; Watts et al., 2011; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Watts et al. (2011) describe critical sociopolitical action (or critical action) as the "individual or collective action taken to change aspects of society, such as institutional policies and practices, which are perceived to be unjust" (p. 50). Although this definition seems to center civic actions within traditional political processes (e.g., voting), it

includes a range of actions aligned with social justice and activism (e.g., protest), and forms of civic engagement both inside and outside of sociopolitical institutions (Diemer, & Li, 2011; Watts et al., 2011). Critical action is the component of critical consciousness most limited in the research literature (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

This study examines religious and spiritual factors, place (operationalized by variables measuring sense of place) and individual factors (e.g., age, education, partner status) as they collectively relate to three separate indices of SPD: critical action, critical agency, and critical action for Black emerging adult women.

Spirituality, Religiosity, and SPD

Spirituality and sociopolitical development and spirituality and religiosity have been identified as foundational components of SPD and critical consciousness (Carmen et al., 2015; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2002; Watts et al.,1999). Specifically, religiosity and spirituality are both protective factors for marginalized peoples as they face oppressive circumstances and a system of meaning as they attend to and act against injustice. Indeed, Watts et al.'s (1999) conceptualization of SPD is undergirded by a religio-spiritual ethos that links the pursuit of justice to notions of interconnectedness and transformation.

There are also sustained empirical connections between religiosity/spirituality and social justice. Religious institutions have often provided both the organizational and leadership capacity and financial resources needed to sustain social justice movements (Hutchinson, 2012). Through theology and religious teaching, these institutions also provide ideological, communal moral and spiritual values (e.g., justice and equity) that make sociopolitical action more possible (Hutchinson, 2012; Snarr, 2009; Wald et al., 2005). Extant scholarship on women's activism often relates the interconnected and relational nature of spirituality as promotive of a desire to

actively move against inequitable circumstances for women in particular (Faver, 2000, 2001; Iseke & Desmoulins, 2011; Nodding, 1984; Ochs, 1983). Religiosity and spirituality, in separation and interrelatedly, contribute to the ways that we view the world and the possibilities that can exist in it. Specifically, Watts et al., (1999) theorize that spirituality enables a perspective taking allows individuals to move beyond presently oppressive circumstances through appreciating human interconnectedness and affirming human dignity. Although spirituality and religiosity are implicated in SPD, few empirical studies have explored that association. This study seeks to fill that gap by empirically examining the associations between religiosity/spirituality and SPD among Black emerging adult women.

The rationale for attending to religiosity and spirituality in research on SPD is well established. Religion and spirituality are important, related, and inextricably linked aspects of Black American life (Taylor et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2004). Black Americans tend to be more religious than the general population (Constantine et al., 2000). The majority of Black Americans (83%) believe in God (Pew Research Center, 2015) and engage in religious practice (e.g., going to church, praying daily; Chatters et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2004). These religious commitments extend over the lifespan including emerging adulthood. Black emerging adults are more religious and spiritual than their counterparts and Black women are generally more religious and spiritual than Black men (Pew Research Center 2018). Further, Black emerging adults identify religion and spirituality as core to their identity and daily lives (Griffin, 2006; Lee et al., 2018; McGuire, 2018; Stewart, 2009; Uecker et al., 2007). There are a number of documented benefits to spirituality and religiosity for Black populations. Spiritual and religious practices have been shown to help relieve stress and encourage reflection in stressful circumstances (Constantine et al., 2006), and serve as sources of hope, purpose, and resilience for Black Americans as they

negotiate and resist the day-to-day marginalization (Dancy, 2010; Herndon, 2003; Mattis, 2000; McGuire, 2018; Patton & McClure, 2009; Stewart, 2002; Watson, 2006; Watt, 2003). This latter function, that of resistance, is especially germane to the current inquiry.

To be clear, spirituality and religiosity are different, but interrelated concepts. Spirituality "is that intangible dimension of ourselves that connects us with something greater than ourselves" (Dantley, 2003, p. 6). Spirituality is an understanding of the intangible and the sacred, the ways that those bind individuals to realities beyond the physical, and how that all connects us to each other. Religiosity is the practice and extent to which someone incorporates and adheres to the practices of an organized religion (Mattis, 2002).

Conceptual Framework

Currently, 63% of the US population lives in cities (UN DESA, 2018). Black people make up around 22% of the population in US cities with the vast majority of Black people living states with the largest metropolitan areas (e.g., Detroit, MI with 713,777 Black residents comprising 84% of the population Frey, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). By 2046, over 125 US cities will experience at least a 25% increase in population growth with at least 36 cities seeing at least 50% population increase (IHS Markit, 2017). Importantly, emerging adults are disproportionately moving into urban centers (Lee, 2018; Moos, 2016; Moos et al., 2018; Moos et al., 2019). With this growth, people of color and emerging adults are poised to make up substantive proportions of this population. Understanding the experiences of increasingly young and Black peoples in urban spaces is increasingly relevant and important.

Importantly, the word "urban" is commonplace in educational and psychological research as a marker of context for studies and populations. Rarely, however, is the "urban" explicitly theorized or empirically accounted for in data analysis (Tuck & McKenzie, 2014). Nonetheless,

studies in the social sciences tend to implicate "urban" places as sites of chaos, violence, disorder, and social decay (Clark, 2003). Further, the "urban" is often paired with Black people and with poverty, a fact that causes "urban" to operate as a racialized and classed marker for Blackness. In understudying urban contexts associated with Black emerging adults, we relegate much of our understanding of this developmental context to stereotypical notions without investigating how these contexts may shape positive development.

In contrast to these limiting conceptualizations, the US Census Bureau defines *urban areas* in two distinct ways. First, *urban* clusters "represent areas containing at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people" (US Census Bureau, 2020) and *urbananized areas* are "densely settled census tracts and blocks and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people" (US Census Bureau, 2020). In defining what "urban" means, Mattis et al., (2019) state that urban places are "densely populated, dynamic human settlements whose spatial design, systems of organization, economies, culture, and practices of governance, are rooted in ideologies and enactments of power that are raced, classed, and gendered" in ways that shape affect the positive development (e.g., sociopolitical development) of urban residents (p. 3). The spatial configurations of urban centers replicate inequities and in unpacking how contexts relate to SPD, examining urban centers might allow for new and novel understanding of SPD.

Mattis et al., (2019) introduced the Socioecological, Transactional framework for the study of Religiosity and Spirituality (SET-RS Urban) to theorize the link between urban sociopolitical conditions, spirituality/religiosity, individual level factors including social identities, and prosocial outcomes (e.g., sociopolitical development) among urban citizens (see Figure 1). SET-RS Urban is a transactional and ecological frame that posits that urban places are characterized by multilayered ecologies that can result in positive development. Specifically,

SET-RS Urban explores the ways that urban sociopolitical (e.g., inequality and power) and structural (e.g., spatial and environmental stress) realities work in tandem with individual factors (e.g., age, income), religiosity, spirituality, community/social networks, and family factors, to inform how urban residents develop positively and prosocially. SET-RS makes explicit theoretical linkages between individual factors and SPD. These linkages are also empirically supported (e.g., age is associated with increased experience of and reflection on racial injustice; education and awareness are positively associated with critical reflection and action; Anyiwo et al., 2018).

In this study, which is informed by SET-RS (but not a full test of SET-RS), I use measures of neighborhood quality as proxies for assessing urban sociopolitical features and structural arrangements. More specifically, I use participants' subjective reports of their sense of neighborhood safety, and their reports of the presence of structural assets (e.g., parks/green space, effective schools), as well as structural challenges (e.g., trash in the streets) as markers of inequity and markers of spatial/environmental resources, stresses, and risks. I use multiple measures of religiosity and spirituality to account for religious spiritual and faith-based institutional factors. Age, education and household income are used as markers of individual difference. Finally, SPD (i.e., critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action) is examined as the focal positive developmental outcome.

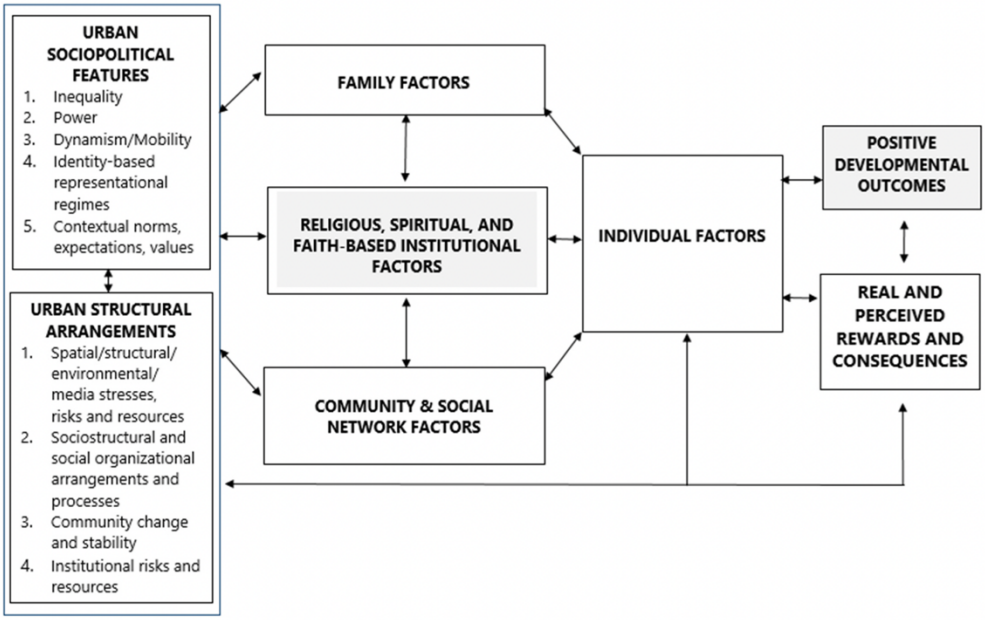

Figure 2. The Socioecological, Transactional framework for the study of Religiosity and Spirituality (Mattis et al., 2019).

The Current Study

This study examines the concurrent contributions of perceived urban structural arrangements, religious and spiritual factors, and individual factors (e.g., age, education) to SPD. Perceived urban structural arrangements (e.g., perceptions about access to resources and safety) are understudied in the SPD literature. So, while I explore these relations, I do not make any hypotheses concerning perceived urban structural arrangements and each of the three indices of SPD. I hypothesize that religious and spiritual factors (e.g., organizational religiosity), and individual factors (age, education, partner status) will each be associated with a significant increase in each of the three indices of SPD (i.e., critical reflection, agency, and action). Specifically, I anticipate positive relations between religious and spiritual factors and each of the three indices of SPD (H1); positive relations between age, education, and each of the three indices of SPD (H2); and negative relations between income, each of the three indices of SPD (H3).

Method

Participants

Data for the current study were drawn the Life in the City Study (LITC; N=1214). LITC is a mixed-methods investigation of factors that motivate love, goodness, and compassion among Black Americans in urban contexts. The analytic sample comes is comprised of 222 Black women emerging adults (M_{age}=25.86, SD= 3.607) from urban centers across the US. Most (70%) of the women in the study have some college experience or a college degree. Half of the analytic sample reports being single, a third (34%) report being married, a little over a tenth (11.8%) report being otherwise partnered, and the rest of the sample (4.2%) reports being widowed or divorced. Approximately half (50.2%) of the sample reports having no children. Participants lived in their cities for varying lengths of time: 6 to10 years (24.3%), 11 to 15 years (24.4%), and 16 to 20 years (24.3%). Slightly fewer (18.7%) lived in their respective city for 21 to 25 years. The rest of the sample (27%) lived in their city fewer than five years. Approximately 27% of participants self-defined as working class, 25.2% reported being lower middle-class, and 28.9% reported being middle-class. Approximately 11% reported being poor or low income, and approximately 8% said they were upper middle-class.

Measures

Critical Reflection

Critical reflection was measured using the 8-item Critical Reflection: Perceived Inequality subscale of Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS; Diemer et al., 2014). Using a 6-point scale (1= “strongly disagree” to 6= “strongly agree”) participants responded to items assessing their critical analysis of identity-based structural constraints. Example items included, “poor children have fewer chances to get a good high school education” and “women have fewer

chances to get good jobs." The CCS was developed and validated among youth attending urban high schools. The critical reflection subscale has proven reliable in other studies (ω[5] of 0.85 to 0.91 across multiple groups in Tyler et al., 2019). Scores on this scale were calculated as a mean. The Cronbach's alpha for the measure in this sample was .90.

Critical Agency

Critical reflection was measured by the 7-item Critical Agency subscale of the Measure of Adolescent Critical Consciousness (MACC; (McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016). Respondents used a 6-point scale (1= "not at all" to 6= "completely") to indicate the degree to which they agreed with items assessing their perceived ability and motivation to act against injustice. Example items included, "I am motivated to try to end racism and discrimination," and "In the future, I will participate in activities or groups that struggle against racism and discrimination." Scores on this scale were calculated as a mean. McWhirter and McWhirter (2016) report a Cronbach's alpha of .89. The Cronbach's alpha for the measure in this sample was .83

Critical Action

Critical action was measured by the 9-item Critical Action: Sociopolitical Participation subscale of the CCS (Diemer et al., 2014). Participants responded to items indicating how frequently they have participated in sociopolitical actions using a 5-point rating scale, where 1= "never did this" and 5= "at least once a week." Example items included, "participated in a civil rights group or organization" and "joined in a protest march, political demonstration, or political meeting." Previous studies using this subscale have reported good scale reliabilities (e.g.,

[5] The authors used McDonald's omega squared in this article as a measure of reliability.

Cronbach's alpha of .78 in Rapa et al., (2018)). Scores on this scale were calculated as a mean. The Cronbach's alpha for the measure in this sample was .86.

***Perceived Neighborhood* Quality**

Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed with several statements about the quality of the neighborhood in which they live. Five items were used to assess perception of neighborhood quality. Example items included "In my neighborhood there are parks where people can play," and "In my neighborhood it is safe to walk alone at night." Items were measured on a 5-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree").

Individual Factors

Single item indices were used to measure for age, educational level, and household income. Age was measured as an open-ended variable for participants to provide a response. Participant educational level was measured by asking "What is the highest level of education that you have completed?" Responses were recorded on a 5-point scale where 1 = "less than high school," 2 = "GED or a high school diploma," 3 = "some college," 4 = "college degree," and 5 = "graduate or professional degree." Household income was measured by asking participants "What is your family's combined household income in US dollars?" This item was measured on an 8-point scale with 1 = "$19,000 or less," 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," and 8 = "$200,000 or above."

Religiosity/Spirituality

Four indices of religiosity and spirituality were included in this study. S*ubjective religiosity* was measured as a mean of three items from the National Survey of Black Americans and the National Survey of American Life (NSAL; Taylor, et al., 2004). These items were: "How

religious are you?" "How important was religion to your family when you were growing up?" and "How important is religion in your life today?" Items were measured on a 5-point scale (1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "very important"). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this measure was .65. *Subjective spirituality* was measured by a single item "How spiritual are you?" This item was also measured on a 5-point scale (1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "very important"). *Non-organizational religiosity* was measured as a mean of three items adapted from NSAL (Taylor et al., 2004). These items were: "How often do you pray or meditate?" "How often do you read religious books or online content?" and "How often do you listen to religious music?" These items were similarly measured on a 5-point scale (1 = "not at all," 3 = "sometimes," 5 = "very often"). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this measure was .65. Two single-item indicators of *Organizational religiosity* were used in this study. The first item, "How often do you attend religious services (e.g., church, temple)?," was borrowed from the NSAL (Taylor et al., 2004). The second item, "How often do you watch religious services online?," was developed for this study to reflect contemporary shifts in the worship practices of Americans (see PEW 2020). These items were both measured on a 5-point scale (1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "very important"). These were entered separately to assess if the mode of organizational religious involvement (in-person attendance vs. online engagement) is differently associated with each of the three outcomes.

Data Analysis

All analysis were carried out using SPSS version 25. I examined the descriptive statistics to check for trends in the data, ran tests to identify potential outliers, explored the distribution of the data, examined potential multicollinearity issues, and examined correlations among key study variables. I also examined the skewness and kurtosis of the data to determine the normality of the

data. The results of these analysis yielded no multicollinearity issues or issues with the skewness and kurtosis of the data. Finally, I used G*Power to calculate a needed sample size of 131 participants for a medium effect size.

In examining the major study question and hypothesis and generally exploratory nature of this inquiry, I conducted three stepwise OLS regressions to explore the relations between study variables with each of the three indices of SPD (critical reflection, agency, and critical action) as separate outcomes. Variables were entered in blocks. Block one included individual factors (i.e., age, educational attainment, and annual income). Block two added urban structural arrangements (e.g., in my neighborhood it is safe to walk alone at night). Finally, block three included religiosity/spirituality variables (i.e., subjective religiosity, subjective spirituality, non-organizational religiosity, organizational religiosity).

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Table 1 summarizes the correlation analyses.

Overall, the Black emerging adult women in this sample reported relatively high levels of critical reflection (M=4.44, SD=1.10), moderately high levels of critical agency (M=3.80, SD=.79), and low levels of critical action (M= 2.23, SD=.84). Overall, Black emerging adult women in the sample moderately agreed that there were safe after school play areas for children (M=3.39, SD=1.16), moderately agreed that they were safe when walking in their neighborhood at night (M=3.15, SD=1.16), moderately agreed that there were parks where people can play, jog, or have a good time (M=3.50, SD=1.07) somewhat agreed that there was graffiti in their neighborhood (M=2.76, SD=1.27), and somewhat agreed that families feel safe walking or allowing children to play on the streets (M=3.18, SD=1.10).

Overall, women in this sample reported moderate levels of both subjective religiosity (M=3.43, SD=.90) and non-organizational religiosity (M=3.20, SD=.89), moderately high levels of spirituality (M=3.77, SD=1.12), and relatively low levels or organizational religiosity as measured by religious service attendance (M=2.87, SD=1.31) and frequency of watching religious services online (M=2.52, SD=1.35).

Critical reflection was significantly and positively correlated with education ($r = .166$, $p \leq .01$), with families feeling safe walking or allowing children to play in the street ($r = .165$, $p \leq .01$), having parks where people can play, jog, or have a good time ($r = .209$, $p \leq .01$), safe places for children to play in their neighborhoods after school ($r = .223$, $p \leq .01$), and with subjective religiosity ($r = .199$, $p \leq .01$) and spirituality ($r = .436$, $p \leq .01$). Critical reflection was negatively and significantly correlated with age ($r = -.344$, $p \leq .01$), family's household income ($r = -.203$, $p \leq .01$), and frequency of watching religious services online ($r = -.226$, $p \leq .01$).

Critical agency was significantly and positively correlated with education level ($r = .187$, $p \leq .05$), safe places for children to play in their neighborhoods after school ($r = .295$, $p \leq .01$), having parks where people can play, jog, or have a good time ($r = .173$, $p \leq .01$), subjective religiosity ($r = .308$, $p \leq .01$), nonorganizational religiosity ($r = .191$, $p \leq .01$), and spirituality ($r = .420$, $p \leq .01$). Critical agency was negatively and significantly correlated with age ($r = -.481$, $p \leq .01$), family's household income ($r = -.192$, $p \leq .01$), and frequency of watching religious services online ($r = -.205$, $p \leq .01$).

Critical action was significantly and positively correlated with age ($r = .291$, $p \leq .01$), seeing graffiti on the wall in the neighborhood or trash in the streets ($r = .167$, $p \leq .01$), religious service attendance ($r = .172$, $p \leq .01$), and viewing religious services online ($r = .247$, $p \leq .01$). Critical action was negatively and significantly correlated with having parks where people can

play, jog, or have a good time (r= -.173, p ≤ .01), safe places for children to play in their neighborhoods after school (r= -.133, p ≤ .05), and families feeling safe allowing children to play in the street (r= -.135, p ≤ .05).

Three hierarchical multiple ordinary least squares regression analyses were conducted to examine and model the direct relationships between independent variables and critical reflection, critical agency, and critical action (see Tables 3, 4, 5).

Critical Reflection

The first step of the model predicting critical reflection was significant, F (3, 218) =25.13, $p < .001$. The individual level variables collectively predicted 50.7% (24.7% adjusted) of the variance in critical reflection. Age (β = -.465, $p \leq .001$), education (β = .273, $p \leq .001$), and income (β = -.161, $p \leq .01$) were significant predictors of critical reflection. In sum, being highly educated was associated with greater critical reflection. However, younger women and women with lower incomes scored higher on critical reflection than their counterparts.

The second step of the model was significant, F (8, 213) =29.33, $p < .05$, and the variables collectively predicted 56.9% (32.4% adjusted) of the variance in critical reflection. In this step, age (β = -.422, $p \leq .001$), education (β = .234, $p \leq .001$), and income (β = -.19, $p \leq .001$ were again significantly related to critical reflection among emerging adult Black women. Women who reported that their neighborhoods have parks for people to play, jog, and have a good time (β = .142, $p \leq .05$), and safe places where children can play after school (β = .161, $p \leq .01$) scored significantly higher than their counterparts on critical reflection. Feeling safe walking home at night, seeing graffiti, and families feeling safe with children playing on the streets were not significant. Additionally, the inclusion of place indicators did not attenuate the significance of individual factors.

The third step of the model was significant, F (13, 208) =40.5, $p < .001$ and the variables collectively predicted 68.3% (46.7% adjusted) of the variance in critical reflection. In this step, participant age (β = -.311, $p \leq .001$), education (β = .193, $p \leq .001$), and income (β = -.143, $p \leq .01$) were significant predictors of critical reflection. Perceiving that families feel safe walking or allowing children to play on the street (β = .125, $p \leq .05$) and safe places where children can play after school (β = .117, $p \leq .05$) were positively associated with critical reflection. Safety walking home at night, seeing graffiti, and having safe parks in which to play were not significant. Interestingly, subjective spirituality is positively related to critical reflection (β = .366, $p \leq .001$), and frequency of watching religious services online was negatively related to critical reflection (β = -.157, $p \leq .05$). Subjective, religiosity, non-organizational religiosity, and frequency of in-person service attendance were not significant.

Critical Agency

The first step of the model predicting critical agency was significant, F (3, 218) =25.37, $p < .01$ and the variables collectively predicted 25.9% (24.9% adjusted) of the variance in critical agency. Among the individual factors, age (β = -.457, $p \leq .001$), education (β = .327, $p \leq .001$), and household income (β = -.139, $p \leq .05$) were significantly related to critical agency.

In the second step of the model indicators of place were included. This step of the model was significant, F (8, 213) =30.014, $p < .001$, and the variables collectively predicted 33.2% (30.7% adjusted) of the variance in critical agency. Similar patterns emerged for the individual factors in this step. Age (β = -.419, $p \leq .001$), education (β = .285, $p \leq .001$), and household income (β = -.147, $p \leq .05$) were significantly related to critical agency. Among the indicators of place, the belief that there are safe places for children to play after school (β = .267, $p \leq .001$) was the only significant predictor of critical agency for Black emerging adult women. Safety walking

home at night, seeing graffiti, having parks to play or have a good time, and families feeling safe allowing children to play on the street were not significant. In the third step of the model religiosity/spirituality variables were introduced. This step of the model was significant, F (13, 208) =40.316, $p < .001$, and the variables collectively predicted 46.4% (43.1% adjusted) of the variance in critical agency. As was the case in steps 1 and 2, age ($\beta = -.327$, $p \leq .001$) and education ($\beta = .254$, $p \leq .001$) were significantly related to critical agency. However, household income lost significance once perceptions and experiences of place and religio-spiritual factors were included. Safe places for children to play after school ($\beta = .235$, $p \leq .001$) was the only place-based variable that was significantly related to critical agency for Black emerging adult women. Safety walking home at night, seeing graffiti, having parks to play or have a good time, and families feeling safe allowing children to play on the street were not significant. Subjective religiosity ($\beta = .149$, $p \leq .05$), subjective spirituality ($\beta = .287$, $p \leq .001$), and frequency of viewing religious services online ($\beta = -.203$, $p \leq .01$) were significantly related critical agency. Non-organizational religiosity and the frequency of attending in-person services were not significant.

Critical Action

The first step of the model was significant, F (3, 218) =7.937, $p < .001$, and the variables collectively predicted 9.8% (8.6% adjusted) of the variance in critical action. Age ($\beta = .313$, $p \leq .001$) was positively and significantly related to critical action among Black emerging adult women. Educational level and household income were not significant.

The second step of the model was significant, F (8, 213)=10.532 , $p < .05$, and the variables collectively predicted 15% (11.8% adjusted) of the variance in critical action. Age remained significant in this step, ($\beta = .248$, $p \leq .001$). Educational level and household income

remained non-significant. Among the indicators of place, commonly seeing graffiti on wall or trash on the streets (β = .148, $p \leq .05$) was the only significant indicator. . Safety walking home at night, seeing graffiti, having parks to play or have a good time, and families feeling safe allowing children to play on the street were not significant.

The third step of the model was significant, F (13, 208) =14.768, $p < .001$ and the variables collectively predicted 22.9% (18.1% adjusted) of the variance in critical action. No individual factor or perception of place remained significantly related to critical action. Formal religious attendance (β = .248, $p \leq .01$), the frequency of watching religious services online (β = .175, $p \leq .05$) were positively related to action, yet subjective religiosity (β = -.262, $p \leq .01$) was negatively associated with action.

Discussion

Drawing on Mattis et al., (2019)'s SET-RS Urban frame, I explored the relations between individual factors (e.g., age, education), perceived urban structural arrangements, religious and spiritual factors, and three measures of SPD (i.e., critical reflection, agency, and action). I hypothesized positive relations between religious and spiritual factors and each of the three indices of SPD (H1); positive relations between age, education, and each of the three indices of SPD (H2); and negative relations between income, each of the three indices of SPD (H3) Because of the lack of empirical study of place (i.e., urban structural arrangements) in relation to SPD, I made no hypotheses regarding these factors.

Regression analyses revealed a complex picture of the relations between individual factors, place, religiosity/spirituality and SPD among Black emerging adult women. Each of the individual factors were related to SPD of Black emerging adult women, albeit in unexpected ways. Education was significantly associated with critical reflection and agency, yet not

significantly associated with critical action. More highly educated emerging adult-aged Black women were more likely to believe that people who hold particular identities experience structural constraints. More highly educated women also expressed greater motivation to create change and a stronger sense of their capacity to make change happen. Education being a positive indicator of critical reflection is unsurprising as many studies have shown a positive relation between education and critical reflection and critical agency (Diemer & Li, 2011; Smith & Hope, 2019). However, the lack of a relation between higher levels of education and critical action is intriguing and worthy of further examination. It is possible that the measure of education used in this study is too limited to assess the role of education in SPD. Studies that examine the role of domains of education (e.g., liberal arts outcomes like intercultural effectiveness) will likely help to clarify the role of education in SPD for Black women. Longitudinal quantitative and qualitative studies may also shed light on the direct and indirect relations between education (e.g., the role of exposure to feminist, antiracist, and social justice-oriented curricula) and critical action.

Younger women and more educated women reported a greater sense of agency to create change (i.e., critical agency). Household income was negatively related to critical agency, however that relationship became non-significant once religio-spiritual factors and perceptions and experiences of place were included. It may be the case that there is an overlap between household income and religiosity and spirituality (e.g., lower income women may be more religious/spiritual).

Perceptions of safety and pleasure were also associated with SPD among Black emerging adult women. Simply put, participants who perceived the urban setting in which they lived as safe—especially for children— were more likely to report that there are some identity groups

that are especially vulnerable to injustice (critical reflection), and these individuals were more likely to report both a motivation to create change, and a belief in their ability to effect change (critical agency). However, those who experienced their neighborhoods as safe were less likely than their counterparts to report engaging in social justice work (critical action). Future studies should examine the ways that beliefs about the safety generally, and safety of children specifically, are implicated in the SPD of Black emerging adult women.

A novel contribution to this work is the finding that while place matters for SPD, some markers of place may matter more than others. Further, markers of place are associated with some domains of SPD bun not others. For women in this study, perceptions that places (i.e., neighborhoods) allow children and families to safely play is positively related to critical reflection and agency, while the ability walking alone at night is not significant. These findings may suggest that for emerging adult aged Black women living in urban areas, the conditions that signal safety for families are particularly important in inspiring reflection and commitment (i.e., agency). It is equally plausible that women are prone to being reflective and who are committed to social change are especially likely to attend to spatial markers that suggest that families (e.g., children and parents) are safe and have places of play that they can enjoy. Future work investigating spatial literacy among young Black women may help to unpack why some aspects of the ecology (e.g., markers of safety) are associated with particular aspects of SPD (i.e., reflection and agency), while other markers (e.g., presence of graffiti and trash on the street) are associated with other aspects of SPD (i.e., critical action). In addressing issues of spatial literacy researchers might explore how and why some features of urban environments are read as signals of safety, as warning signs, as troubling signs of inequity, and as sufficiently worrisome that they require engagement.

Finally, the findings regarding religiosity/spirituality indicate that these cultural ideologies function in different ways for each of the indices of SPD. Subjective religiosity and spirituality were positively related to critical reflection and agency, yet subjective religiosity was negatively related to critical action. In contrast, formal organizational involvement (i.e., viewing religious services online) was negatively related to critical reflection and agency, but positively related to critical action.

That subjective spirituality and religiosity are positively related to reflection is unsurprising (Herndon, 2003; Mattis, et al., 2000; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2002). Scholars have long theorized that people who perceive themselves to be more religious and spiritual are more likely to see a commitment to justice as an index of religious/spiritual authenticity (Anzaldua, 2015, Mattis et al., 2004, 2019). That measures of subjective religiosity and spirituality were positively associated with reflection and agency, while formal religious involvement (i.e., attending religious services) was unrelated and worshipping in online settings was negatively related to these outcomes is surprising and contrary to my hypotheses. Little is known about the ways that digital spaces of faith (e.g., online religious services) inform sociopolitical development among African Americans (Mattis et al., 2019). However, the negative relation between online worship and both critical reflection and critical agency suggests that these spaces may operate in ways that run counter to Black faith traditions. Black religious institutions, particularly Black Protestant churches, and African American Muslim institutions have historically embraced ideologies of liberation and social justice (Cone, 1997). Religious leaders in these faith communities have used sacred texts as authoritative resources to critique racism and other forms of injustice, and to encourage worshippers to embrace a sense of social mission (Brown et al., 2016). Consistent with this history, studies have consistently demonstrated that among Black

Christian adults, church attendance is associated with prosocial orientation (Brown, et al., 2016). It is certainly not clear that the participants in this study necessarily attend predominately Black religious institutions. It also is not clear whether these participants attend religious institutions where religious leaders emphasize issues of justice. Future studies that examine the link between service attendance and SPD would likely benefit from the inclusion of information about the worship context (e.g., the demographic profile of the religious community, the political ideology of the institution and its leaders).

Importantly, the fact that religiosity and spirituality variables were consistently associated with all three indicators of SPD supports the tenets of SET-RS. The difference in patterns of association between various domains of religiosity and spirituality and domains of SPD highlights the need to reject simplistic arguments that suggest that religiosity and spirituality promote SPD. It is not enough for SPD theory to assert that religion and spirituality are important to SPD. These findings suggest that the theory must do more to clarify the domains of religiosity and spirituality that may promote and or undermine particular aspects of sociopolitical development. It also will be important for the theory to specify the mechanisms by which religiosity and spirituality inform the various aspects of SPD among particular identity groups.

Future efforts to untangle the ways that religiosity/spirituality inform critical reflection and agency should consider denominational features (e.g., denominational ideological orientations towards political involvement), regional church and faith attitudes (e.g., Southern churches orientations towards controversial social issues), and the demographic make-up of places of worship (e.g., racial diversity, marginalized persons in leadership roles) as these features relate to critical reflection. These aspects of faith life matter because churches and other

religious sites socialize adherents to an understanding and orientation towards the moral good and social justice itself (Mattis et al., 2000; Taylor et al., 2004).

Additionally, exploring the associations between religiosity/spirituality and SPD among more religiously/spiritually diverse samples of Black women (e.g., women from various Christian denominations, Muslim women, adherents of traditional African religions) may prove useful in understanding the links between religious ideology and SPD. Further, future work should seek to investigate the rich diversity of religious institutions Black women attend and the explicit opportunity structures they have in pursuing sociopolitical involvement through these institutions. Religious organizations have a range of philosophical orientations towards social justice (i.e., from non-involvement to explicit encouragement of critical sociopolitical action) and have varying perspectives on the role of women as public leaders. Examining the nature of these organizations and the role of women in these institutions may allow us to more fully unpack the role of these institutions in SPD.

Finally, the findings concerning critical agency could be indicative of a spirituality being a promotive aspect of agency whereas the engagement with faith systems might detract from critical agency. Future work should also investigate how women's particular understandings of God/the Divine (e.g., the belief that God expects His people to care for those who are vulnerable, or the belief that God will directly intervene in the world to achieve justice) may promote or undermine reflection, agency, and action.

It is noteworthy that religious involvement (i.e., both formal religious attendance and increased frequency of watching religious services online) was associated with greater reported engagement in critical action. Involvement in religious organizations may be a conduit for opportunities to engage action. Churches often have groups that actively engage in social justice

work and that members are often asked to join and to volunteer their time, energy and talents to advance the work of these mission groups (Gilkes, 1988; Hull, 2001; Iseke, 2011; Smith 1996). Emerging adult Black women involved in social justice organizations within religious institutions may be exposed to messages that reinforce their engagement in critical action (Junior, 2015; Payne, 1990; Williams, 1986). Exploring how religious organizations engage emerging adult Black women (and women across the life course) to become involved in, and to stay involved in, sociopolitical action will be key in the future study of SPD.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study makes a number of important contributions, however, as is the case with all studies, the work also has a number of important limitations. First, this study relied on a relatively small convenience sample of urban-residing, 18- to 30-year-old Black women. The participants in this study were generally highly educated and from well-resourced households. As such, there is certainly the possibility that our results are not reflective of perspectives and experiences of Black women as a whole. A larger and more diverse sample of women might allow us to determine the relevance of these findings for emerging adult aged Black women more generally. A larger sample may also have allowed for sufficient power to conduct analyses (e.g., SEM) that would provide a more nuanced picture of the relation between study variables.

The results of this study highlight the point that religiosity/spirituality (e.g., religious attendance, and the identification with being religious) are associated with SPD. That said, the study was limited by measures of religiosity and spirituality in multiple ways. First, the reliability coefficients for subjective religiosity and non-organizational religiosity were low. Second, subjective spirituality, and indicators of organizational religiosity were single items. These measures, while standard in the field, can be improved to more accurately reflect the lived

experiences of Black women. For example, several strands of qualitative work on Black American spirituality indicate that notions of interconnectedness are central to spirituality. Scholars should develop measures based in the literature and lived experiences of Black women so that we might be better able to capture the relations between religiosity/spirituality and SPD. Future work might more thoroughly investigate aspects religiosity/spirituality (e.g., denominational identity, religious and spiritual efficacy) as they relate to measures of SPD.

This study supports the notion that, as theorized in SET-RS Urban, people's experiences of the places where they live and work, and their religiosity and spirituality are related to the SPD of emerging adult Black women. That said, these components were related in a complex and somewhat surprising ways. Place, in particular urban structural arrangements related to safety, were important in critical reflection and agency. Perceptions of social disorder and disinvestment (e.g., trash on the ground, graffiti) were associated with sociopolitical action. The experience of place may be overlooked as an obvious contributor to the critical reflection and agency of Black women, particularly because place is so commonly undertheorized in psychology research. Although these understandings of the relations between perceptions of urban structural arrangements and SPD contribute to the literature, this operationalization of place is limited. The measures in this study do not capture the dynamism, understanding of community change, or the full range of environmental risks and affordances common in urban settings (Mattis et al., 2019). Future work should 1) qualitatively explore the ways that urban residents define and understand what makes a place an asset or or a source of risk, and 2) develop measures of urban place that better capture residents' understandings. Overall, however, these findings help to illuminate the point that everyday perceptions of place and religious and spiritual ideologies and practices are jointly related to young Black women's sociopolitical

analyses, their commitments to change, and their efficacious efforts to transform the world into a more just place.

Table 1. Intercorrelations of key study variables (n=222)

Variables	Critical reflection	Critical agency	Critical Action
1. Age	-.344**	-.381**	.291**
2. Educational level	-.203**	-.192**	0.062
3. Household income	.166**	.187**	0.1
4. Safe places where children can play after school.	.223**	.295**	-.133*
5. It is safe to walk alone at night	-0.088	-0.111	0.061
6. Parks to play, jog, or have a good time	.209**	.173**	-.143*
7. Common to see graffiti on walls/trash	-0.024	-0.05	.167**
8. Families feel safe walking/ children play on the streets	.165**	0.093	-.135*
9. Subjective religiosity	.436**	.420**	-0.089
10. Non-organizational religiosity	-0.069	0.038	.172**
11. Subjective spirituality	-.227**	-.205**	.247**
12. Frequency of religious service attendance	.199**	.308**	-0.118
13. Frequency of viewing online religious services	0.107	.191**	-0.008

*$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$

Table 2. Scale inter-item correlations (n=222)

Variables	Inter-Item Correlations
1. Subjective religiosity	.378
2. Non-organizational religiosity	.379
3. Critical reflection	.544
4. Critical agency	.421
5. Critical action	.417

Table 3. Regression model predicting critical reflection (n=222)

	Block 1			*Block 2*			Block 3		
Variables	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*
1. Age	-0.465***	0.018	-7.602	-0.422***	0.018	-6.796	-0.311***	0.018	-5.053
2. Educational level	0.273***	0.073	4.456	0.234***	0.071	3.879	0.193***	0.066	3.47
3. Household income	-0.161**	0.034	-2.688	-0.19***	0.033	-3.231	-0.143**	0.03	-2.675
4. Safe places where children can play after school				0.161*	0.061	2.496	0.117*	0.057	1.952
5. It is safe to walk alone at night				-0.081	0.06	-1.296	-0.040	0.054	-0.703
6. Parks to play, jog, or have a good time				0.142*	0.065	2.231	0.084	0.059	1.438
7. Common to see graffiti on walls/trash				0.069	0.053	1.112	0.090	0.049	1.582
8. Families feel safe walking/ children play on the streets				0.096	0.061	1.568	0.125*	0.057	2.208
9. Subjective religiosity							0.126	0.089	1.734
10. Non-organizational religiosity							-0.009	0.094	-0.114
11. Subjective spirituality							0.366***	0.062	5.879
12. Frequency of religious service attendance							-.114	0.058	-1.649
13. Frequency of viewing online religious services							-0.157*	0.056	-2.275

$p \leq .05$, $^{**}p \leq .01$, $^{**}p \leq .001$

Table 4. Regression model predicting critical agency (n=222)

	Block 1			*Block 2*			Block 3		
Variables	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*
1. Age	-0.457***	0.013	-7.483	-0.419***	0.013	-6.799	-0.327***	0.013	-5.299
2. Educational level	0.327***	0.053	5.345	0.285***	0.052	4.742	0.254**	0.048	4.555
3. Household income	-0.139*	0.025	-2.319	-0.147*	0.024	-2.524	-0.09	0.022	-1.678
4. Safe places where children can play after school				0.267***	0.044	4.158	0.235***	0.042	3.913
5. It is safe to walk alone at night				-0.11	0.043	-1.756	-0.081	0.04	-1.418
6. Parks to play, jog, or have a good time				0.049	0.047	0.776	0.001	0.044	0.024
7. Common to see graffiti on walls/trash				-0.008	0.039	-0.135	0.003	0.036	0.057
8. Families feel safe walking/ children play on the streets				-0.002	0.044	-0.031	0.009	0.041	0.163
9. Subjective religiosity							0.149*	0.065	2.04
10. Non-organizational religiosity							0.022	0.069	0.29
11. Subjective spirituality							0.287***	0.045	4.597
12. Frequency of religious service attendance							0.029	0.043	0.422
13. Frequency of viewing online religious services							-0.203**	0.041	-2.925

$p \leq .05$, $^{**}p \leq .01$, $^{**}p \leq .001$

Table 5. Regression model predicting critical action (n=222)

	Block 1			*Block 2*			Block 3		
Variables	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*	β	*SE*(*B*)	*t*
1. Age	0.313***	0.015	4.651	0.248***	0.016	3.571	0.138	0.017	1.859
2. Educational level	0.007	0.061	0.109	0.048	0.061	0.71	0.09	0.06	1.344
3. Household income	-0.011	0.028	-0.164	0.002	0.028	0.032	-0.022	0.028	-0.336
4. Safe places where children can play after school				-0.104	0.052	-1.439	-0.05	0.052	-0.699
5. It is safe to walk alone at night				0.128	0.051	1.813	0.103	0.05	1.499
6. Parks to play, jog, or have a good time				-0.054	0.055	-0.758	-0.039	0.054	-0.559
7. Common to see graffiti on walls/trash				0.148*	0.045	2.134	0.104	0.045	1.525
8. Families feel safe walking/ children play on the streets				-0.06	0.052	-0.877	-0.108	0.052	-1.587
9. Subjective religiosity							-0.262**	0.081	-2.987
10. Non-organizational religiosity							-0.092	0.086	-1.005
11. Subjective spirituality							-0.008	0.056	-0.106
12. Frequency of religious service attendance							0.248**	0.053	2.993
13. Frequency of viewing online religious services							0.175*	0.051	2.104

$p \leq .05$, $^{**}p \leq .01$, $^{**}p \leq .001$

Chapter 3 - Study 2:
The Spiritual is Political: Religiosity and Spirituality in Black Emerging Adult women's Everyday Manifestations of Sociopolitical Development.

"*Spirituality is so central to scholarship on women's culture and women's liberation that we can't discuss liberation or empowerment for women without also discussing women's spirituality."* **Dilla Buckner as cited in Frederick (2003)**

Black emerging American women have a long history of individual and communal resistance and protest (Anyiwo et al., 2020; Ginwright, 2010; Quashie, 2012). This sociopolitical action is rooted in analyzing and dismantling unjust social conditions including conditions that are rooted in racist, sexist, and classist state-sanctioned violence (Collins, 2000; 2009; Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Edwards, 2017; Payne, 1991; Watts et al., 1999; Watts, et al, 2011). Although Black emerging adult women have often been at the forefront of efforts to address injustice (e.g., Fernandez et al., 2018), and research has demonstrated that religiosity/spirituality are powerful motivators of activism in Black communities (Payne, 1990; Raboteau, 2004; Smith, 1996), social scientists interested in sociopolitical development (SPD) have not often investigated how religiosity and spirituality promote SPD for Black women generally, and emerging adult Black women in particular (Voisin et al., 2016). Indeed, extant research on SPD has often centered boys (e.g., Smith & Hope, 2020) and adolescents (e.g., Diemer 2006; 2011). Further, studies of SPD rarely focus on religiosity/spirituality. The result is that the literature on SPD lacks depth in understanding how Black women develop and enact their sociopolitical sensibilities, and how religiosity/spirituality may contribute to this domain of development (Anyiwo et al., 2018). The present study responds to calls to take a more intersectional approach to the study of sociopolitical development (Carmen et al., 2015). Because of a broader focus on generalization

and a specific focus on Black boys and men the ways that intersecting systems of oppression influence and impact the lived experiences of Black women's SPD is understudied. Further, this work responds to calls for greater attention to the role of religiosity/spirituality in SPD (Baker & Brookins 2014; Edwards, 2017; Fernandez et al., 2018; Jemal, 2017). This study's focus on emerging adult Black women religiosity/spiritualty also responds to calls to "center women's voices to construct a more fully inclusive and vision of justice" (Edwards, 2017, p.3).

Scholars have long made connections between religion and sociopolitical life and behavior (e.g., DuBois, 1899/1996; Durkheim, 1915; Taylor et al., 1999). SPD theory explicitly ties the tenets of liberation theologies to manifestations of a religiosity/spirituality that aim for "existential freedom [that] empower[s] people to fight for social and political freedom" (Watts et al., 1999, p.260). In particular, Black American life and efforts to remedy oppression are intertwined with religion/spirituality (Brown, 1953; Crawford, 1990; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Luckett, 2019; Payne, 1990; Smith, 1996). In the era of chattel slavery, Negro spirituals served to cast a vision of eventual freedom (Brown, 1953), and Black people used theology to launch subtle as well as explicit critiques of injustice (Raboteau, 2004; Smith, 1996). Black religious institutions in the post-emancipation and Civil Rights eras were pivotal in organizing and supporting social justice movements (Crawford, 1990; Smith, 1996; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Payne, 1990). Black women, in their roles as priestess, prayer leaders, and through prominent non-pastoral roles in Black religious institutions, have played particularly powerful roles in shaping and promoting social justice work in the US (Gilkes, 1993). Black women, and particularly emerging adult Black women, have used their connection with the Divine as a site from which to reflect on oppressive systems and promote efficacy and action against injustice in everyday life (Collins, 2009; Cooper, 1892; Dillard, 2000; Gayle, 2011; Riggs, 1997; Mattis,

2002; Payne, 1990; Starks & Hughey, 2003). Further, Black women have used spirituality to lead in higher education institutions (Brown-McManus, 2012), lead religious institutions and planted churches (Danielson, 2021; Gilkes, 1993) and have been underrecognized leaders in political organizing and sociopolitical action (Gayle, 2011; Payne, 1999) while forefronting their religio-spiritual understanding of the world.

Literature Review

To begin, religiosity and spirituality are two important and interrelated concepts of faith life in Black American communities (Bowen-Reid & Smalls, 2004; Mattis & Jagers, 2001; Taylor et al., 2004; Taylor et al., 2014). Further, we know that Black women, including emerging adult Black women, report higher levels of religious activity their Black male and non-Black female counterparts on measures of religiosity/spirituality (Taylor et al., 2005). Additionally, Black emerging adult women are more likely to be religiously involved (e.g., attending prayer groups and religious services) and more likely to define themselves as spiritual than their peers' (Hope et al., 2019; Stewart, 2009; Taliaferro et al., 2009). Before moving forward, it is important to ground this work in common definitions. Spirituality refers to the ways that individuals seek to make meaning of the visible and invisible, engage in a quest for purpose in the world, and experience the interconnectedness of themselves with others and nature (Chickering et al., 2015; Mattis, 2002). In contrast, religiosity refers to the affiliation with and adherence to established beliefs and practices in relation to a transcendent power particularly a god or system of gods (Chickering et al., 2015; Mattis, 2002). These definitions of spirituality and religiosity guide my work, however, I use the convention of "religiosity/spirituality" when necessary to reflect the interplay between these concepts in everyday life.

Religiosity/spirituality, and Black American Life

The functions of religiosity/spirituality in the everyday lives of Black American adults have been copiously studied. However, empirical research on religiosity/spirituality among Black emerging adult women is sparse. Among Black adults generally, religiosity/spirituality informs coping (Constantine et al., 2002; Watt, 2003) and is positively correlated with optimism, hope, positive identity development, purpose, persistence, coping, resistance, and resilience (Dancy, 2010; Herndon, 2003; Mattis, 2000; Mattis et al., 2003; 2004; McGuire, 2017). Mattis (2002) found that religiosity/spirituality helped Black women to confront and cope with gendered and raced oppressions while inspiring a sense of purpose.

However, research demonstrates that, for Black emerging adult women, religiosity/spirituality is associated with a range of positive developmental outcomes—which is also the case for their older counterparts. In particular, religiosity/spirituality helps women to navigate personal and academic challenges associated with collegiate environments (Cannon & Morton, 2015; Constantine et al., 2006; Patton & McClure, 2009). Although much of the research on the role of religiosity/spirituality in the lives of Black women has centered on coping, the role of religiosity/spirituality in shaping individual thoughts and actions as well as collective social movements (e.g., Civil Rights Movement), particularly among Black women in the United States, is also well documented (Ackelsberg, 1998; Crawford, 1990; Faver, 2001; Frederick, 2001; Smith, 1996; Szymanski, 2012).

Religiosity/spirituality, and Individual and Communal Resistance

Black women have a long history of individual and collective sociopolitical action (Collins, 2000; 2009) where they have employed a range of overt and subversive acts, direct actions, and participation in "traditional" sociopolitical acts (e.g., voting, writing congress

people, etc.) in efforts to change racist institutions (Barnes, 2006). In some scholarship, these efforts are linked to cultural ideologies of religiosity and spirituality (Smith, 1996). However, the pathways and mechanisms through which religiosity/spirituality influence activism remain a rich ground for research. Presently, scholars have studied and or theorized various mechanisms by which religiosity/spirituality informs sociopolitical life and behavior particularly in Black communities. First, religious institutions provide the institutional and material resources (e.g., financial resources, networks, building to use) that support social protest and organizing (Mattis & Jagers, 2001).

A second pathway through which religiosity/spirituality is theorized to inform activism is through is influence on meaning-making. Religiosity/spirituality helps marginalized peoples to make meaning of social justice and change work (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2000, 2002; Watts et al., 1999; Welch, 1999). That is, spirituality helps women to make meaning by interpreting their experiences as they engage in social justice work, attach value to these experiences, and enable more complex understandings of psychological and social realities and their own thoughts. Feminist scholars have also posited that spirituality helps women to make meaning of their experiences with social justice and change work in community through driving an engagement in relationships that encourage mutuality, growth, reflection, and transformation (Bradely et al., 2007; Tisdell, 1998, 2000).

Third, religiosity/spirituality are presumed to inform activism and social change efforts through its role in inspiring a sense of obligation to disrupt injustice and protect the most marginalized (Daloz et al.,1996; Lemer, 2000; Yasuno, 2004). Generally, Black American traditions of religiosity/spirituality espouse an interconnectedness between humanity and the Divine that promotes peoples' ability to imagine and work towards Black liberation (Banks-

Wallace & Parks, 2004; Baxter et al., 2019; Lewis, 2008; Lewis et al., 2007; Mattis, 2000). Indeed, Cone (1997) notes that "the God of biblical faith and black religion is best known as the Liberator of the oppressed from bondage" (p. ix). Black liberation theologies frame a Christian God as one who is primarily concerned with the poor and most marginalized. This theology strives to make the Christian Gospel relevant to the particular historical and present experience of Black American life. Relatedly, Black womanist scholars have also pointed to the faith lives of Black women as laden with a sense of responsibility to share resources and help others in striving towards justice (Junior, 2015).

Fourth, feminist and Black womanist scholars theorize that the relational aspect of religiosity/spirituality (i.e., the interconnectedness and communal aspects of religiosity/spirituality) may be a key mechanism in the link between religiosity/spirituality and activism (Gilkes, 1993, 2001; hooks, 2000; Mattis, 2002). Consistent with this view, Black religious traditions historically have built on this relational epistemology by espousing central values of "communalism, the welfare of the collectivity, and integral relation of the spiritual and the material, and the moral obligation to pursue social-political concretization of the theological principles of equality, justice, and inclusiveness" (Sawyer, 2001, p.67). Ultimately, it because of an understanding of spiritually and the interconnectedness therein that we come to critical consciousness in its highest form—love (Anzaldua, 2015; Wallace, 2020). Love spurs us on to long-term commitments to justice in the world.

Although there are many established and theorized links between religion and sociopolitical engagement particularly for Black women, questions remain about the mechanisms underlying this relationship (Glazier, 2015; Grayman-Simpson & Mattis, 2012). This study uses

qualitative research approach to explore the associations between spirituality/religiosity and SPD among Black emerging adult aged women.

Current Study

This dissertation study advances current research on SPD by shedding light on how religiosity/spirituality informs Black emerging adult women's reflections, agency, and actions as they seek to create more just worlds. In this study I ask, "How, if at all, does the religiosity/spirituality of Black emerging adult women influence their sociopolitical development?" This larger question subsumes two questions. First, how do Black emerging adult women define religiosity/spirituality? Second, how do Black emerging adult women understand and describe the ties between their religiosity/spirituality and the ways that they think about and enact social justice?

Method

This study uses a qualitative research approach to explore the associations between religiosity/spirituality, identity, and SPD among emerging adult Black women. In particular, this study is guided by a thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) adapted with consensual qualitative research techniques (Hill et al., 2005) that that centers the lived experiences of Black merging adult women college participants. This inquiry demands that I use a methodology cognizant of the realities participants encounter in their everyday lives as Black women. In an effort to attend to the ways that spirituality, identity, and SPD manifest in the lives of Black emerging adult women, I anchor this study in a Black Feminist epistemology (BFE) that guides the adapted thematic analysis.

BFE is a critical epistemological frame that highlights the importance of story-telling/narrative in women's ways of knowing. Generally, critical epistemologies shift "the locus

of power in the research process by situating subjects as knowers" (Pillow, 2006, p.186). BFE centers the everyday experience, knowledge, resistance, and inherent value of Black women (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1989; Wingfield, 2015). Taking on a BFE frame helps us to understand the lived experiences (e.g., the joys, friendships, traumas) of Black women from their own perspectives (Okello, 2018; Wingfield, 2015). Using BFE will allow me to examine how power operates throughout all aspects of the research (e.g., construction of the research question, the interview and knowledge co-construction process, analysis, and interpretation). Further this epistemology allows for an examination of how participants' subjective understandings and experiences of power relationships shape their thinking about and response to privilege and oppression (Wingfield, 2015). This study explores how Black emerging adult women describe (i.e., tell the story of) the association between religiosity/spirituality, and social justice awareness and action (i.e., change work). This study explores Black emerging adult women's' reflections on the relations between their spirituality/religiosity, and sociopolitical awareness and action. I choose a BFE guided adapted thematic analysis to guide my effort to critically examine how Black emerging adult women activists describe the association between religiosity/spirituality, and social justice and change work. Importantly, my own narrative colors how I do this work.

Positionality[6]

Study Participants and Setting

Participants in this study were a subsample of Black emerging adult college women who participated in a larger study of women of color activists. Participants in the larger study were women of color recruited from a community-based organization that cultivates the leadership

[6] See positionality statement.

skills of women engaged in activist/social justice work. In the larger study, 14 emerging adult women of color activist college students were recruited and interviewed over Zoom. The data for this study were drawn from the six emerging adult college women in the study who identified as Black women. The majority of participants identified as Black and African American with one participant describing herself as a second-generation Nigerian immigrant. Participants in the subsample were all undergraduate students and ranged in age from 18 to 23 years old. All women in the subsample reported that spirituality and/or religion were important to them, and all identified as active participants in social justice-oriented efforts. Participant demographic information for this subsample is represented in Table 5.

Data Collection

Participants were interviewed by a research team consisting of four Black women PhD students and one Black woman faculty member. Using a semi-structured protocol, the research team asked participants questions that focused on religiosity/ spirituality, identity, SPD and leadership. Questions included, "If you think of yourself as a religious or spiritual person, did your religiosity or spirituality motivate you to do the work that you did in [the community-based organization]? If so, how?" While some questions explicitly asked about religiosity and spirituality, other questions that did not center on these topics elicited responses related to spirituality and justice (see Appendix III). Regardless of whether they appeared in the context of the interviews, all references to religiosity and spirituality were coded. These interviews lasted about 90-120 minutes. Participants were compensated $25 upon completion of the interview.

Data Analysis

All interviews were conducted on Zoom and were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription service. After verbatim transcription, I conducted the data analysis with a team of

six undergraduate women at the University of Michigan. The research team represented an array of racial identities (Black, Asian, White), nationalities (US citizen, Greek, Jamaican American, Korean American), and genders (cisgender women and one cisgender man). We used an adapted thematic analysis to guide us in a systematic identification and organization of themes across the data. Generally, thematic analysis consists of familiarizing oneself with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and then producing the report (Braun and Clark, 2006). My research team and I followed these steps, but added 1) a consensual qualitative approach through a consensus approach to coding, and 2) the use of auditors (Hill et al., 2005) in order to interrupt groupthink, balance my own power as the research lead, and ensure credibility.

Before we began our analysis, all team members attended a thematic analysis training led by a senior scholar with expertise in thematic analysis. We started our analysis by reading through each transcript while listening to the interview audio to correct errors and familiarize ourselves with the data. As we read, the team identified meaningful units (i.e., chunks), or "the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself – that is… interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345). These chunks were the focus of the coding process and every chunk was agreed upon by consensus.

We used an iterative open-coding procedure to content analyze the verbatim transcripts, yet we found the need for a coding process that was both inductive and deductive. We identified propositions related to SPD theory in deductive analysis, but also allowed room for emergent ideas that were outside of the theoretically relayed codes we had developed (Fereday, & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). As a result, we re-started by edge or open coding half of the interviews in

weekly meetings. Once we completed half of the transcripts, we all individually made our initial coding lists. Once this was completed, we met and consolidated these codes into a codebook with definitions and inclusion and exclusion criteria by consensus. This process took several meetings.

After this process I transferred all transcripts to Delve, a qualitative research tool. With Delve we organized and finalized codes, to developed and maintained the codebook, and used it to keep a running record of the evolution of themes. The codebook and a sample transcript with codes applied to the chunks in the transcript was submitted to an auditor to judge the fidelity of the coding system (i.e., the codes captured the essence of the raw data), the definitions of the codes, and the application of codes to the narratives. After auditor feedback, we focused on iterative readings of the interviews with the analytic questions in mind. The auditor and I met one on one and I relayed this information to the team. From there we collapsed, redefined, and made new codes in the codebook in line with the feedback.

We met weekly to discuss our coding of the interviews and came to consensus on every coding application. Once on all transcripts were coded we developed thematic maps to understand the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes. We used Mural, a visualization software, to develop moveable maps that helped to organize the codes in thematic groups. After the data was coded, the research team engaged in a series of discussion and memoing in the effort to organize codes into themes that answer the overall research question and analytical questions. Importantly, representing our data in different ways was key to our final understanding of the findings. After the initial thematic development, we asked “does this map identify the broad issues in the data?” and “how does this map help us answer the research question?” After these deliberations, again by consensus, we submitted our

coding maps to an auditor for them to check. Once the coding map was finalized, I developed final patterns in the codes and submitted these to the larger team for evaluation. This process resulted in a set of four major themes and 21 codes.

Validity and Trustworthiness

We incorporated aspects of consensual qualitative research (CQR) in order to ensure robust data analysis, transparency, and rich findings. In CQR investigators use semi-structured interviews and a diverse set of judges/coders with multiple perspectives in data analysis, who work towards consensus to make meaning of the data (Hill et al., 2005). This process also uses at least one auditor (someone on the research team uninvolved in coding) to check the work of the team doing the bulk of analysis and cross-analyses in the data analysis. In all steps of these analyses, the research team memoed about how our identities and opinions may be contributing to our collective analyses as a means of ongoing reflexivity (Rodriguez, 2010). Additionally, we engaged in a reflexive debriefing process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) where we meet weekly to discuss reactions to transcripts, emerging ideas, potential biases, and problems encountered while codes are being generated, negotiated, and regenerated. Lastly, in this study we provide nuanced and rich descriptions (Golafshani, 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of the findings to ensure a representation of the data that is emblematic of participant voices.

Results

The overall research question guiding this study is: How, if at all, does the religiosity/spirituality of Black emerging adult women influence their sociopolitical development?" To guide the analysis, I asked two analytical questions derived from this overall question. First, how do Black emerging adult women define religiosity/spirituality? The second analytical question posed in this study is: how do Black emerging adult women understand the

ties between their religiosity/spirituality and the ways that they think about and enact social justice? Here I present thematic findings related to both questions, but I will present for each theme beginning with exemplar quotes for the first research question.

RQ1: How do Black emerging adult women define religiosity/spirituality?

In defining religiosity/spirituality, participants implicitly addressed several key questions: How are religiosity and spiritaulity related to each other?; What does religiosity mean?; What does spirituality mean?; How do religiosity and spirituality function? And finally, who influences religous/spiritual development? These implicit questions served to ground me as I extracted themes. The results of this question center on three themes about the how participants define religiosity and spirituality: 1) the evolving relationship between religion and spirituality, 2) religion is God and institutional commitment, and 3) spirituality is the sacred and purpose-filled connection.

The Evolving Relationship Between Religiosity and Spirituality

In defining the religiosity/spirituality participants often first noted what they thought was the relationship between religiosity and spirituality. These observations were not always clear delineations, but more often a nuanced understanding of this relationship. For example, Alma said: “I don’t consider myself religious, I think I consider myself spiritual.” When Busayo was describing her religiosity/spirituality she said “I do consider myself a spiritual person” even though later in the interview she spoke at length about the ways her church was influential in her social justice work. Austen continued this framing and highlighted one more important finding. When describing her religiosity/spirituality she said that “I’m a very religious, I mean, spiritual person.” There was often a hesitancy and a pause in defining what these terms were for them. Other participants also blended their understanding of spirituality and religion. Rosa said that “I

do believe, you know, I am Christian, I guess you can call it that, but more so it's about a spiritual[ity]. And while Sassi no longer identified as a religious person she understood religious tenets while making her spirituality her own. She said that she was "more spiritual than religious, just because of the way I understood religion growing up, yet I think about like spirituality that everything is ever always gonna be evolving." Participants in the study highlighted a connection between religiosity/spirituality that they were in the process of understanding, molding, and in the process of changing. What this allowed them to do was somewhat remove spirituality from organizational and familial origins and make into something more personal while carrying some tenets from religion and family into new, evolving, and personally curated identities.

Religion is God and Institutional Commitment

In defining religion, participants saw religion as 1) a meaning making system with an identification with God as creator of world and 2) religious identity and beliefs are shaped by family and enacted when convenient. In defining the bounds of her religiosity/spirituality, Spring made a connection between religiosity/spirituality and family. She said, "I'm not religious in the sense that I attend church. I didn't, I didn't grow up in church…However, my family identifies as Christian and in a lot of ways typically I identify with God, and God as the creator of this whole world. Importantly, Spring also highlighted the fact that family was important to the way that she viewed her religiosity/spirituality. Participants often reflected that their understanding of religiosity/spirituality had genesis in their families' orientation to religiosity/spirituality, but for many participants this initial frame shifted. Indeed, participants noted that this genesis was not always stable. Sassi noted, "I grew up with a religion in my house, but it was always like when it was convenient."

Spirituality is the Sacred and Purpose-filled Connection

In defining spirituality, participants offered several components integral to their understanding of spirituality. Specifically, spirituality was 1) a positive connection to others, God, higher consciousness, and the earth; 2) connected to a sense of purpose; and 3) connected to breath and providing stress signals allowing the navigation challenges.

First, participants noted that, for them, spirituality served to help connect them to others. When Rosa was delineating between her religiosity and spirituality she clarified her spirituality as "a connection with the earth and with, you know, the elements and with one another, and a higher sort of consciousness and a higher sense of vibration" Rosa's definition of her religiosity/spirituality represented the syncretic (i.e., the fusion of religio-spiritual tenets) and personal ways that participants thought through their understanding of spirituality and the Divine. After her earlier pause, Austen was pressed to further identify what religiosity/spirituality means. She said, "I think that [spirituality], I think that means that I believe in a divine and ancestral guidance, um, and all that comes with that." Here, Austen highlighted a key part of the definition of spirituality for participants. There was a relational component to women's definitions of spirituality. Participants spoke about spirituality as a relationship and connection to the Divine or the earth. Further, the being or beings on the other side of that relationship were always guiding and/or looking out for the good of participants.

Second, spirituality was also connected to a sense of purpose. Spring highlighted that purpose was key in the definition of her religiosity/spirituality. When describing what religiosity/spirituality mean for her she said "we all have a purpose…I definitely believe in a higher power, and that I definitely believe that I have purpose on this Earth and that I'm still trying to figure out, or listen to." This purpose helped to make meaning of the everyday

circumstances they faced and locate themselves as a part of a larger existential narrative that was guided by a Divine and powerful outside, but known, presence. Across the interviews, participants noted that religiosity/spirituality served to ground them and give them purpose despite any obstacles.

Next, and in particular for Sassi, spirituality was also connected to helping recognize and navigate stress. In defining spirituality Sassi stated:

> I think that it's tied, this is gonna maybe sound cliché, I don't know, but I think it's tied to like the way that you breathe. Like I think it, that there's, I feel like there's times when it, depending on what's going on like, where like maybe like you feel like something like is actually like on, like making it harder for you to breathe. Like, and being able to like notice when that's happening.

For Sassi, spirituality was a deeply personal and embodied experience. Spirituality helped her to negotiate her life and the work she was doing by providing signals of stress and helping her to move through the world. She continued to expound on this component of spirituality by saying:

> That might, I don't know, be spiritual or not, but I think that I always, even in other ways, like, to think, like when I realize that like something is giving me a lot of anxiety, but whatever it may be, like I think about how much I'm like putting into it, like how much of my time and like brain power I'm like putting into this like thing that's causing me like so much anxiety. Then I'm like, all right, like how do I reassess and step away from it and fix it? And like, and the way that you like interact with spirituality, at least in my understanding, is like being able to step away from all of it and be all right, like here are the things that I want to like give me pressure feelings, and I don't want any pressure.

> How do I like navigate my body, so that these things aren't like draining my person, and I'm putting energy back into myself and the things I actually care about.

Sassi was able to use spirituality as an internal resource in navigating the pressures surrounding her activism and then reassess in order to move her work forward.

In sum, participants defined religiosity/spirituality in ways that were reflective of not only their experiences, but also how they saw religiosity/spirituality as connected with the world at large. Religiosity/spirituality was defined as having several facets (e.g., purpose, as a grounding principle in every situation despite the ways that religiosity/spirituality changed across their lives, helping to navigate stress as an embodied experience). Further, participant familial relationships were also important to the development of these understandings in that there was often a genesis of religiosity/spirituality in family, but the meanings of religiosity/spirituality for participants changed over time. Finally, these meanings of religiosity/spirituality for participants were nuanced and interdependent. Although participants chose to highlight more of what spiritualty meant for them, these women retained an attachment to religion that was a part of their definition of religiosity/spirituality.

RQ 2: How do Black emerging adult women understand the ties between their religiosity/spirituality and the ways that they think about and enact social justice?

Three themes emerged from the analysis of the women's interviews regarding the relationship between religiosity/spirituality and the ways that they think about and enact justice. These themes were: 1) religiosity/spirituality as motivational and efficacious in enacting social justice; 2) spirituality, interconnectedness, and collective change in social justice; 3) religiosity/spirituality, intrapersonal change and activism.

Religiosity/Spirituality as Motivational and Efficacious in Enacting Social Justice

Participants described religiosity/spirituality as foundational and motivating in their work, but also as a source of efficacy in times of stress and when their aims seem less than likely to succeed. In speaking about spirituality and her activist work, Alma said that "If I were to say like anything drove me that was like a higher power, it was like more so believing that like everything, like kind of the universe, everything happens for a reason." Rosa concurred and said that she "was moved by… a higher sort of consciousness and a higher sense of vibration" to pursue her activist work. Busayo helped to provide some nuance when she said that "I wouldn't say it was like because of my, my religion that I was like, 'I have to do this work.' But I feel like it definitely, it did keep me on track. As, I, I, it did help motivate me throughout the process." For participants, religiosity/spirituality served to motivate them towards more activist oriented work.

Participants also relayed that religiosity/spirituality served as a source of efficacy in their social justice work. In speaking about her repeated striving on an activist project involving young people and the criminal justice system Spring said, "I'm determined to make it work... I don't force things. If the Lord really wants to do this, He's gonna make it happen." After her success with her program, she spoke about what God did in these moments:

> Every month I was like, "Oh my God, I can't, I can't do it. I can't, I can't make a budget." And I was, I was really stressed, I was so ready to give back all the money and not do the project ... I felt it was time to admit I can't do this, but it got, it got done. It got done, and it wasn't all me.

Spring's belief that her project was a God-inspired idea allowed her to keep trying, and she credited God with her eventual success. Busayo shared a similar experience in her own activist

work and seeking resources. She spoke about trying to find money and suddenly encountering willing sponsors:

> Those are definitely things where I was like, “I see you, God!” [I’d be] in the middle of a street or something like that. I felt like those are definitely times where I felt ... my spirituality was working overtime. It was like [God said], “We're gonna make this happen.” And, I was like, “Cool, you know.” [God said] “I'm on your side. Literally. So, do what you wanna do.”

Participants were able validate the presence of the Divine in their justice work and the Divine in themselves as a part of a larger narrative of good.

Finally, participants spoke about the personal and institutional resources that came along with religiosity/spirituality and their influence in making social justice work more possible. For example, Busayo used her congregation and her pastor as key institutional resources in recruiting participants for a workshop she was organizing.

> I had to just ask for help and one of the places I went to was church. Kinda just got up one Sunday morning and I was like, ‘Hey everyone.’ ‘If you wanna send your kids to my workshop, it's happening on Saturday. And my pastor even helped me recruit some people, which was pretty cool.

Overall, religiosity was foundational to participants activist work and, in particular, motivating their action. Relatedly, religiosity/spirituality increased their efficacy through providing participants internal and external resources as they moved forward in enacting social justice.

Spirituality, Interconnectedness, and Collective Change in Social Justice

As participants spoke about their activist work, they often referred to connection and community as sites for energizing and catalyzing the link between sacredness/spirituality and

justice. Rosa spoke about this connection. She said, “you have to have a sense of compassion and love and depth for your community to want to do those things. It doesn't necessarily mean that what I call God is what you call God, but…we work it out.” As Rosa spoke about her religiosity/spirituality she spoke about the interconnectedness and compassion that stemmed from her spirituality. This, in turn, made her want to change her community alongside other people. She referred to this change as “a level of consciousness and opening of sort of your understanding of the way the world works, and [in particular] the way that women and women identifying people walk into the world.” Spirituality was a means of connection to issues of justice beyond the self. Sassi, spoke about this interconnectedness as a part of something larger:

> Fundamentally I think I believe that if people truly know better they will do better. If they really understand the, the effects that the things they're doing have on people's lives, they won't intentionally harm people if they understand the, like, the entirety of it.

Sassi emphasized that all actions are interconnected and, if people appreciated the interconnections they would act in the service of good. Austen, when speaking about the fundamental beliefs of her spirituality, said, “I’m a part of anyone who I'm in any sort of relation with. You have to care about something bigger than yourself, if you don't, then that's not going to work.”

Relatedly, many of the participants spoke about the fact that they met together to discuss ideas, strategies, and ways to move forward and felt a spiritual interconnectedness that spurred them on in their social justice work. Spring described one occasion that highlighted the links between spirituality, the sense of interconnectedness, and collective change. She said that these strategy meetings helped everyone to,

> calm down and to find energy where we are, and there was a lot of spirituality going on, a lot of people who just believed energy around us and the way we interact with it, and learning how that plays a role in our projects…I didn't connect with spirituality until I was with them.

These meetings were a source of energy as participants moved forward in their own activist projects. Further, these meetings were a place participants felt spirituality and began to understand the role it played in their own projects and the role spirituality played in the collective pursuit of justice.

Participants characterized this spiritual connection and energy as a sisterhood. Busayo noted that these meetings were "literally filled with community and just sisterhood." Rosa also described these meetings as "a deep sisterhood and connection that you're making with these young women." She continued and said that in this sisterhood participants were able to "spend time together and really bond with one another… them being able to teach me about things that they cared about and that mattered to them and that mattered to the community was also nice." Finally, Sassi often reflected on these experiences with her fellow woman of color activists. In one example she reflected on her experiences with them and her spirituality and said:

> I [am] more spiritual than religious… but I think that like it, being able to be part of a community that like was so invested in doing this hard work, while also still being people, doing their school, and whatever it is they have to do with their life reignited hope in me to be like, 'all right, there's a way for you to have capacity to do all of these different things if you have a space to refuel them.'

These participants helped each other to question, explore, see, learn, hope, and do and through this they collectively pursued justice work. These gatherings were in and of themselves spiritual

experiences that allowed a more collective approach to critical action and increased the belief that the actions would happen. In other words, these meetings were a kind of experience where spirituality increased critical efficacy through spiritual interconnectedness and collective actions towards change. Furthermore, for many of these women, the interconnectedness was felt especially powerfully in their relationships with other women in the organization. These relationships were grounded in an intangible sense of understanding that came from the shared experience of women involved in struggle work. The relationships were rooted in shared values (e.g., a shared belief in the humanity of Black people), a shared commitment to doing the work of social justice, and a shared history of activism. The relationships were rooted in love, compassion, reciprocal obligation, trust, and respect. And these values, commitments, and sensibilities felt so powerfully sacred, expansive, and transcendent that they fueled the sense that these women were spiritual family. This familial sensibility reminded women that they were not alone in the struggle, reminded them of the meaningfulness of their sacrifice, and encouraged women to redouble their efforts to create change.

Religiosity/Spirituality, Intrapersonal Change and Activism

Finally, participants often remarked that their understanding of religiosity and spirituality changed over time and that this change was associated with a change in how they utilized spirituality in their activism. Participants often mentioned the college context as one where relationships helped them to explore who they were and what they believed regarding religiosity/spiritualty. Spring, in particular, spoke about the ways that her college friends helped change her perspective and her religious/spiritual identity. She said,

> I didn't know they were such strong Christians. We were just friends, you know, they never talked about church and how they grow up. It wasn't until I really got to know them

> and I saw like how much they actually prayed and studied the Bible. I was like, "Wow, how do you— You, you lived this life when we go party and stuff, but...you have a strong relationship with God. How are you— what is that like? What does that mean to you?" I think as I was growing up I definitely believed in God, but I didn't have a relationship with him because I just didn't know what that looked like. So, in college I learned a lot about that with my friends and then started to develop my own relationship with God.

Participants noted that change in their religious and spiritual identities, and comfort with that change, helped them to move forward in their social justice work.

Sassi spoke about the fact that spirituality "ebbs and flows" and that this ebbing and flowing allows one to understand that the conditions of stress and exhaustion don't last forever.. She said,

> So like, that's why the idea of like accepting, this condition being exhausting and hard, it doesn't feel permanent to me. Like, yes it's hard, and like it's exhausting, and like it's annoying, and I hate having to do it but I don't think it's permanent. I think if I believed it was permanent, I couldn't do this work. Like I would, it would just be a waste of my time.

Seeing her spirituality and her capacity for managing stress as an ebb and flow allowed Sassi to see the state of justice in the world as also one of moving towards justice even when exhausted. Spirituality provided a mirror through which she cultivated hope for social change.

While participants highlighted the various ways that religiosity/spirituality positively informed their work, they also reflected about how much emphasis people should put on religiosity/spirituality in their social justice work. In a moment of reflection Busayo offered,

> I feel like my spirituality has grown, but I've, I've put less emphasis on like spirituality like in social justice work, if that makes sense. I used to use it as an excuse and not

> necessarily me, but … other people use it as an excuse for a lot of things. They'd be like, 'Oh, I'm not going to go to this protest. I'm just gonna pray about it.' Right. Or like, 'Oh, um, I don't want to be controversial and use this hashtag, but I'll pray about it.' Like people used to say that a lot to me.

In sum, even though Busayo noted the importance of spirituality in her own work, she also noted that she had to navigate other's understandings of what spirituality meant for the work of justice in the world. Further, she noted that spirituality can either catalyze social justice work or provide an excuse for not engaging directly or agentically in the work of social justice.

Discussion

This study sought to explore the ways that religiosity/spirituality influences the sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult college women activists. Through an adapted thematic analysis of one-on-one interviews with six Black emerging adult college women activists, I found that religiosity/spirituality inform key facets of participants SPD. This included critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action (e.g., through spirituality's influence on efficacy), as well as the organizational settings and facts of early life experiences and socialization (e.g., religious socialization and churches as an organizational context). The findings from this study are both aligned with and shed new light on the role of religiosity/spirituality in SPD.

To begin, participants often first noted that there was a connection between religiosity/spirituality and attempted to make delineations between the terms. Although these delineations were not always neat, they reflected the nuance participants had in their thinking around religiosity/spirituality. It was in making these delineations that some of their more

complex understandings of religiosity/spirituality came to the surface. These moments of hesitancy led to more complex responses, but there was not a complete separation.

Importantly, when defining religiosity/spirituality participants mostly focused on their spirituality. That is, participants focused on the development of a relationship with a higher power vs the institutionalized and ritualistic worship of said power. When aiming at describing spirituality, participant descriptions incorporated a metaphysical relational dimension (in that participants described a relationship with a higher power, relationships to ancestors and the universe, etc.) and a meaning making dimension that allowed them to locate themselves and their purpose in larger existential narratives that are guided by the Divine (Banks-Wallace & Parks, 2004; Mattis, 2002; Mattis & Watson, 2008; Patton & McClure, 2009; Tolliver, & Jackson, 1996). Participant definitions of spirituality were also connected to a sense of purpose that was connected to the relational understanding of spirituality. Participants articulated that they were guided by a higher power and through this guidance they were able to move in purpose despite obstacles. Finally, participants described their spirituality as something that was tied to their bodily navigation of stresses. That is, spirituality also allowed participants to recognize stress and provided a coping mechanism in times of struggle or exhaustion from activist activities (Cannon & Morton, 2015; Mattis & Watson, 2008; Watt 2003). This is particularly important in a study of women activists because of the ways we know that certain stressors (e.g., stress from microaggressions) is exacerbated when Black college students are politically involved (Hope et al., 2018). Studies on the ways that Black activist women students use spirituality to negotiate stress and exhaustion may further elucidate links between SPD and spirituality.

The Black college women participants in this study saw religiosity and spirituality as foundational to the work of justice in the world. In regard to religiosity, participants noted that

although they may not subscribe to all the tenets of a particular religious organization, these institutions sometimes provided institutional and material resources (e.g., financial resources, networks, leadership) that helped in their social justice work (Mattis & Jagers, 2001; Payne, 1990; Smith, 1996). Church congregations and church leadership were often first stops in generating resources and helped to get the word out about women's organizing work. Although seemingly understated, it is important to note that these findings about the role of religious institutions stand in line with the long historical record concerning the role of religious institutions in SPD. In particular, scholars have suggested that attending religious institutions exposes Black Americans to political discussions and more opportunities for political involvement (Livingston et al., 2017). Relatedly, Scholarship concerning Black American traditions of religiosity/spirituality often denotes the ties between notions of religious teachings on liberation and the promotion of a liberatory imagination (Banks-Wallace & Parks, 2004; Baxter et al., 2019; Lewis, 2008; Lewis, et al., 2007). In speaking about religion's connection to social justice work, participants noted that they were sometimes moved towards their activism by the tenets of religious teaching. Religiosity was foundational to the SPD of the participants in that religious orientations towards justice were a pivotal part of the motivation for activism.

In regard to spirituality's foundational role in the to the commitment to justice, participants also expressed what could be termed as a *spiritual efficacy*. Participants often spoke about the fact that in pursuing critical actions, it was their spirituality that allowed them to push through and actually create change. Not only did spirituality motivate their actions, but spirituality allowed them to feel more efficacious through their belief that their actions were aligned with a Divine presence in their lives and their success. Participants saw themselves as aligned with greater purpose. We hear in quotes like, "I hear you God," women's verification of

their conviction that God is guiding their work, and their belief that their work is purposeful because it is being guided by a transcendent force. An understanding of the ways that spirituality may augment political efficacy SPD for Black college women is a potentially rich avenue for future research. In the research literature, spirituality is already associated with a litany of efficacy and persistence related outcomes for Black college women (e.g., purpose, persistence, coping, resistance; Watt, 2003) and understanding the role of spirituality and efficacy in activism may shed some light on ways to support these students as they engage in activism on and off campus.

There is indeed a literature on spiritual efficacy (Oman et al., 2012) and some work on the role that spirituality has in allowing activists to persist in activism despite setback (Tisdell, 2002). Future studies may seek to refine the measurement of spiritual efficacy through explore the extent to which spiritual efficacy and political efficacy are associated. Black feminist theologians point to the idea that Black women develop particularized readings of sacred texts and particularized views of Jesus and God (e.g.,, Jackie Grant's book, White Women's Christ, Black Women's Jesus). Future work may benefit from exploring the extent to which Black women's sense of spiritual efficacy is informed by their particular readings/understandings of God, Christ/Allah etc., and the tenets of their systems of faith. It may also would be pertinent to explore the ways that women's analyses of power (as both a secular and theological construct) inform their beliefs about their spiritual efficacy. Indeed, future work should explore potentially gendered frames of political efficacy in SPD for college activists.

By continuing to interpret these results through both feminist and Black womanist orientations towards spirituality, we see that participants thought beyond the metaphysically relational quality of spirituality. They described spirituality as an interconnectedness that allowed

them to connect with those that have similar purposes aligned with a sense of justice in the world. In particular, spirituality created a sense of "us-ness" – a connection to others, that made the needs of others legible. This transcendent motivation was a key part of the critical reflection of participants in that it oriented them towards collective struggle before the self.

Participants used connection and community as places for exploring the link between sacredness/spirituality and justice. One distinct example of this came through a cultivation of what participants often referred to as a spiritual sisterhood, they were able to 1) explore, learn, and cultivate hope in their activist work and 2) use these connections to collectively facilitate their work towards social justice. Further research into the ways that connection and relationships of Black women may influence SPD is needed, especially in light of the majority of research on SPD that prioritizes and reproduces a focus the individual and cognitive approaches to SPD (Carmen et al., 2015). Indeed, these findings are in line with scholarship that calls for more collective foci in understanding the "the transactional, dialectic, collective, and spiritual/ontological aspects at work in the processes of SPD" (Carmen et al., 2015, p. 828). Through these findings on spirituality and sisterhood, we see the connections between the dynamic and relational spirituality these participants experienced and the relational nature of SPD (Carmen et al., 2015; Watts et al., 2003).

These participants spoke about sisterhood as a place that refueled them, healed them, and provided respite from activist work. In other words, feminist and Black womanist perspectives allow us to see sisterhood as a site for engendering a relational epistemology of hope, healing, and love that then inspire women to engage in social justice work (Carmen et al., 2015; hooks, 2000; Ochs, 1986; Tisdell, 2000). It is important to note that this finding emerged among a group of women who knew each other, shared religio-spiritual orientations, and had meaningful

interpersonal relationships that were grounded in their work as part of a common organization. This community organization helped to shape their ideas about justice, brought these participants together around a common cause, and facilitated interactions among the women. Further, this community organization was a microplace in a multilevel ecology that helped these Black women activists shape other places (e.g., schools in the community, churches). These women built relationships as a group of women activists, shared membership in a social justice organization, and lived in the same city. Sharing these relationships certainly contributed to their SPD and to the view of social justice as a collective effort. The relationships and this view of justice were both a marker of the organization's values, and something these participants generated as they helped each other accomplish goals related to their activism. Although outside of the conceptual framing of Study 2, Black placemaking frames may certainly allow for a deeper analysis of these participants' activist activities, and allow for insights that more concretely link relationships, group identities, institutional practices, and spirituality with SPD.

Finally, it is important to note that participants describe religiosity/spirituality as an evolving and active part of their lives in college. This is in line with extant work (e.g., Parks, 2000) which highlights the continuing, but developmentally different, role in the lives of college students generally and Black college women specifically (Patton & McClure, 2009). Participants' evolving definitions may indicate an exploration of religiosity/spirituality in college as they took hold of their religious and spiritual identities (Patton & McClure, 2009). The participants in this study often reflected on the changes in their religio-spiritual identity in separation from their families. Participants highlighted that college 1) provided the freedom to explore religious and spiritual beliefs and identities; and 2) brought them in touch with others who helped them to confront their own beliefs and who helped provide models for different ways

of being spiritual. One aspect of campus/college life was salient in the findings is the way that encounters with new/different people helped broaden spiritual perspectives and identities. Future work might consider more detailed (and perhaps longitudinal) studies of the ways that shifting religious/spiritual beliefs may inform women's awareness of different manifestations of injustice, influence their commitments to action, their sense of efficacy, and their ideas about the options that they have for becoming engaged in acts of resistance.

Religiosity/spirituality in SPD catalyzes refection and action through an interconnectedness and spiritual efficacy towards change. Future investigations of SPD should prioritize the role of relationship and the role of the subjective experience of connection in this developmental process. Research in the bonds of "sisterhood" certainly exist in the higher education research canon. Indeed, the concept of sisterhood has been studied in sororities (Hernandez, 2007; Snider 2020) and in Black women's colleges (Mebane, 2019). Yet research focused on the sisterhood and spirituality of women activists is nascent. Given that emerging adulthood is a developmental period during which people are especially likely to become politically active, future work exploring the ways that sisterhood and religiosity/spirituality catalyze sociopolitical reflections, sociopolitical analysis, commitments to social justice, and social justice actions college students will prove valuable. Further, given substantial empirical evidence of the role of religiosity/spirituality in coping, resilience and well-being among Black women, research on religiosity/spirituality in the lives of activists will provide universities with foundational data needed to explore ways to institutionally support the ontological healing of Black women student activists.

A Note on Reflexivity

These findings are not without the biases that come from my insider and outsider positionality. I am a Black man graduate student studying the experiences of Black college women activists. Further, the research team I worked with in the initial coding of the transcripts was composed of a diverse team of undergraduate women with whom I do and no not share several identities. This means that although I share racial and student identities with participants, and with some members of my research team, I do not share a gender identity with either group. As I have navigated the insider/outsider positions, I have sought to "embrace and explore the complexity and richness of the space between entrenched perspectives" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 62). Insider and outsider are untidy categories and in seeking the in-between I often found myself trying to bridge the divide between myself, participants, and my research team. This was especially evident as we, as a research team, engaged in the coding of the data. I actively sought their input and had to wrestle with my own power and biases in the process. The research team challenged me on several ideas, and brought new understandings (e.g., ideas about spirituality and sisterhood) that I may have otherwise missed. Further, as we consulted Black feminist texts, they challenged me to re-learn and re-engage these texts with fresh eyes. Finally, in ongoing conversations with a subset of study participants, I have been pushed to lean into more literature on gender and spirituality and to consider my role in telling this story.

Future Directions

The findings in this study draw us to a number of exciting possible avenues for future study. First, it seems prudent to explore more directly the ways that spirituality influences the critical efficacy of Black emerging adult college women as they pursue social justice. Although there is theoretical (Watts, 1993) and some empirical (e.g., Carmen et al., 2014; Yasuno, 2004)

support for the ways that spirituality is influential in SPD, evidence for the ways that spirituality potentially acts as a means of increasing critical efficacy is minimal.

Specifically, this study differs in that this study indicates that spirituality may be influential to SPD by allowing students to understand and seek the common dignity of all people and influencing a critical reflection and motivation to change unjust circumstances. When it comes to the potential augmentation of critical efficacy through spirituality, however, the evidence is minimal. Future work should more pointedly investigate the distinct role of religiosity and spirituality in the SPD of this population. This research may be able to glean a more thorough understanding about the ways that Black emerging adult college women develop sociopolitical efficacy as a part of SPD. Avenues of research in this area may include investigating the role of specific theological tenets (e.g., Black liberation theologies vs more conservative mainline protestant theologies) in shaping the affective, cognitive, motivational dimensions of efficacy in relation to SPD for Black women activists. A second, and related, area of study for future research is one that seeks to elucidate the developmental arcs of religious, spiritual, sociopolitical and gender identities, and to elucidate the ways that spiritual identity development and sociopolitical development may jointly influence each other. Next, quantitative work, particularly developing psychometrically sound measures of spiritual efficacy, may help to investigate the ties between spiritual efficacy and other facets of SPD. Although there is a body of work that explores the relationship between spirituality and efficacy (e.g., Oman et al., 2012 on self-efficacy and spiritual behaviors), this study offers the field a way to rethink political efficacy. The results from this study, along with others (e.g., Watt, 2003), demonstrate that spirituality is a consistent source of help in times of trouble. Capturing these notions of "God got me through it" that include attributions to the Divine may be useful in examine the way that

spiritual efficacy and traditional measures of political efficacy are jointly or differentially associated with SPD.

Another central finding to this study was the way that these participants developed what they coined a spiritual sisterhood as a collective context for SPD. Participants remarked that sisterhood was a place of learning, encouragement, hope, and healing. Future work should investigate the organizing work of Black emerging adult college women activists, and in particular, how deep relational ties and notions of interconnectedness are related to SPD. Future quantitative work may investigate the ties between participating in these activities and positive psychological and academic outcomes among Black emerging adult college women activists (e.g., positive future orientation, academic persistence, academic retention). Future qualitative work should examine how participants go about creating these sisterhoods, and explore the everyday ways that these sisterhoods influence acute as well as long term and sustained forms of activism among Black college women.

Finally, there was an underlying tension between the existence of an organized religion versus spirituality in line with interconnectedness. The tension between organized religion and spirituality does not necessarily translate to a complete rejection of faith. For some women the tension was associated with an interrogation and clarification of beliefs (e.g., of institutions vs. God). For some women the tension was associated with evolving efforts to distinguish acts of faith (e.g., justice work) from performances of faith (e.g., ritual acts like prayer) and presence in spaces of faith (e.g., membership and attendance in religious institutions). Future work should explore how religious and spiritual activists navigate this tension and what this tension means for SPD. Specifically, future work should explore 1) how changes in religiosity/spirituality influence

Black women's sociopolitical analysis, reflection, & action, and 2) how changes in sociopolitical analysis, reflection, action reciprocally shapes Black women's religiosity/spirituality.

Limitations

This study makes important contributions to the study of religiosity/spirituality, however, it is not without limitations. First, the participants in the larger study were a group of college women activists who worked as part of a leadership development program to achieve their aims. These findings may not apply to Black women activists who do not have the same support structures for their activist work. That is, the findings may be different from women activists who are independent actors. Moreover, these findings may not apply to emerging adult-aged Black women activists who are not enrolled in college or who have no experience in college settings. Future work focused on more diverse samples of Black emerging adult age women activists including women with less than a college education and women who are not affiliated with social justice organizations, will help to broaden our understandings of the role of religiosity/spirituality in SPD for young Black women. Second, although this study included college students, participants did not often offer up reflections on the ways that their college experiences influenced the ties between religiosity/spirituality and SPD. Future work should more explicitly inquire about how collegiate environments, fellow students, faculty, and staff influence these ties. Finally, although the coding process through the discussion of emerging was done in a team-based and consensual way, the final extraction of these themes was the responsibility of the first author. More pointedly, one concern is that I am a man studying the lived experiences of women. Future work on these topics by Black women researchers will bring new insights and value to the field.

Table 6. Study 2 participant characteristics			
Pseudonym	**Student Status**	**Race and Ethnicity**	**Age**
Busayo	Undergraduate	Black/Nigerian American	18
Spring	Undergraduate	Black/African American	23
Sassi	Undergraduate	Black/African American	21
Rosa	Undergraduate	Black/African American	21
Alma	Undergraduate	Black/African American	20
Austen	Undergraduate	Black/African American	23

Chapter 4 -Study 3: There is a Place that We Can All Be Free: Placemaking in the Sociopolitical Development of College-attending Black Emerging Adult Women

listen,
you a wonder.
you a city
of a woman.
you got a geography
of your own.
listen,
somebody need a map
to understand you.
somebody need directions
to move around you- ***what the mirror said, Lucille Clifton***

Cities in the U.S. are growing and are increasingly populated by Black emerging adults (Lee, 2018; Moos 2016; Moos et al., 2019; Moos et al., 2018; IHS Market, 2017). These cities are places that are often vibrant with the life, creativity, activism, and joy of Black emerging adults (Hunter et al., 2016; Mattis et al., 2019). Unfortunately, in the social sciences, representations of cities, and the Black people within them, tend to emphasize a focus on challenges of urban life (e.g., inequitable housing and schooling policy), stress, discord, deleterious mental health, physical health effects, and poor developmental outcomes (Dumas, 2014; Jacobson et al., 2009; Levine et al., 2008; Milgram, 1970; Miller & Keys, 2001; Sewell, 2016; Thoits, 2010). Missing from the social sciences is a body of studies that offers a counterstory about Black urban life and particularly the ways that Black emerging adults reshape urban places to be more just and more compassionate (Isoke, 2013; Mattis et al., 2019). This study offers a counterstory to the literature in psychology and education by exploring placemaking among Black emerging adults—particularly emerging adult-aged Black women—

residing in urban centers. Black placemaking "refers to the ways that urban black Americans create sites of endurance, belonging, and resistance" (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 23) that reshape social, spatial, and economic realities in ways that are attuned to joy and celebration, and justice (Mattis et al., 2019). Drawing on Black placemaking frameworks, Mattis et al., (2019) suggest that "collectivist ideologies, traditions of self-help, and commitments to activism" help to reshape urban social, spatial, and economic realities and "create and sustain businesses, creative enterprises, …, and spaces of entertainment, pleasure and celebration in urban contexts" (p. 10). This suggests that a study of Black placemaking may indeed be connected to the study of sociopolitical development (SPD). Indeed, Hunter et al., (2016) and Mattis et al., (2019) assert that SPD is both an outcome of, and a strategy to promote, Black placemaking activities in urban places.

SPD is the process wherein "individuals acquire the knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and the capacity for action in political and social systems necessary to interpret and resist oppression" (Watts et al., 1999, p.185). Although scholars have noted that examining SPD means accounting for how place and ecologies shave developmental opportunities and exposure to oppression (Watts et al., 2003), investigations of SPD rarely go beyond naming specific places (e.g., "urban" schools and neighborhoods) as context (Anyiwo et al., 2020). In addition, studies often proceed without examining how the dynamic, transactional relationships between cities as a whole and particular microsettings (i.e., places within urban spaces that are both a part of and yet distinct community niches such as college campuses) within them may complicate SPD (Kusenbach, 2008; Mattis et al., 2019).

Further, although SPD theorists note that social identities (e.g., gender, race) contribute to commitment and action towards remedying systemic oppression (Watts et al., 2003),

investigations into SPD have been limited in their disproportionate attention to adolescent populations (e.g., Diemer 2009; Diemer & Lee, 2011) and boys/men (e.g., Smith & Hope, 2019). This oversight has left an important intersection of urban residents (i.e., Black emerging adult women) out of the literature. Indeed, research on the roles of context and identities in the SPD of Black emerging adult women, is limited (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). Importantly, Black college women are a growing demographic in urban centers and represent In this study I explore the relations between placemaking and SPD among women college students residing in and attending university in urban contexts.

SPD, Place, and Research

To say that an understanding of place is central to our understanding of human development is stating the obvious. Casey (2009) asserts that "however much we may prefer to think of what happens in a place, rather than the place itself, we are tied to place undetachably and without reprieve" (p. xiii). Although place is, even if not named, a central factor in human experience (Massey, 1994; Sampson, 2012, 2013), we undertheorize and understudy place particularly in research in psychology and education (Agnew, 2011; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Whatever attention is paid to place, and in particular urban place, is often superficial, and reduced to the surface on which activities and experiences take place (Casey, 2009; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

What does it mean to pay serious and critical attention to place in research? Massey (1994) argues that "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (p. 154). Places, like social relations, are in process and are experienced differently based on social identity(ies) (Massey, 2005; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

Our bodies, identities, and place are bound together, and the confluence of our identities (e.g., race, gender) color how we perceive, navigate, and experience place (McKittrick, 2006). Places, and our experiences of them, are constructed, at least in part, through spatial acts of oppression (e.g., racism and sexism). Likewise, identities and our access to power are entrenched in and dependent on the physical geographies we inhabit and the ideologies, laws, histories, and cultures that help shape them (Massey, 1994, 2005; McKittrick, 2006; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

Returning to SPD, Clark (2003), in particular, argues for a need to explore the links between place and sociopolitical development, and insists that "we need to make clear the power, limits, partiality and indeterminancy of the sites which inscribe and enable our sense of place, identity, and the possibilities for action" (p. 10). In short, any understanding of SPD must be rooted in an understanding of place and identity. Importantly, however, Hunter et al., (2016) argue for an orientation to place that privileges the everyday joyful, loving, and celebratory experiences of Black people in place and efforts to shift oppressive places to joyful and celebratory geographies. Explorations of SPD often privilege the resistant and acute manifestations of SPD in response to oppression, but Hunter et al., (2016) remind us to focus on the everyday and joyful manifestation of SPD related to making places joyful and good. Aiming to understand how individuals shape places to be more just and joyful may lead to a more holistic understanding of SPD. This paper advances extant research on SPD by aiming to ascertain the way that identity and place mutually influence SPD among Black emerging adult women.

Spatial Imaginaries and Black Placemaking

To think about and examine urban places, we must endeavor to more fully understand the "spatial imaginary"—that is, how we come to know about space and urban places. The spatial

imaginary is the epistemology of space (i.e., the way we come to understand and think about space). "Space" here refers to the understanding of the "dimension within which matter is located or a grid within which substantive items are contained" (Agnew, 2011, p. 317). Space is supposedly neutral, universal, and abstract. In contrast "place" is both the "geographical context for the mediation of physical, social and economic processes" (Agnew, 2011, p. 4), and the "product of social relations that reflects the hegemony of dominant ideologies" (Mitchell et al., 2010, p. 210).

Places are not abstract or objective. Places are continuously shaped, produced, and shifted over time. They are imbued with power, and people and structures in them engage in particular practices that are malleable and that affect each other (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Place is also differentially experienced based on gender, race, sexuality, age, culture, etc. For example, young Black men standing on an urban street corner are not imagined, experienced, or treated in the same way as young White women occupying the same location. The differential experience and treatment of people based on race, gender, class etc. reminds us that that bodies, identities, and urban places are not separate. Indeed, we are reminded that it is often through spatial acts of oppression, constructed by and enforced through dominant spatial imaginaries McKittrick (2006), that "particular kinds of bodies, one by one, are materially (if not always visibly) configured … into a hierarchy of human and inhuman persons that, in sum, form the category of 'human being'" (Gilmore, 2002, p. 16 as cited in McKittrick, 2006, p. xv).

The experience and meaning of urban place is also different because people with differential power over others install, benefit from, and use markers of identities and spatial acts of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, racialized sexism) to create meanings and experiences that benefit them (McKittrick, 2006). The White spatial imaginary reinforces structured advantages

of Whiteness through giving White people "privileged access to opportunities for social inclusion and upward mobility. At the same time, it imposes unfair and unjust forms of exploitation and exclusion on aggrieved communities of color" (Lipsitz, 2011, p.6). Lipsitz (2011) argues that the White spatial imaginary spatializes White advantage through spatial acts of oppression (e.g., mortgage and insurance redlining, segregation) that expose communities of color to inequitable and less dignified places. White spatial imaginaries spatially hoard resources and threaten democratic thinking through isolating people based on race and limiting participation in truly democratic ideals. This imaginary produces racialized inner cities devoid of resources.

In contrast, the Black spatial imaginary sees these places (e.g., urban spaces) as places to reshape and form into places of resistance and imagination. The Black spatial imaginary:

> views place as valuable and finite, as a public responsibility for which all must take stewardship. Privileging the public good over private interests, this spatial imaginary understands the costs of environmental protection, efficient transportation, affordable housing, public education, and universal medical care as common responsibilities to be shared, rather than as onerous burdens to be palmed off onto the least able and most vulnerable among us (p. 69).

Black placemaking refers to Black people's active and daily resistance to White spatial imaginaries in order to create more just, joyful, and democratic places (Harvey, 2013; Hunter et al., 2016). Black people have quite literally occupied place (e.g., sat-in at lunch counters during the Civil Rights Movement) in order to make those places more democratic, just, and joyful. Although their contributions to transforming urban settings are often obscured, Black women, including young adult Black women, have helped to agentically transform urban places through

renaming efforts, demolition and removal of racist landmarks on and off college campuses, organizing clothing exchanges for other Black women, boycotts of racist stores, and organizing racial equity movements (e.g., Black Live Matter, the Black Action Movement at the University of Michigan) (Isoke, 2013; Garza, 2014; McKittrick, 2006; Payne, 1990). However, despite the rich history of Black women's justice-based placemaking, scholars interested in SPD have not adequately explored how Black emerging adult women 1) think about urban place; 2) critically reflect on and understand the links between their identity(ies) and spatialization of oppression (e.g., how they think about the ways that particular places are rendered safe or unsafe for them as Black women); or 3) work to align their identities, experiences, and understandings of urban places with joyful, liberatory and justice-oriented policies and practices through critical action.

The current study is rooted in an understanding that for Black emerging adult women in urban centers, these histories are filled with struggle, contradiction, resistance, and activism in remapping and re-making place (Lipsitz, 2011; Massey, 1994; McKittrick, 2006; Shabazz, 2015; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Scholars have started to investigate the ways that campus geographies inform political behavior for some students (e.g., how campus geographies shape politically conservative student attitudes in Binder & Wood, 2013). This study endeavors to advance extant scholarship by exploring the links between identity, Black urban placemaking, and SPD (i.e., how urban-residing emerging adult Black women's sociopolitical analyses, commitments, and efforts to resist injustice) among emerging adult, college-attending Black women. Further, this study seeks to understand how Black placemaking is linked to SPD and how these concepts are associated with Black emerging adult women 's efforts to cultivate good and joyful places.

Current Study

The current study aims to investigate one central question: How do the ways that Black emerging adult women make place (i.e., experience, perceive, and imagine urban places—especially urban universities) inform their sociopolitical development? This overall question is guided by two interconnected questions: 1) How do Black emerging adult women describe their experience as Black women navigating the cities where they live and the urban universities where they attend school?; and 2) How do these women's experiences as Black women in these places influence their SPD (i.e., beliefs about (in)justice, and beliefs about their capacity to create change, and their actions towards that change)?

Methodology and Methods

This study uses a qualitative research approach to explore the associations between place, identity, and SPD among emerging adult Black women. In particular, this study is guided by a critical narrative methodology (Huber et al., 2013; Rodriguez, 2010) that centers the lived experiences of participants and attempts to describe and understand the ways that power is imbued in the lives of participants. A narrative methodology enables me to center the voices, perspectives, and experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; 2006) of Black emerging adult women.

Narrative methodology also holds that time, context/place, culture, and social location matter in the stories that we tell. Narratives are temporal because "when we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment, but as an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, a present as it appears to us, and an implied future" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 29). We make sense of how past events have been endowed with meaning as they change with time. Narratives are contextual in that places imbue

experiences and the narratives of those experiences with meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; 2006; Daiute, 2014). Narratives are cultural in that there is an interaction between the individual and the larger societal institutions, customs, practices, and artifacts of a of a society. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) bring the temporal, cultural and contextual dimensions of narratives together when they state that narratives "focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places" (p. 50).

Simple attention to time, culture and context in narrative is not enough, however. The personal, social, and geographic nature of narratives is always influenced by, and is always in relationship with, dominant discourse (Okello, 2020). This inquiry demands that I use a methodology that allows women to articulate the gendered, cultural, social, spatial, and temporal realities that they encounter in their everyday lives as Black women. In an effort to attend to the ways that spirituality, identity, and SPD manifest in the narratives of Black emerging adult women, I anchor this study in a Black Feminist epistemology (BFE) that guides the narrative methodology.

BFE is a critical epistemological frame that highlights the importance of story-telling/narrative in women's ways of knowing. Generally, critical epistemologies shift "the locus of power in the research process by situating subjects as knowers" (Pillow, 2006, p.186). BFE centers the everyday experience, knowledge, resistance, and inherent value of Black women (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1989; Wingfield, 2015). Taking on a BFE frame forces us to consider the embodied and everyday understanding of oppression of living in marginalized bodies along psychophysiological, sociohistorical, and sociopolitical lines (Okello, 2018; Wingfield, 2015). Using BFE will allow me to examine how power operates throughout all aspects of the research (e.g., construction of the research question, the interview and knowledge co-construction

process, analysis, and interpretation). Further this epistemology allows for an examination of how participants' subjective understandings and experiences of power relationships shape their thinking about and response to privilege and oppression, as well as their efforts to locate and create joy and goodness in their placemaking. This study, then, uses narratives and narrative analysis to explore how college-attending Black emerging adult women tell the story of the relations between their race, gender, place, and sociopolitical awareness and social justice change work.

Positionality[7]

Data Collection

Study Participants and Setting

I recruited 12 Black emerging adult women activists (aged 18-29) who attend universities in cities for the study. Participants lived in large metropolitan areas (e.g., Atlanta, New York City, Washington D.C), identified as Black women, and as activists or active participants in social justice-oriented efforts. I employed a purposeful sampling approach (Maxwell, 2013; Patton 2002) so that I would be able to elicit information on the specific ties between place and social justice that may not be available with a wider call for participants who were not targeted because of their activism in urban places. Ethnoracially, seven participants identified as Black/African American, with four participants also identifying as Ghanaian, Nigerian, Cameroonian, and Haitian and one participant identifying as Black and bi-racial. All participants also identified as religious or spiritual. The participants represented a range of social class strata, with participants' annual household incomes ranging from $10,000 to over $100,000. All

[7] Please see my positionality statement.

participants identified as cisgender, most were heterosexual with two participants identifying as queer and pansexual. At the time of the study, seven women were undergraduate students and the other five were students pursuing post-graduate degrees. Students represented eight institutions across the United States, with regional distribution in South, Midwest, and Northeast. Of these institutions, one was a large Midwest research institution, one was an art college in the Midwest, two were small urban colleges in the Northeast, two were large research universities in the South, one was an Ivy-League institution in the Northeast, and one was a Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU's) in the Northeast. Demographic data are reported in Table 6.

Data

Two kinds of data were collected for this study: 1) narrative geographies (a participatory map-making exercise that combines the co-creation of maps with narrative about the sites on the map) that help to contextualize place; and 2) narrative interviews that focus on identity, place and SPD.

Narrative Geographies. Each interview began with a participatory map-making exercise (Appendix III). Studies have used participatory map-making to gain insight into how people experience places and communicate place-based knowledge (Corbett, 2009; Fang et al., 2016). Usually, these methods involve strategies for visualizing places (e.g., photography) as well as dialogue about place, and pressing concerns associated with the places being described, as well as community needs (Fang et al., 2016). This process was sometimes done virtually in software and sometimes participants drew their own maps on Zoom. The map-making exercise used in this study contextualized participants' experience of their city or neighborhood where they live, and their experience of the campus and campus-adjacent neighborhoods and sites associate with the educational institutions that they attend. To visualize the places being discussed, I used

MapMe virtual mapping software to create participatory maps, complete with pin drops and local addresses, along with embedded notes and other media (e.g., photos). The interview protocol purposefully engaged participants in conversations about how life in cities and in urban universities informs their thinking about place, the presence of indicators of injustice in these places, emotions concerning these issues, feelings of agency concerning actions against injustice, and engagement in critical action. For example, I asked participants to "Tell me about a place in the city that has changed in the last 5 years. Are there ways that the changes that you have seen remind you of justice or injustice?" I also asked "Are there places in the city where you like to go as a Black woman? Please describe the places and tell me why you feel the way you do there?" At the same time, I sought to locate the multiple places in cities where people spend their time, and sought to obtain a dynamic picture of peoples' movement from place to place through the urban centers where they live and attend school. For example, I asked "I'd like you to think about an average weekday/weekend. From the time you wake up to the time you go to bed where do you go? What do you do in those places?" This exercise allowed me to get a map of the places where people spend time. In order to create the fullest possible map, I included key probes: How do you get there (e.g., walk, take the bus, drive, ride bike)? Where do you usually eat? Where do you feel safe and unsafe on campus?

As the interview unfolded, I noted important places and returned to the evolving map to ask participants to provide further insight about specific locations. During the interview, I asked how specific stories related to the places that were mentioned (e.g., in terms of history). The maps and accompanying stories provided a way for the participants to concretize their experiences of place and placemaking, and offered valuable insight into the ways that Black emerging adult women attach meaning to urban and campus geographies, how they navigate

identity in those places, and how these factors work together to inform their sociopolitical development.

Narrative Interviews. The second section of the interview inquired about the ways that social identities (e.g., race and gender) and spatial context (i.e., cities and urban higher education institutions) inform the SPD of Black emerging adult women (see Appendix III). Questions included, "What experiences in the city have motivated you to reflect on injustice?" "How has the city shaped who you are?" "How, if at all, do you think your identities (like your race, gender, sexuality, religion) have affected your decisions about when to address injustice?" "How does your activism make XX city a better place?" "How has your college experience shaped what you think of as a good place?" These interviews ranged from 60 to over 150 minutes. Participants were compensated $30 upon completion of the interview.

Data Analysis

I used Zoom to record interviews with the permission of the participants. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription service. Data cleaning and analysis were conducted by a research team (myself and two undergraduates trained in qualitative analysis). Data were cleaned by reading verbatim transcripts while relistening to the original Zoom recording. The transcripts were reviewed for words and utterances missed by the professional transcriber. During the data cleaning process all transcripts were anonymize (e.g., names of people and places were deleted or replaced with pseudonyms). The research team engaged in a critical narrative analysis (Saldaña, 2016; Okello, 2020) of verbatim narrative transcripts.

We met weekly, and sometimes bi-weekly, in a series of iterative coding meetings to watch interviews, memo, and analyze emerging ideas regards to identity, place, and SPD. These observations and memos were recorded in Word documents and then used to generate an initial

list of loose coding categories. Bamberg (2004 as cited in Saldaña, 2016) notes, however, that analyzing narratives only for the content may not be enough to elicit understandings of how power and privilege operate in narrative. For that reason, in the analytical phase of the work we were attentive to subcoding schemes and categories pertinent to power and the connections between concepts. In this vein, we developed coding categories that captured participants' ideas about power and place, categories attendant to how participants narrated geographies, and categories capturing everyday reflections on and efforts against injustice in specific places and locales on campus

We focused on iterative readings of the interviews with the analytic questions in mind. As we read, the team identified meaningful units (i.e., chunks), or "the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself – … interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345). We then identified an initial set of prospective ideas that served as the foundation for codes. As we engaged this initial code development process, we individually memoed about the process of moving from ideas to codes, the fit of the codes to the data, and ideas and codes that may be missing. Once we individually developed ideas for the initial coding scheme, we integrated our lists and discussed any concerns about the initial list of categories. This integration allowed us to come to an initial set of 11 major codes and 68 subcodes with definitions. We then iteratively coded randomly selected sets of chunks, refined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and coalesced codes with a final 55 subcodes. The codebook also included an "other" category to capture information responsive to the question but that is unique and worth looking at again. All decisions were made by consensus, including the resolution of all conflicts. The research team coded the chunks in Delve, a qualitative research

tool. After the data was coded, we engaged in a series of discussions and memoing in the effort to organize codes into a parsimonious set of narrative themes that answered the research questions. Through narrative analysis we sought to understand the relationships between identities, place, placemaking, and SPD through the meanings that the participants ascribed to them (Andrews, 2019).

Validity and Trustworthiness

We incorporated aspects of consensual qualitative research (CQR) in the analytic process in order to ensure robust data analysis, transparency, and rich findings. In describing CQR, Hill et al., (2005) outlined a process wherein investigators use semi-structured interviews and a diverse set of judges/coders with multiple perspectives in data analysis, who work towards consensus to make meaning of the data. This process also uses at least one auditor (someone on the research team uninvolved in coding) to check the work of the team doing the bulk of analysis and cross-analyses in the data analysis (Hill et al., 2005). The auditor for this study was a Black woman PhD with training in qualitative research and with subject knowledge of the processes in this study. I consulted this external auditor at several steps of the analysis. The auditor reviewed the initial list of coding categories and evaluated the applicability of this list of initial categories to the analytical questions. The goal of this process was to see whether the initial codes captured the data, and to determine whether there might be underdeveloped or missing codes. The auditor evaluated the reasonableness and specificity of the codes, the definitions of the codes, the fit of the codes to a random selection of chunks, and if the codes seem to be answering the analytic questions in regard to identity, place, and SPD.

In keeping with the need for ongoing reflexivity (Rodriguez, 2010), in all steps of these analyses, the research team memoed about how our identities and opinions may be contributing

to our individual and collective analyses of the narratives. Additionally, the research team engaged in a reflexive debriefing process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) where we meet weekly to discuss reactions to transcripts, emerging ideas, potential biases, and problems encountered while codes are being generated, negotiated, and regenerated. Lastly, through nuanced and rich descriptions (Golafshani, 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of the findings we sought to ensure a representation of the data that is emblematic of participant voices.

Results

The narrative geographies I obtained from these participants consisted of detailed descriptions of their cities, neighborhoods, and college campuses, and described the ways that time and power shaped each locale, the relationship between universities and surrounding communities, the efforts to transform places in the city and university. Participants' stories of navigating urban places were reflective of spatial acts of oppression, Black and White spatial imaginaries, and Black placemaking efforts to resist and create more just, joyful, and democratic places (Harvey, 2013; Hunter et al., 2016).

The first research question posed in this study is: How do Black emerging adult women describe their experience as Black women navigating the cities where they live and the urban universities where they attend school? The results of this question center on four narratives about the geographies these participants lived in and attend school in: 1) Cities are hard places filled with communal care, 2) Cities are places where you have to understand and navigate boundaries and demarcations of university power, 3) Universities are White places, and 4) There are Black places on White urban campuses.

The second research question posed in this study is: How do these women's experiences as Black women in these places influence their SPD (i.e., beliefs about (in)justice, and beliefs

about their capacity to create change, and their actions towards that change)? The results of this question center on three narratives: 1) Critical sociopolitical reflection and action as central to making Black places; 2) The creative possibilities of imagining future Black places; and 3) Black sisterhood as a place of socialization, sociopolitical action, hope, joy, and safety. I elaborate on these themes below, and present exemplar quotes for each theme.

RQ1: How do Black emerging adult women describe their experience as Black women navigating the cities where they live and the urban universities where they attend school?

Cities are Hard Places Filled with Communal Care

Here I elucidate how Black emerging adult women described their experience as Black women navigating the cities where they live and the urban universities where they attend school. Several participants (n=8) in this study were residents of the cities in which they attended school. Because many of the participants were longtime residents, their narrative descriptions of these cities and urban universities were saturated with notions of place, time, change, memory, and power. For example, Raven said,

> … You had fast food eateries, you had Cash Loan, Payday places, you had a few groceries, but the grocery stores definitely weren't serving a variety of foods that you could get at a larger chain grocery store, Publix or ... We actually did have a Publix on the South Side, but there was a difference in the type of business, and also what you had access to on the South Side. A lot of people took the bus. But, people took the bus, I think, all throughout [Shadowbrook] because our homeless, there was a homeless shelter, it was probably on the northeast side of town.

Raven's description of her city, the predatory loan centers, grocery stores lacking good produce, the dollar store, etc. were common descriptions of the cities in the narrative geographies

participants presented. These urban features were representative of the ways that White spatial imaginaries (i.e., policies and behaviors that privilege the access and opportunity for White people) force Black people into urban environments characterized by a lack of access to basic needs, exclusion, and exploitation. Importantly, however, despite descriptions of these cities that may lead to stereotypical conclusions about these environments, participants described the places they navigate as problematic, but also as sites replete with resources of human ingenuity and care. In describing their cities, participants often told stories of navigating the city and the university from the lens of a child before describing their current experiences. These narratives highlighted certain geographical features common in urban environments (e.g., corner stores, street vendors) that were integral to urban childhood and, arguably, urban childhood educational success. For example, Lynn reflected:

> So, before Walmart, it was very convenient. So, like you'll get your drinks from [the corner store] and you'll get your chips from there. Especially being in high school and middle school, … and even elementary school, that was the central place of getting your snack. So, if you had no time, or your mom didn't have time to get you a snack before for class and such, you would just go to the convenience store before school, or if you're super hungry after not eating at lunch, you'll go to the convenience store before going home and grabbing a snack.

Lynn also highlighted the corner store's current importance. She stated: "It's also a place where you can get your resources… Like, oh, get those spoons, forks, cups, soda, water, candy…something. 'I'm hungry. Let me just grab something.'"

As part of their critical reflection on the places where they have lived and where they attend school, participants often remarked on the longevity of community assets from their

childhood, and on what these meant for the neighborhood, especially when their urban neighborhoods lacked resources. Importantly, one of these assets that emerged routinely in women's narratives was a communally based love and care that existed even during hard circumstances. Ella, for example, asserted that her city was:

> Full of vibrant [and] colorful [people], culture, [and] different languages…So there's that. Bomb-ass Mexican food, bomb-ass food. When I was growing up, violence was a reality as well. But, there also is like a deep love [for] each other. So, it's difficult in that way. So, you see the love that we have for each other, how we ride for one another, and we also are violent towards each other. So, folks who are coming to visit, I'd like, 'Be prepared to have some bomb-ass food, to see people of color.' I would also say, I think given my experience of the city and getting more education about the history of this country and how they treat folks of color, and particularly people with lower incomes from the communities like [South Greenland], that it's not necessarily our fault that we are in violent context or are impoverished. It's what happens when city or country, or state, isolates you.

Implicit in the ways that participants described their cities was an underlying spatial awareness and an awareness that the cities they called home were shaped by urban sociopolitical features (e.g., power, dynamism), urban spatial arrangements (e.g., community change, spatial and structural stresses), and time. Participants reframed their cities as a sites of communal care and resilience despite histories and policies that undermined their well-being. Participants named the pooling of resources in order to make collective purchases, the sharing of food and other resources, neighborhood food pantries, etc. that were either all collective actions designed to assist each other in difficult moments.

Cities are Places Where You Have to Understand and Navigate Boundaries and Demarcations of University Power

As they described their urban contexts, participants noted the mobility so often present in urban centers as they move around the city to get necessities (e.g., food), and to get to their classes, organizations, and jobs on campus. Danielle, for example said that "it is actually very normal to like travel from different neighborhoods. A lot of the neighborhoods are two stops away from each other, and it's quick and easy to get there." Mobility was a constant part of these participants' experiences, and it was through this movement that participants often highlighted the real and immaterial boundaries that they encountered. As they moved through urban contexts participants often highlighted geographical markers that helped to delineate certain boundaries (e.g., campus buildings, street intersections, subway/train stops). Participants also described how geographic boundaries and geographic markers mark places of privilege and lack, safety, and violence. For example, Ella described the ways that streets help to define places of privilege and resource deprivation. She said, "you know you're in the hood, if something's named after Martin Luther King in that area." Other participants pointed to signifiers (e.g., markers of social class) that marked boundaries. Iris, for example, spoke about moving from her classes on campus to her home in West Philadelphia. She said "you'll be walking and the houses will get closer together. There'll be less green spaces, more concrete, more litter... you see things going into disrepair. Then there's also just the people. There's a level of safety that's lost once you go further into Northeast Redemption." It is important to note that participants universally described universities as somewhat better in terms of upkeep than outside of the university bubble.

Because of the tenure of most of the participants in their cities, this meant that these students were navigating the disparities marked by the boundary between college and city for a

significant period of time. Iris spoke about her relationship with the university across time and highlighted a jarring entry into university life as one of crossing the border into well-resourced White spaces. Describing her campus, which is located in the middle of a large urban center, Iris stated:

> It's honestly just the exact opposite of the homes closer together, the disrepair everything's new... And I also learned this in the class, apparently all the university buildings are pointed inwards. None of them point towards outside or the city, as we know it, they're all clustered together and pointing at each other, to create this physical boundary of 'this is our territory'... You could feel it as far as the atmosphere goes. Like, "Oh yeah, this is their space." And, before I was a student here, I just did not feel comfortable all the way being on this campus. So, to hear that it's physically built like that. I was like, "Oh, that makes sense. Not surprising."

It was unclear just who was being referenced when participants described university settings as "their space," but being students gave these women access to the territory.

Students in these urban colleges were not only aware of the presence of these boundaries, but they were cognizant of the ways that boundaries actively structured participants' lives by both keeping other urban residents out and keeping students in. Amel clarified ways that some campus environments in urban centers reinforce boundaries. She said, "The campus is, the buildings are just extravagant. It's just, it's a bubble. [Fortune University] is a bubble. So, everything is there. Everything you think a campus would have is there, but just unfortunately we're on a hill, so we can't really go nowhere." Similarly, Lynn stated, "There's another narrative. [Fortune University] is not even in the people's mind for some reason. It's because [Fortune University] is so secluded up on this hill that most P.O.C. students, when they're

deciding whether they want to go to college or not, they're not thinking about [Fortune University]."

Urban college environments, and the perceived boundaries they create with larger city contexts provide important fodder for *place-based critical reflection*. The design of campuses, and the navigation between urban colleges and broader urban ecologies, engender a reflection on place in that many of the universities that participants attended made explicit attempts to exclude people and sometimes seemed to try to keep students within the bounds of a university campus. Boundaries were a, explicit form of enforced power in that they separated the "insiders" from the "other" and marked these campuses as places sheltered from the rest of the urban world and belonging to a particular group (Newman, 2003). Further, these boundaries marked a power differential when it came to issues of justice. Iris said that,

> During protests and city lockdowns, I heard groups of people coming home from parties and living the best life. There's a citywide lockdown because of civil unrest, but they're still going about their lives. Having their drinks, living their best college experience... It's a privilege to be isolated away from the world's problems and just have your enjoyment be at the top of your list…[Suburbia University] is more like a suburb outside of city.

Boundaries were a manifestation of power that created privilege and escape from the realities of the world outside for some students. Participants understood and wrestled with this as they navigated both belonging to and being outside of this protected group.

Finally, modes of transportation also created a boundary for participants. Khadijah reflected on her campus tour within a large midwestern city. She said "We took this tour of [Los Santos] …. Basically, we got on the trolley car, went straight down, went straight back. (Laughs) And they said, 'That's [Los Santos]. That's all you need to know.'" The trolley and the stories

told on the "tour" defined boundaries for students. As a resident of [Los Santos] Khadijah remarked that these boundaries followed the more affluent and "safe" part of the city, and represented an inaccurate picture of the whole city. Historically, the trolley has been viewed by residents of Khadijah's city as a billionaire's transit experiment that obscures the less resourced part of the city. Khadijah said, "What have I heard? 'High crime rates, some parts are dangerous, it's dirty, all these things.' It's like, okay, I'm getting what you mean. I know what you're saying, and you're talking about some very specific areas that are not [the gentrified part of the Los Santos]." The story told on the campus tour was not so much the story of the campus as much as it was a narrative to keep students from venturing out. The narrative presented about the city by the university was one of fear. That presentation stood in stark comparison to Khadijah's lived experience of the city. In describing what this meant for the reputation of the city on campus Kadijah said, "People talk and say 'that part is really dangerous. Are you sure? Can we go down there?' What do you mean can we go (Laughs)? Can you walk? Because we can go."

Importantly, there was one example of a university setting that had less obvious and more permeable boundaries that illustrated a more reciprocal university- city relationship. Specifically, participants who attended the HBCU in this study noted that their campus was deeply embedded in the life of their surrounding communities. Sarah described the intersecting geographies of campus and the city. She said, "You have the hospital and then us. Then you have the surrounding community... [Thurston University] is a part of the community. Sometimes you feel like it's [Thurston University] and then [Thurston]. We've blended because we are an open campus." Similarly, Danielle noted that "People … in [Thurston] like to hang out on [Thurston University]'s campus. Because it's in the city. It's an open campus. The gates are never really closed off for anyone."

Boundaries, both those created by buildings, transportation, and those created by class, were an influential part of the navigation for the participants in this study. Participants described navigating borders between where they live and the urban universities where they attend school, reflected on how these borders created and defined the campus through limiting access to others, how college campuses indeed changed the cities through infrastructure and beautification. Participants described and critically reflected on their experiences in these cities and the urban universities within them while centrally describing places around boundaries and they recognized the implicit messages sent by universities.

Universities are White Places

All participants who attended Historically White Institutions (HWI's) described their universities as reinforcing structural advantages, hoarding resources, and replicating oppressive systems through spatial acts of oppression. Universities themselves were what Lipsitz (2011) might call places designated as White. Universities were "White places" in that the social relations in the physical place of the university were set up in ways that exclude people of color and privilege Whiteness. The boundaries defined the university as 1) a place replete with resources that were unavailable to people who did not belong and 2) being protected by multiple forms of fetishizing and policing of Black bodies. Further, universities participated in the exclusion of people of color in cities through policies that contributed to the gentrification and pricing out of residents of color.

As participants described their cities and universities, and the experiences therein, they often noted that their universities replicated the inequality they saw outside of campus. Most routinely, this happened in two areas: the resources available to White students vs students of

color, and policies or university actions that reinforced Whiteness as having claim to property[8]. When comparing the architecture and homes of White fraternity members Iris said"

> I looked in here and I was, "Yo, what? This is my city. This looks very different." From the architecture to just the things inside, I'm just like, "Wait. Whoa, whoa. I didn't know y'all was living like this! That's crazy!" And, even the frats, they literally had mansions. No joke, mansions in the middle of campus. You'd go and there's three, four floors, just massive amounts of space. And it's like, "You're just a bunch of bros. How do you have this set-up? Who made this okay?"

The Black women emerging adult students in this study often remarked on the rather explicit connections between Whiteness and social class on campus. Ella said,

> "Then there would just be beautiful expensive ass buildings. I never felt like I belonged there…when it got to those really wealthy buildings, I was like, "Nah, that's not really where I'm at." The Business School, never catch me over there. They had undergraduate majors in business, but it was hella wealthy. Hella White, wouldn't catch me over there. So, I guess if it was like hella wealthy, hella White, I wasn't really feeling it."

Not only was the idea of the university as White made in terms of class, but in the history of the names of buildings on campus. nerine e noted that "The [Black Cultural Center] was, at the time, the only building named after a Black person on campus, and it got built in [in the 90's]. Until [very recently], it was the only building named after a Black person."

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[8] Here I refer to a tenet if critical race theory articulated by Harris (1993) that describes four rights endemic to Whiteness in the US: 1) the right to disposition or the right to pass on privileges; 2) the right to use and enjoyment or the right to use Whiteness as one sees fit, including protection by and from the law; 3) the right to status and property; and 4) the right to exclude.

The university was a White place in terms of the ways that participants described the policing of campus, both formally and informally. Participants noted the police presence on campus, and often highlighted that being policed contributed to feeling as if they did not belong. Iris noted that "Personally, I feel more secure with [college and city police] than a Black man would, yet there's still profiling. I'll walk through campus and see guards looking at me…They'll follow me out the corner of their eye… I belong here, but all right, go off[9]." Maya said, "there's, again profiling by the security guards like, 'I'm walking to class, sir. I don't know why you're worried about me.'" Interestingly, Maya also noted that her presence was also informally noticed by others. She said, "Apparently, I'm intimidating because there will be like women that hold their purses or move away…You have no reason to be swerving on the sidewalk, but they do. You notice things and just keep it moving." Participants offered that their presence was always noted and felt as if they were being surveilled. Iris also noted that gender played a role in who is surveilled and that identifying as a woman might provide some relative safety in comparison to peers that identify as Black men.

The presence of Black emerging adult women was also policed in a literal sense by police officers, but they were also in other ways, particularly in terms of the way that they moved in and out of White fraternity parties. In speaking about one White fraternity party experience Iris said, "I would feel unsafe. There was a frat party, and they were like, 'Oh, they can come in. But *they* can't.' I was allowed to come in, but the people I was with weren't. I stood by the door for 30 seconds, looked around, and this guy tried to talk to me, and I'm like, "This is not where I have to be at. I gotta go. This is not for me." The fraternity men had the power to pick and choose who

[9] This phrase is a colloquialism denoting that one has observed an incident they find offensive but is unwilling to engage in a prolonged action correcting said incident.

entered these places. This policing that occurred in parties was a part of a larger gendered experience on college campuses. Similar to Iris' understanding of policing and gender above, Lynn spoke about the differences in racialized and gendered perceptions on campus and said:

> Black men on campus are definitely treated different from Black women on campus. In some ways there is a lot of oppression. Of course there's always racial discrimination and racially profiling. I feel like both sides have certain things to battle with, where like Black men on campus, yes, they are over-sexualized or hypersexualized in the sense of like he's Black, I want to interact with him. With a Black woman on campus, they (i.e., White students) may not necessarily interact with them. If anything, they're more intimidated because they're like, "Oh, she's a Black girl and she's kind of scary." So, like I don't know, in some way they don't want to interact, where I feel like being Black, in general, there's some cases where they don't want to interact in general, or there's some cases they do want to interact, but their intentions for them interacting with you is not so pure... It's just that being Black on campus, sometimes when White students interact with you, I feel like some of it, sometimes they don't want to interact because they're afraid. This idea that you have stigmas and perceptions of your blackness, … in that it makes them feel like, "Oh, I'm uncomfortable. I don't interact with this person." Ya know. Or there are other cases and they may not necessarily say it, but you can feel it because you can see how they interact with everyone else, aside from you, or you can see how they look at you, or you can just feel the vibe. It's like something that doesn't have to be spoken to. You just already know.

Black women in this study suggest that they were at once fetishized and relegated to the margins because of race, gender, and the places they navigated. The policing of their bodies in White

university spaces was a near universal narrative. Participants had to make explicit choices about where they went. They understood that their actions on campus were limited by a policing. They had specific *place-based and place and gender-based* understandings of the ways to navigate urban universities.

Yet, this was not the only way that universities acted as White places. Perhaps the most incisive of complaints was that universities were changing urban areas through gentrification. Participants often remarked that their homes, the cities that they had spent so much of their time in, were changing as a direct and indirect result of universities expanding the bounds of campus life. Iris spoke about a particular historically Black neighborhood in her city and the changes taking place because of university expansion. She asserted that the neighborhood of Barrington was a Black place before gentrification, but:

> We fighting, but I'd say it still is a Black place…There's so many just different entities and organizations that are encroaching upon it. I've talked to a couple of people about this. There are different suburbs or just townships outside of the city that people have been moving out to. Apparently, there's this thing where they have Section 8 people moving out. So, they've been moving Section 8 and low-income housing out there to get them out of the city, which has been a really interesting thing to hear about.

When asked who was moving people, Iris said, "The government, because as far as moving housing and Section 8 and stuff that, that's their territory. But, there's definitely incentives or talks from the universities, or whatever the case may be, to have that be done." The encroaching of White university place into and over Black places was disorienting. Ella spoke about her college's encroachment into her childhood neighborhood. She said, "I remember driving up the first major hill, I had to walk as a kid and I saw this White girl running with her dog. Blew my

fucking mind. Never saw it in my life. I was like, 'Oh, shit. God damn it. No.' That was the first step. Second step is I went to the taco shop ordered my food, they had a fucking chicken vegan bowl or some bullshit."

Participants viewed these changes in longstanding understandings of home as changes enacted for the benefit of White people, and often critically and angrily reflected on what these changes meant for longtime Black residents. Ella reflected:

> It's fucked up that White people are the only ones who are considered deserving of some quality. For decades we, low-income POC go without, and all of a sudden, when a White person has some interest, then all of a sudden we start getting more resources. It feels inhumane, and it feels like our lives are not valued.

As these urban universities grew, they sometimes displaced the families of their own students and erased the history of longtime residents. As Ella reflected, this process was dehumanizing, and she was conflicted about what it meant to attend the university that was contributing to this process.

There are Black places on White Urban Campuses

Finally, the participants who attended HWIs reflected that despite being students on a sometimes overwhelmingly White campus, they found safe harbour in institutionally supported places dedicated to their success and well-being (e.g., Black cultural centers). These places were spaces of respite and safety for students as they moved through their days. These places of respite were particularly important as students encountered microaggressive and otherwise aggressive affronts to their personhood on campus. Raven mentioned this after describing an otherwise cold campus climate for Black women. She said, "there were resources on campus where you could find people that were like you. The Black Student Association meant

everything... There was an importance for places where Black people can meet each other, but also get encouragement and support." The organization that Raven described was one that received institutional funding to support Black students, but was student-run. In detailing her daily routine, Iris spoke about her journey through campus as one where she left her White roommate and immediately embarked on a journey of finding Black places. Her routine involved meeting with Black friends after lunch. She said, "you really are inside this Black sphere. From there, I'd go to the Black Cultural Center. I'd be there and talk to friends and staff, and honestly just enjoy time to have space where it's Black people and Black voices." Outside of cultural centers, participants also described living environments on campus that were, by definition, Black places. Ella said, "the beautiful thing is that we had this African-American theme program, the Afro-floor…it was all these Black undergrads living together having our own "Real World" situation. We had programming and activities and it was very rooted in our Blackness." Several participants at HWI's noted that these Black residential places were integral to their ideas of comfort and safety. These were the places participants spent time, even when their official residential contract was done.

Research Question Two: How do these women's experiences as Black women in these places influence their SPD (i.e., beliefs about (in)justice, and beliefs about their capacity to create change, and their actions towards that change)?

My analysis elicited three narrative themes: 1) Critical sociopolitical reflection and action as central to making Black places for women; 2) The creative possibilities of imagining future Black places; and 3) Black sisterhood as a site of action, hope, joy, and safety.

Critical Sociopolitical Reflection and Action as Central to Making Black Places for Women

Throughout the study, participants spoke at length about how they, as women, created Black places in their universities and cities as sites to celebrate, promote justice, and engage one another. They described the spaces that they created as safer than surrounding city and university contexts. The desire to and involvement in making of Black places, on Historically White Campuses specifically, was the result of critically reflecting on power, time, and place, understanding the possibilities that might create a more liberatory place, and building the efficacy to act towards that change in their contexts. Khadijah helps us to understand both *place-based critical reflection* and *place-based critical motivation* to create Black places when she said,

> I want to say the first time where it made me look at "ooh, me?" you know was definitely when I was going to school in this private school bubble. I was just like- I mean, whether I like it or not, I mean, I am here. I think that was the moment where it was like, okay, we can't be the exception just because we want to be, kind of thing. I had to really look at, 'Okay, how am I being in the system?' Right? Because they want us to be a part of the system, because that's how it continues. So, how am I almost being complacent in this? What am I doing? Right? Where am I going? I'm going to this school. It's a private school. Where are they putting their money? Towards the community? No.

Participants often reflected that the ways that they inhabited urban environments, including urban university settings, and how they were excluded and dehumanized in White places the served as the impetus for Black placemaking. Beyond the reflection on university city relationships, the Black women in this study also reflected on the exclusion of Black women on campus places, particularly their exclusion from places of joy. Lynn spoke about this when she described a different aspect of White party culture (i.e., beyond the bodily policing Isis

described). She described her interactions at these parties, that were supposed to be a fun occasion, as dehumanizing, and isolating while potentially dangerous. She said that at these off-campus (and mostly White) parties she "feels the Blackness, I feel my identity being judged upon. So, I would say definitely off campus parties, just especially, even if I'm with my friends, just being the minority there it feels uncomfortable." These parties were dehumanizing experiences that moved beyond policing of Black women's bodies. She said,

> The only time White people are ever bold to interact with us Black girls and such, is when they're super drunk. You notice the difference where it's like, they interact with you at the party, but in the classroom or just in passing by, they would never say "hi" to you. That's like interesting you know. The only place that seems Black girls are recognized … as being human beings are when these folks are drunk at parties. Yes, when they're drunk, but in some way, even that, that's still giving them too much credit.

This tension of being in a White place and the uncomfortableness of being in such places spurred Khadijah, Lynn, and others to think about the ways that they could resist the university from within and create more city-wide change. These response from several participants was to employ Black placemaking to transform the White spatial imaginary of campus (i.e., to transform the spatial, cultural, and social arrangement of campuses that benefit White students) in order to actively create Black places.

Khadijah spoke at length about Black people creating their own Black places, and described the way that Black students cared for one another and why they did this.

> I think it's a combination of everyone being the only Black kid in the class and having to either be the spokesperson or listen to these statements being made and having to just ... In some cases, people just were more comfortable not saying anything, because they

didn't feel like it was worth it. … And I think I remember having conversations with people where they were like, "I always feel like I have to perform for them. I have to be funny. I have to be really happy all the time." And it's tiring when it's just not authentic or just, you know, ... But, yeah, it was nice to see people just be like, "Okay. You know, 'You having a bad a day? It's okay. You can come here, you know. Good day? You can come here. It's all okay because we're here. You can participate in the games. You can not participate in the games if you don't want to. We're all here. Food is free. Grab a plate. Come eat."

Black placemaking is not as concerned with resistance as much as it is concerned with the collective agency and humanity of Black people. Black placemaking is the act of transforming otherwise oppressive places into ones more concerned with the celebration, joy, intent, and agency of Black people (Hunter et al., 2016). The notion of Black placemaking as an intentional labor of love and care was echoed by Maya. She said, "We had house parties and stuff, and then we have more broader campus events. [Brownleaf] has a very strong, and supportive Black student community. So, you're going to take care of the students who are coming up behind you." Participants' Black placemaking efforts were also an everyday, sometimes improvisational, occurrence that served as a means of cultivating joy for participants. Iris noted that "We'll move in groups and wherever we go we make Black places. If we're going to lunch somewhere, we take over a table and we just have fun there. So, it's us creating spaces, even if there's no designated spaces." These intentional efforts moved beyond a static simple gathering. These were dynamic and sometimes mobile places of joy. These participants critically reflected on their contexts and engaged in actions that celebrated their agency and humanity. This was not simply combatting injustice, these acts sustained them.

Finally, the notion of making Black place was not only relegated to on-campus places. Participants often described acts of Black placemaking outside of university contexts. Iris discussed one such instance of an impromptu block party and said, “They cut the block off. There's food, there's music, sometimes a moon bounce. It’s a fun space. Even if you're not from that neighborhood, you’re drawn in. You can walk up and be like, "Hey cousin." And then grab a plate.” Participants made impromptu Black places in both city and university contexts to make sure that other Black people were loved and cared for in the midst of inequity. These created places were reflective of a more democratic, humanizing, and joyful understanding of places to sustain them.

The creative Possibilities of Imagining Future Black Places

Participants often reflected on the sometimes-problematic structures and policies of their cities and universities as a launching point for imagining what the most ideal versions of their cities might look like in the future. These conversations often centered on imagining cities are places oriented towards the collective good, and focused on taking care of both the physical environment of the city and the people who experience the brunt of inequitable conditions. Imagining future cities, enabled a move beyond critical reflection into imagining compassionate, joyful, loving, and caring environments. As they described what they imagined it might be like to live in a good place, participants espoused changes at all levels, from governance of cities to the temperature. In imagining what a good city might look like Sarah said, “I feel like it would just mean people caring about... I feel like it just takes people, the city, I guess, wanting to make sure that it looks good for those residents.” Ella spoke about the specific conditions that might make a city a just and good place. She said,

> We would have jobs that we wanted. We have good education. Folks will be able would be able to heal ourselves in terms of the gang violence and stuff. Families would have access to quality healthcare and mental health. Oh my gosh, we would have therapy. But, I think we would be the same. The makeup of this city would be the same. The taco shops will be the same, the laughter, you know what I'm saying? Liquor stores and liquor stores, but they got that bomb-ass candy, and we'd run into each other in the aisles. And the candy lady would still be there, multiple "candy ladies" in the projects.

Ella spoke to a lack of constraints on the human condition and opportunities for everyone to be whomever they wanted to be. Amel also spoke or equity as a hallmark of good and just cities when she said, “I wish that wealth was equally distributed. I wish it was, because everyone deserves to live in a nice house. Everyone deserves to have the resources they need to take care of themselves and their families.”

Khadijah’s imagining of a good city was influential in her Black placemaking efforts and hopes for the future. She said:

> I hope that I create places like that... I hope that I am always fighting for places where it's not only just livable but enjoyable. I think life should be filled with that joy. I think it is easy to, okay, ‘What people need?’ You know, always, you know, get them the basics and that we need to just survive, but more than just survive. I want life to be joyful for people, you know. I talk a lot about creating these safe spaces… But, in order to even do that, …you need some kind of basic knowledge that you are going to survive in an actual, physical, warm space. And, I continue to grow and learn and make more things, I hope that I create more of that physical, because I think people need it.

In sum, cities served as a site for not only *place based critical reflection* on inequity, but imagining possible Black cities served as a site of motivation and imagination to change an inequitable world.

Black Sisterhood as a Site of Action, Hope, Joy, and Safety

Finally, as participants narrated their experiences in their cities and urban universities and their efforts to transform these places, notions of Black sisterhood were impossible to ignore. For these Black women students, their bond with fellow Black women were indelible resources that helped them reflect on injustice, pursue action, and provided respite when their efforts at social justice took a toll. In identifying the role of Black sisterhood in shaping critical reflection, Danielle said, "I feel like a sister is someone you can talk to and share everything. Because we are so close, we're going to talk about issues that arise in the community and just the world in general." These sisterhoods allowed participants to freely reflect on and engage in conversations around the inequalities they saw in their cities and on their campuses. Amel spoke about her best friend and the transformative power of the sisterhood they share. Amel said:

> I grew up in [East Fortune] like, oh, everything's okay but going to [Fortune University], I'm like, 'Oh, no, things are not okay!' And this is something that now that I've been able to see things in this view. Well, I need to teach my children about social justice, about this stuff my parents didn't even teach me about. Because, when I tell you, if it wasn't for my sister friend, or [the sisterhood], I would be blinded. Because I didn't even know that was a thing as social justice, because my high school never offered that.

Even more than providing a safe place to reflect on the community issues and personal instances of oppression they face, Black sisterhood was a site for these women to be reinvigorated, to rest,

to be vulnerable, and to be safe as they moved towards critical actions. Ella noted this when she said,

> I don't have to explain that to my Black woman friends. It's that not needing to have to explain my dehumanization that creates space for me. The sisterhoods that I have, have poured into me, which allowed me to have the energy to continue to do the work that I do, to believe in myself, to believe in my work. Without that, I wouldn't be able to be an activist, I wouldn't be able to do the work that I do, because I would be so low I wouldn't be able to get up. I lift up sisterhood because the vulnerability and the care that I have in my sisterhoods is unmatched. I have really awesome, awesome guy friends. But, the sisterhoods that I have, and how we love each other ... I don't know. It's magical, the freeness with how we love each other, and the support that we give to each other, the honesty. The vulnerability, the spaces that we create for us to just be.

Black sisterhood was a gendered site of healing from the everyday encounters of oppression participants faced in the cities and on campus. Further, for women, sisterhoods were a reprieve from the everyday isolation they felt being the only Black person in several places on campus This healing, vulnerability, and care was necessary in sustaining their own critical actions.

Further Black placemaking activity was often in generated in and completely supported by these sisterhoods. Khadijah spoke about Black women organizing and planning events on campus to create safe Black places, and reflected that “Black women made the whole event. It was all Black women made the whole event come through, 100%. It was great.” Maya spoke about how her own Black placemaking activities were spurred by Black sisterhoods that were forged in a Black place on campus:

> I had my house, which was the [‘yonce] house... We had a living community. I knew at home we had this Black women's community. And we celebrate birthdays, people getting jobs, we celebrated everything there was to celebrate. We'd have cooking nights, movie nights. So, we hung out a lot together. We go to parties together and this is where creating the [Black women summit] comes in. We had a group of women that [could] meet together and plan this black women's summit that was open to everyone in [Northwest Stumpton] that we housed.

The ‘yonce house was itself an intentionally crafted place emblematic of Black placemaking activity. Further this was a place sustained by Black women for Black women and out if it came more opportunities for Black women to be cared for and celebrated.

Finally, Black sisterhoods served as of loving and labor filled relationships. nerine e reflected on the intensity of these loving relationships and said,

> I kept realizing more and more of the ways in which my relationships with women, Black women specifically, have saved my life. And, I think somewhere in the process of being in places, of being so uncomfortable I have to come within myself, Black women were the ones who pull me back out in those moments…There's an everyday-ness and part of that everyday-ness is joy and gentleness and caring, and love and selflessness in everyday sisterly familiar way. And, also in an everyday real way that manifests into labor that is tiring and exhausting.

Black sisterhoods were sustained and everyday acts that also served as sites of intentional socialization. These sisterhoods facilitated a place for rest and healing, but they also facilitated celebration and joy. Maya describes this when she said that the sisterhoods she cultivated were a place of joy. She said “we celebrate birthdays, people getting jobs, we celebrated everything

there was to celebrate. We'd have cooking nights, movie nights and hang out." For Maya this cultivation of sisterhood "was much of my vision of activism." The cultivation of Black sisterhoods was, in sum, a kind of activist joy-making and celebration of the everyday-ness of Black womanhood in cities and on campus.

Discussion

Using SPD theory, BFE, and Black spatial imaginaries as guiding theoretical frames, this study sought to explore the ways that college-attending Black emerging adult women make place (i.e., experience, perceive, and imagine urban places—especially urban universities), and how this placemaking informed their sociopolitical development. SPD theory suggests that contexts (e.g., early schooling contexts and community environments) contribute to the civic participation of Black Americans, especially as they seek to transform the United States to be a more just and democratic nation. Consistent with SPD theory, this study highlights the reality that place is central to the SPD of Black emerging adult college women as they seek to transform the world. Participants narrative geographies highlighted the places women navigated. However, this study also highlights the point that place-based critical reflections are central to the SPD of Black women activists.

Place-based critical reflections were instrumental in how participants navigated urban places and in how they understood the neighborhood borders of cities and campus. Participants described the ways that cities and urban colleges are structured by White spatial imaginaries (i.e., the privileging of White peoples through spatial acts of oppression) and how these places changed over time to further entrench these imaginaries and relegate Black people to the margins (Lipsitz, 2011). In particular, they noted the ways that architecture, street names, building names etc. served as visible and invisible markers of power on campus and in the city. University

borders also served to keep the world out in service of creating a serene learning environment unconcerned with the social issues that surround them. The borders of campus also meant less engagement with activities aligned with social protest for students who most benefited from the imaginaries that created marginalizing social issues.

Participants actively re-storied stereotypical notions of urban places by operating from a Black spatial imaginary (Lipsitz, 2011). Participants noted the struggles and contradictions of urban place and critically reflected on the biased policies and behaviors that create these realities. However, participants also experienced cities and urban university places as sites of communal and collective care. The descriptions of cities as sites of compassion and goodness do not mask the realities of challenge and adversity in urban centers. Instead, participants offered a portrait of these places as ones defined by relationships and by cultural institutions that cultivate goodness, joy, care, and hospitality despite the hard circumstances (Samanani, 2017; Williams, 2020).

The women in this study viewed urban universities, and in particular HWI's, as more like suburbs in a city than as places contributing to the overall welfare of residents (Baldwin, 2021). And similar to suburbs that suffer certain disadvantages (e.g., inequitable housing opportunities in suburbs; Alba et al., 2000; Bailey et al., 2021; Williams & Collins, 2001), universities were plagued by some of the same forces (e.g., inequitable housing opportunities for students; Foste, 2021). Participants often noted that these idyllic "suburbs" kept other urban residents out and did so by design. Instead of being an accessible repository of public service, these places separated "insiders" from "outsiders" and marked campuses as urban places accessible by a privileged few.

Participants also articulated the fact that universities are a gentrifying force, and that the expansion of the borders of the university encroached on life in traditionally Black neighborhoods and shifted Black residents' perception of belonging in said neighborhoods.

These findings are in line with scholarship at the intersection of urban planning and higher education (Baldwin, 2021) that find that universities are plundering cities in service of their own goals. As part of their reflections, participants lamented that they, their families, and extended networks were sometimes directly impacted by gentrification. Participants noted the cognitive and emotional conflict that came from being enrolled in and benefitting from universities that were responsible for displacing their families and communities. As part of their sociopolitical analysis of the complexities of gentrification, these young women activists were compelled to grapple with the question: What does it mean to benefit from the very institutions and processes that are destroying one's own family and community? Importantly, although students attending HWI's described the ways that these institutions engaged in gentrifying practices and the ways that they reinforced fear-based narratives about surrounding communities, HBCU's seemed to cultivate a different relationship to students and local communities. Participants attending HBCU's described their universities as having more open, fluid, and respectful relationships with local communities—particularly with local communities of color. In future studies scholars may benefit from investigating the veracity of these claims.

Finally, participants relayed several stories about how Black bodies were subject to multiple forms of policing and dehumanization (Boyles, 2015). The Black college women who attended HWI's in this reported being policed by officers and fraternity men as they navigated campus and as tried to access places of joy (e.g., parties). Even when they were able to access these events, Black women reported experiencing indignities and danger. There have been recent investigations into college party culture and the ways in which these are racist and sexist events (Armstrong et al., 2006;). Future work should investigate the ways that universities are structured in reifying racism and sexism as a part of the collegiate experience for Black women. Further,

studies should investigate the ways that Black women collectively engender support from one another in community as well as resist this policing on campus.

While universities were sometimes experienced as unsafe and hostile spaces, women also noted that there were institutionally supported places on campus that supported them as Black women. These places (e.g., Black cultural centers) were integral to the Black women in this study. Beyond institutional efforts, Black women created places on campus that highlighted their agency as place makers. Multiple participants created physical places on campus and in cities where Blackness was celebrated and Black womanhood, in particular, was re-humanized after navigating a sometimes-unkind college campus. Further, participants spoke about "mobile Black places" that existed outside of physical spaces that allowed them to navigate campus together. Importantly, the ability to witness and create such places may infuse a sense of political efficacy in women. Many participants spoke about the modeling of these efforts, particular from other Black women as inspirational. Finally, the ability to imagine these places may help cultivate sociopolitical skills and capacities such as a prophetic imagination (i.e., an imagining of a just alternative to the dominant social world; Brueggemann, 2001) and may inspire hope.

One unexpected contribution of this study was the narrative on Black sisterhood as a site of hope, joy, and safety for activists. In many ways, these sisterhoods were reminiscent of what bell hooks (1990) names as a homeplace, a "special domain, … [a place] where all that truly matter[s] in life [takes] place—the warmth and comfort of shelter, the feeding of our bodies, the nurturing of our souls. There we [learn] dignity, integrity of being; there we [learn] to have faith" (p. 383). These sisterhoods, as described by participants, were (home)places where Black women were not objects, but subjects free to, as Ella said, "just be." It was in this "just being" that many participants were able to pause and gain the strength to carry on, express doubt and fears, and be

vulnerable when they were otherwise not able to do so. Sisterhood was a gendered site to engage in healing, support, and care. Although Black sisterhoods may fall outside of what we consider 'place,' these were sites from which participants launched Black placemaking activities and healed from activist work. Future work on SPD should investigate the collective, familistic nature of activism (Carmen et al., 2015), and the ways that strong, gendered friendships and collectives may facilitate the continuance of activism and justice making through allowing Black women to rest and care for one another and cultivate places of dignity and justice. Viewing these (home)places through a BFE lens, we should not only investigate these sisterhoods for their inherent value and what they do to change the lived experiences of the women who are engaging in them, but for they ways that they allow women to transform the world.

The results from this study offer an extension to SPD. The findings point to the need for SPD theory to broaden its focus to include not just actions that reflect traditional notions of resistance, but actions such as Black placemaking that seek to cultivate sites of human dignity, creativity, care and joy. Focusing on Black placemaking allows us to center the collective, everyday, and mundane transformational acts that Black collegians engage in to "transform the places in which we find ourselves into places in which we live" (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, p. 1). Further, understandings of context in SPD theory tend to be individual and rather than collective, as such we do not have communal approaches to understanding place in SPD (Carmen et al., 2015). Black placemaking's focus on these collective efforts may allow us to extend SPD theory in ways that allow for that recognition.

This study is a call to higher education scholars and scholars of SPD to investigate and map the goodness of urban settings and urban students (Mattis et al., 2019) with the explicit acknowledgement that it is impossible to study urban colleges, and development of any kind

within them, without studying the cities in which they find themselves more thoroughly. Development is "spatially, socio-politically embedded, personally specific, and multi-directionally influenced" (Mattis et al., 2019). Whereas the focus of SPD is indeed the development towards the transformation of oppressive worlds, Black placemaking offers scholars the chance to 1) focus on the humanity and goodness (Mattis et al., 2019) and 2) focus on these behaviors in specific urban higher educational settings (Mattis et al., 2019; Tichavakunda, 2020). Indeed, Black women face oppression across place, gender, class, and sexuality, and frames examining the developmental capacity to change those circumstances need to conceptualize justice and liberation across those domains (Butler, 2018).

Altogether, these results and frameworks suggest that to study the multiple lives Black collegians, and particularly Black college women activists, we need different frames. Although all participants in this study identified along a spectrum of activism, their work was not always ensconced in a resistance. Sometimes, participants just wanted to create a place where their collective humanity was acknowledged, respected, and loved. This calls for frames, as Tichavakunda (2020) notes, that "examine the dynamic nature of Black life" (p.12). Although SPD is aimed at the resistance of oppression, the frame may be extended to account for the ways that making places is influential in the SPD of Black women college students. While not explicitly aimed at reifying the humanity of Black citizens, the central processes of SPD are indeed a part of the placemaking activities of participants in the study. For the Black women in this study, the work of activism is not always resistance, sometimes it is what Carmen et al., (2020) call ontological healing. This is a process of identifying the wounds and injuries of oppression and the wounds sustained in resisting that oppression and gathering in created places to critically reflect on the ways that these wounds constrict agency in the world. This was akin to

the process participants describe occurring in Black sisterhoods. Black placemaking may offer a rejoinder to Carmen et al., (2020)'s call for expanding SPD beyond cognitive and induvial dimensions into more contextual and communal perspectives. Further, Black placemaking offers a lens into the collective labor of Black people as they move to create these places (Hunter et al., 2016; Tichavakunda, 2020). Finally, future work examining the ways that Black women and girls change place needs to take up frames that "see where Black girls cultivate care that is rooted in justice, respect, reciprocity, and futurity" (Butler, 2018, p. 40). Rendering Black women and girls as visible and navigating places with them as they re-story and re-make place is "first required action in activism for and with Black girls, as it then pushes toward hearing girls, believing girls, understanding Black Girl matters, and articulating why Black girls matter" (Butler, 2018, p. 40). In other words, we must love, fight alongside, and Black college women who are already doing so much to change our cities and the worlds they influence.

A Note on Reflexivity

These findings are not without my own biases that are reflective of my insider and outsider positionality. To start, I am a Black man graduate student studying the experiences of Black college women activists. This means that although I share racial and student identities with participants, I do not share a gender identity which has been a key part of the findings in the study. Further, the research team I worked with in the initial coding of the transcripts was composed of a diverse team of undergraduate women with whom I do and no not share several identities. I have hoped to find a way to be in between this dichotomy of insider/outsider and "embrace and explore the complexity and richness of the space between entrenched perspectives" as I pursued this work (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 62). These categories of insider and outsider are untidy and in seeking the in-between I often found myself trying to bridge the

divide between myself, participants, and my research team. I consistently reflected on the power and privilege I had in doing this work. It was this perspective that guided me as I extracted final themes alongside the research team. I, as well as I could, relinquished power and was humbled by the result.

Future Directions

The findings in this study draw us to several exciting possible avenues for future study. First, I return to Tuck and McKenzie (2015) and Casey (2009) in agreement that higher education scholars and psychologists need to seriously interrogate the ways that place, and the construction of place through social relations, histories, and policies influence developmental outcomes, identities, and the educational enterprise. Most germane to this inquiry, while there is theoretical (Watts, 1993) evidence for the ways that place is influential in SPD, evidence for the ways that place is a central facet of this development is limited. Scholars frequently name 'urban' place without truly theorizing what urbanicity means for participants in terms of the ways that place may indeed shape SPD. Findings from this study highlight one potential line of inquiry—how might we examine placemaking as a developmental process aligned and using components of with SPD? Truly examining urban place as a generative part of the SPD process may produce more localized understandings of a generalized developmental process.

Another possible area of inquiry deals with the HBCU's in this study. Many of the placemaking processes described in this paper were specific to the HWI's that participants attended. That is not to say that there were not placemaking activities on HBCU's, but because HBCU's were already seen as Black places, the narrative of placemaking on these campuses was different (e.g., included fewer references to a sense of alienation). Future work should explicitly examine how placemaking and SPD are linked for students on urban HBCU campuses.

This inquiry was born out of an observation that Black college women were somewhat excluded from the research discourse on SPD. The findings of this study highlight some potential new avenues for exploration. Few studies have sought to qualitatively explore how socialization and critical reflection on gender informs SPD of Black college women (Guillaume, 2020). Future work in higher education and psychology might explore how these processes are specifically related. Furthermore, examining the ways in which sisterhoods are a critical and activist celebration of the everyday-ness of Black womanhood might help to understand the everyday nature of SPD for Black women. Finally, future measurement of concepts associated with SPD can explore specific measures capturing gender-based critical reflection and action.

Limitations

This study makes a number of contributions to the study of SPD in Black emerging adult women, however, it is not without limitations. First, the participants in this study were a small sample of Black, college-attending, emerging adult aged women activists from 4-year colleges. The extent to which these findings may apply to other Black emerging adult women activists in or out of college is not clear. Future work investigating the pathways and mechanisms of SPD should aim to recruit larger and broader sample of Black emerging adult college women. Further, it is not clear how the findings might be different from women attending 2-year colleges where fraternities, forms etc. are less likely to be part of the spatial realities. Future work should more readily incorporate and explore these contexts. Second, although this study purposefully included an ethnoracially diverse sample of Black college women as the population of analysis, future work that includes larger subsamples of native born, multigenerationally identified African Americans and immigrant and first generation Afri-Caribbean and African will allow us to better understand how nativity informs urban-residing women's sociopolitical analysis, critical

motivation, and sociopolitical action. It is possible that women of immigrant origins have different understandings and expectations of the places that they encounter in the US. For example, a Nigerian student from a privileged background may find the level of economic disparity and the unjust treatment of Black people in America's cities and American universities to be particularly shocking. It will be useful, therefore, to explore how place and SPD are linked for women with other cultural and global-spatial experiences. A third, limitation of this study centers on the geographic distribution of participants. The participants in this study were from several large urban centers. Future studies focused on a single localized urban area, e.g., a single region or city, might produce insights specific to a place that are more applicable for policy and practice. Finally, although the coding process through the discussion of emerging was done in a team based and consensual way, the final extraction of these themes was the responsibility of the first author. This leaves some questions about the role of researcher gender and positionality in this research. It is possible that my positionality as a man of immigrant origins may have influenced the interviews, the analysis, and the interpretation of the data.

Table 7. Study 3 participant demographics					
Pseudonym	**Student Status**	**Race & Ethnicity**	**Sexuality**	**Age**	**Institution Type**
Amel	Undergraduate	Black/Cameroonian American	Heterosexual	21	Northeast urban college
Ava	Undergraduate	Black American	Queer	24	Northeast urban college
Danielle	Undergraduate	Black/African American	Heterosexual	21	Northeast HBCU
Iris	Undergraduate	Black/African American	Pansexual	19	Northeast Ivy-League
Khadijah	Undergraduate	Black/African American	Heterosexual	20	Midwest Art College
Lynn	Undergraduate	Black/Haitian American	Heterosexual	21	Northeast urban college
Ella Conley	Graduate	Black/African American	Heterosexual	29	Midwest research institution
Maya	Graduate	Black/African American	Heterosexual	22	South research institution
nerina e	Graduate	Black/Bi-racial	Heterosexual	27	Midwest research institution
Raven	Graduate	African American	Heterosexual	29	South research institution
Sarah	Undergraduate	Black/Ghanaian American	Heterosexual	21	HBCU
Linny	Graduate	Black/Nigerian American	Heterosexual	29	Northeast Ivy-League

Chapter 5 -Conclusion:
Religiosity Spirituality, Place, and Sociopolitical Development

This dissertation sought to address the question: How do religiosity/spirituality and spatial context (urban place and college contexts) inform the sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult women who reside in urban settings? I used quantitative and qualitative approaches across three studies to examine this research question among three different samples of women. Study 1 focused on Black emerging adult women broadly. Here, I explored the contributions of perceived urban structural arrangements, religious and spiritual factors, and individual factors (e.g., age, education) to SPD. Study 2 and Study 3 focused on Black emerging adult college women activists. In Study 2, I took a qualitative approach to investigating the definitions of religiosity/spirituality, and the roles of these cultural ideologies in the SPD of Black college women activists. Finally, in Study 3, I used a qualitative approach to explore links between Black urban placemaking and SPD among emerging adult, college-attending Black women activists. In the current chapter, I synthesize findings across the three studies, highlight some contributions of this dissertation study, offer recommendations for scholars and practitioners, and suggest future directions in the study of sociopolitical development (SPD) among Black college women and college students more broadly.

Summarizing Overall Findings

In Study 1, I sought to examine the concurrent contributions of individual factors, perceived urban structural arrangements, and religious and spiritual factors to the SPD of Black emerging adult women. The findings concerning individual factors showed that educational level

was positively associated with critical reflection and agency, age was negatively associated with critical reflection and agency, and household income was negatively associated with reflection. No individual factors were associated with critical action. These results are intriguing. Previous research has shown that educational attainment is positively associated with SPD (Diemer & Li, 2011). Interestingly, age was negatively associated with critical reflection and agency. In regard to critical agency, this may suggest that younger emerging adults are less convinced that they have the opportunity or the tools to do anything about the system than older emerging adults. Younger emerging adults may be more dependent on family for support and resources and may be especially affected by family expectations and by messages from family about how to focus their attention (e.g., they may experience particular pressures on family to focus on school rather than social justice work). These younger individuals may also, by virtue of their age, have less concrete experience in contexts that might allow them to imagine the world as changeable, or that might help them to imagine how they might effect change in the world. Future studies investigating SPD could investigate the relation between age and a range of factors including the impact of social network members and future orientations (e.g., optimism, hope) and critical agency.

Because of the exploratory nature of the investigation of the link between urban structural arrangements and SPD, I made no hypotheses regarding these relations. However, the findings concerning perceived urban structural arrangements and SPD were revelatory. Findings highlight that participants' perceptions that urban places were safe were positively associated with critical reflection and agency, but negatively related to critical action. In particular, the idea that families and children were "safe" may be particularly important in the reflection and building of political efficacy for Black emerging adult women. Further, the fact that safety was negatively related to

critical action might suggest that perceptions of safe places as "safe" mean that Black emerging adult women see less need to engage in actions to ameliorate injustice.

The findings concerning the relation between religiosity/spirituality and SPD were mixed. Specifically, women's subjective appraisals of themselves as religious and or spiritual were positively related to critical reflection and agency, yet subjective religiosity was surprisingly negatively related to critical action. Further, formal organizational involvement (i.e., viewing religious services online) was negatively related to critical reflection and agency, but positively related to critical action. In-person religious service attendance was also positively associated with critical action. These findings regarding the positive link between subjective religiosity, subjective spirituality and critical reflection and agency, and the findings regarding the link between formal organizational involvement and critical action were in line with established research literature (Herndon, 2003; Mattis, Jagers, et al., 2000). Black religious leaders have historically centered justice as a major theological theme (Cone, 1997). As such, Black youth and adults tend more than other ethnoracial groups in the US to be exposed to messages of social justice and social responsibility in their places of worship (Brown et al., 2016). Black churches also have historically served as vessels for political involvement for individuals and these institutions have supported a range of social justice movements (Hull, 2001; Iseke, 2011). It makes sense that formal religious involvement may lead to more opportunities to critically act. Yet, coupling these expected findings with subjective religiosity's negative relation to critical action leads to a bevy of questions. What does religiosity mean for Black emerging adult-aged women? How do the meanings that they assign to religiosity (and to their identity as religious) inform their thinking about justice and their motivations to act in the service of justice? How do women who are social justice-oriented think about what it means to

be religious? To what extent do these negative relations reflect a particular sense on the part of emerging adult aged Black women that religion is not a path to social justice? Some of these questions are addressed in Study 2. However, future work examining the role of subjective religiosity, subjective spirituality, formal religious involvement, and SPD promise to help us understand much more about religious socialization and SPD.

In Study 2, I build on the findings of Study 1 by examining both the meanings of religiosity/spirituality, and the ways that religiosity/spirituality influences the sociopolitical development of Black emerging adult college women activists. The thematic analysis revealed that participants define religiosity and spirituality as: 1) the evolving relationship between religion and spirituality; 2) define religion as God and institutional commitment, and 3) define spirituality as sacred and purpose-filled connection. Thematic analysis also resulted in three themes elucidating the relationship between religiosity/spirituality and the ways that participants think about and enact justice. Participants' narratives emphasized: 1) religiosity/spirituality as motivational and efficacious in enacting social justice; 2) spirituality, interconnectedness, and collective change in social justice; and 3) religiosity/spirituality, intrapersonal change and activism. Examining the ties between Black emerging adult college women activists' religiosity/spirituality and the ways that they think about and enact social justice elucidated a complex and collective orientation to SPD. In particular, the participants allow religiosity/spirituality to be a foundational part of their work while providing a sort of spiritual efficacy, sense of connection, and sisterhood. Participants used the ever-changing understanding of their own spiritual identity to cultivate hope and moderate the way that they behaved as they pursued social change. Further, spirituality provided rest and healing from the labor of social justice work which in turn re-energized participants pursuit of justice.

In Study 3, I examined college-attending Black emerging adult women's narratives about the relations between their race, gender, place, and sociopolitical awareness and social justice change work. Participants relayed that: 1) cities are hard places filled with communal care; 2) cities are places where you have to understand and navigate boundaries and demarcations of University power; 3) universities are White places; and 4) there are Black places on White urban campuses. These four themes combine to support three narratives about Black women's experiences and how places influence their SPD: 1) critical sociopolitical reflection and action as central to making Black places; 2) the creative possibilities of imagining future Black places; and 3) Black sisterhood as a place of socialization, sociopolitical action, hope, joy, and safety. Participants described their experiences as Black women navigating their cities where they live and the urban universities where they attend school as one that meant navigating power, expanding boundaries, confronting the policing of their bodies and movement, and being critical about the changes that universities wrought. Further, and most importantly they did this while using both place and gender based critical reflection to navigate a geography entrenched in change and power.

As I spoke to participants about their experiences in cities and urban universities, they revealed that places and re-making places were integral to their SPD as Black emerging adult college women. Through resisting the Whiteness of universities and making Black places, showcased a place-based critical reflection and place-based critical motivation. These participants also displayed a liberatory imagining of places that enabled a motivation, efficacy and hope that pushed them to create change. Overall, these narratives highlight the point that for emerging adult aged Black women, cities and the universities in cities served as sites through which these participants were able to think freely about what is good, what is poetic, what is

joyful, and about an everyday ethos of liberation. Finally, participants described Black sisterhood as an identity-based experience of deep connection that allowed them to imagine a more just world, partner with trusted others (i.e., sisters) to create change, and to celebrate, create joy, and heal in everyday moments as they engaged in social justice work.

Contributions and implications

Altogether, the three studies in this dissertation offer new and exciting insights in the study of SPD and, in particular, the study of SPD in college for Black emerging adult women. To begin, these studies give credence to Watts et al.'s (1999) assertion that religiosity/spirituality and aspects of place are related to SPD (as measured by critical reflection, efficacy, and action). The study findings in relation to religiosity/spirituality, while mixed, certainly urge the field to consider 1) the multidimensionality of religiosity/spirituality, and 2) the value of including different dimensions of religiosity and spirituality in both our theorizing about and our empirical studies of SPD. Further, the findings of these studies encourage us to consider how more specific measures of religiosity/spirituality including theological and ideological understandings (e.g., Black liberation theologies, more conservative Protestant theologies, Islam) might help us to understand the role of religiosity/spirituality in SPD more concretely. This study is one of a few that begins to unpack the ways religiosity/spirituality relates to facets of SPD. Religiosity/spirituality, and in particular spirituality, are often theorized to have positive relations with SPD. These findings suggest that there are aspects of religiosity/spirituality that may relate negatively to SPD. Future work must examine the ways that these dimensions of cultural life may undermine as well as promote sociopolitical development.

Study 2 offers new contributions to the SPD research literature by adding credence to the notion that spirituality can contribute to SPD (Watts et al., 1999). Importantly, this study points

to spiritual efficacy as a potential mechanism through which spirituality might impact SPD. In sum, participants saw their social justice actions as part of a larger, purposeful, and Divinely aligned struggle against injustice which enabled them to believe that their actions would be successful despite obstacles. Although the concept of spiritual efficacy exists (see Oman et al., 2012), this study offers spiritual efficacy as a way to rethink political efficacy (i.e., the belief that one has the capacity to create change).

Study 2 also offers another contribution in highlighting the role that religiosity/spirituality and deep relationships bring to SPD. Participants in the second study described their friendships with other women activists as a spiritual sisterhood that allowed them to heal, refuel, and be socialized in their activist efforts. There are bodies of research in the higher education literature focused on the concept of sisterhood in college and what that sisterhood means for college students. What this study offers is a window into how centering sisterhood may broaden the study of SPD from its current individualistic approach to more collective and spiritual understanding of development. Sisterhood offers a gender-based frame for understanding how the women in this study produced a relational epistemology of hope, healing, and love that spurred them on to critical actions. This centering of love, hope, and healing is a contribution to the SPD literature. And, Study 3 highlights the notion of sisterhood as important in the SPD of Black emerging adult college women in that these sisterhoods were an everyday site of healing, care, socialization, and celebration. These studies remind us to focus on the collective and relational aspects of SPD, and to focus on aspects of the human experience such as joy, celebration, and love that are typically ignored in studies of resistance, and in studies of the lived experience of Black adults.

In regard to place and understandings of SPD, this dissertation study is indeed one of a very small number that moves beyond simply naming "urban" as a descriptor of place and moves to investigate the ways that the realities of urban place are related to SPD for Black emerging adult women. The results indicated that perceptions of urban safety, and, in particular, perceptions of safety for children and families, were important to critical reflection and agency, but not to critical action. Considerations of urban place, and in particular perceptions of safety, are a novel contribution to the SPD literature. Importantly, these findings may suggest that while the perception of safety of particular places is important for reflection and agency, it is not sufficient to inspire emerging adult aged women in this study to act critically against injustice. Other work has suggested that young Black women seek more than safety as a motivator for acting against injustice and instead use a liberatory motivation based in imagining more just futures to act against injustice (Gonick et al., 20201). In this dissertation, Study 3 points to the possibilities of imagination as a source for motivating sociopolitical action. Future work should investigate how one's future orientation shapes one's belief in and motivation towards critical action. This study does not rule out safety as a factor in critical action. This work suggests, however, that future work should explore the conditions under which safety inspires action and the conditions under which it does not. Further, this work suggests the need to more thoroughly investigate the spatial markers Black emerging adult women use to signal safety, and how those markers are associated with SPD.

Studies 1, 2 and 3 collectively contribute to the SPD research literature by taking 'place,' and in particular urban place, as a serious contributor to the study of SPD. First, this work highlights the need for studies of SPD to attend to people's place-based critical reflection, and the need for studies in this field to understand how individuals navigate spatial manifestations of

power and oppression. Participants understood that they had to navigate both visible and invisible marking of belongingness and power in the various places that they occupied. This place-based critical reflection was augmented by a gender-based critical reflection that allowed participants to understand how to navigate cities and urban universities as women. These Black emerging adult college women often noted that as they navigated the city and urban university, they were compelled to grapple with both formal and informal policing of their bodies y. Although the original theorizations of SPD do include ideas of place and ecology, these understandings are often relegated to earlier developmental periods. This study urges us to consider place as a factor that is always relevant to SPD. This contribution has implications for higher education professionals. The studies in this dissertation collectively contribute to our understanding of SPD post-adolescence and brings this developmental consideration in conversation with higher education's own developmental literature. Importantly, many of the extant models of adult development common in student affairs master's programs focus on the ongoing development along intrapersonal and interpersonal domains, but without a consideration of power, privilege, and oppression (see Okello 2020 for a critique). These studies remind us that power, privilege, and oppression are indeed a part of college students' developmental ecologies and that the process may look different across identity and context. SPD offers a rejoinder in considering these issues for a wide swath of students.

Implications for Higher Education

These studies make several contributions to the study of higher education. First, these studies bring different conceptual and theoretical perspectives (e.g., SET-RS Urban, Black placemaking) to the study of college student activists in higher education. Second, the findings indicate that religiosity and spirituality may be important contributors to the critical action of

students engaged in activism. Higher education professionals and student affairs staff should be cognizant of the fact that these cultural ideologies guide students and that careful, respectful attention to religiosity/spirituality may help higher educational institutions and their leaders to better understand student activism and SPD.

Second, Study 3 brings a novel methodological approach to the study of college campuses and to the ways in which geographies might be explored in studies of activism in higher educational settings. Through pairing narrative interview techniques with mapping, I was able to elicit narratives about borders (e.g., borders between campus and city) and power (e.g., the university's economic clout, the university's ability to craft fear-based narratives) while investigating how these shaped participant experiences in real time (e.g., how campuses encroach on local neighborhoods, how university-driven gentrification impacts the lives of students and families). The mapping exercise that I developed was invented out of necessity, but it allowed me to approach the study of urban campus places in ways that may have not otherwise been possible during the pandemic. In particular, this mapping exercise allowed me to visualize how participants move through their campuses and cities, and to elicit stories about how those movements informed their sociopolitical analyses and critical reflections and sense of agency regarding (in)justice. The mapping exercise also allowed me to understand how women's movements through campus and the city allowed them to engage in racialized and gendered acts of placemaking (e.g., how they created temporary and permanent spaces of joy and celebration for themselves as individuals and for Black men and women collectively).

Importantly, this movement through different places and engagement in placemaking meant that participants were understanding and changing their environments, but doing so in different ways. Socioecological models (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979) offer one lens through

which to view these processes of engagement, understanding, and change-work. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory allows us to view the link between Black placemaking and SPD as work that occurs in the microsystem, meso and macrosystems where more collective actions towards justice change communities. Future work that investigates the ways that Black placemaking is present throughout the multiple socioecological domains, particularly in how Black people are creating joyful environments despite inequity, may help to develop a more robust theoretical understanding of the social ecology(ies) of Black placemaking.

Third, another higher education contribution of this dissertation study is perhaps an inference that the notion of a 'campus climate' may be a bit of a misnomer when applied to urban campuses. The urban universities where participants were enrolled played major roles in shaping the cities they were located in and structured the experiences of city residents whether those attended the university or not. Campus climate, policy, and behavior had ramifications for cities. Similarly, cities shaped campus climate. Indeed, a key takeaway of Study 3 is that the study of urban colleges and universities should not be undertaken without broader contextualization of the cities in which they reside. As such, the activism of students must be understood at least in part, as a function of the dynamic impact of cities and campuses on the lives of students. Additionally, Study 3 also highlighted the ways one HBCU's unique missional focus may shape 'campus climate' and inform what climate means for the urban places in which this university is located. Participants from the HBCU remarked that the university was open to the public and was very much a part of the city itself. These institutions were almost de-facto Black places that were undergirded by a Black spatial imaginary. HBCU students' experiences in navigating college campuses stood in contrast to the other participants because they reported fewer incidents where they felt threatened along racial lines. They experienced the HBCU as a

place that structurally supported their racial identity and suggested a sense of belonging that eluded other participants. Future work examining Black placemaking on college campuses may specifically examine HBCU's of different types (e.g., single-sex HBCU's vs non single-sex HBCU's) to explore how these institutions shape placemaking.

Finally, Study 3 contributes to the study of higher education by introducing Black placemaking into conversations about college student activism and college student life generally. Although some scholars are beginning to examine Black placemaking on college campuses generally (see Tichavakunda, 2020 for example), this study is one of very few that uses this frame for urban colleges specifically. The findings from this study urge researchers to examine the ways that Black college women agenticallty transform their campuses, not only through acts of resistance, but through acts that center everyday expressions of celebration, joy, love and friendship. Further, the findings of this study have implications for higher education professionals. Creating places in urban college where Black emerging adult women can reflect on injustice and build critical efficacy may help spur SPD. Future work should investigate the particular markers of safety in college campuses and their relation to SPD.

Importantly,

Implications for the Study of Place

These studies make an important contribution to the study of place and in particular the study of urban places. There are, indeed, multiple conceptualizations of place in this project including: theoretical (e.g., Black spatial imaginaries, Black placemaking), measurement (i.e., perceived neighborhood quality variables), and considerations of sociopolitical and structural features (i.e., SET-RS). When considering how we may explore the role of place in SPD (and perhaps the role of place in development more broadly) this dissertation suggests new avenues of

potential refinement and inquiry. First, although social science literature has a tendency to see places in terms of boundaries, this study highlights the need to think about place as dynamic, ephemeral, relational, and rooted in humanity and what humans create.

Second, this dissertation offered one example of a novel multi-place approach that may prove transformative in future research. The approach is one that I created through the narrative geographies. These narrative geographies allowed me to not only examine the everyday ways that participants navigated places, but to think about place at different levels of analysis (e.g., neighborhood vs. institution, institution as a place vs sisterhood as a unique micro-place). In examining these different 'levels' of place or a less bounded approach to place I was better able to examine the intersections of place, identity, and SPD. People operate in multiple places at the same time, move into and through places across the day, and move into and through place across the week. The narrative geographies allowed me to account for not only the static experiences of place, but the movement in and between places, the creation of mobile and ephemeral places, and the experiences of places on everyday journeys that I may have missed if I had focused on a singular place (e.g., a college classroom). Accounting for dynamism as an essential feature of life in urban settings (see SET-RS, Mattis et al., 2019) allowed me to see how moving from one building to the next, or one floor of a building to the next, changed participants' experience of place and their critical reflections and actions. For example, attending to dynamism allowed me to see the ways that Black women created mobile Black places for joy and protection while moving through places frequented by white fraternity men. This dynamism (i.e., making and moving a mobile Black place) emerged as I asked about the mobility inherent in urban places. Taking up the study of place, then, requires us to move beyond the abstract and potentially neutral notion of context. We may find it necessary to examine, at the most basic level, place as

the insertion of human beings into space and the experiences, rituals, policies, and structures that define these places. A critical study of place would also take up how these the experiences, rituals, policies, and structures are influential in spatial acts of oppression and how these acts influence the experience of place based on identity.

Importantly**,** one particular aspect of place emerged across all 3 studies. Place-based and identity-based safety come through as important in all 3 studies. In particular, Studies 2 and 3 support the findings of Study 1 (i.e., the relevance of safety for SPD). The way that safety shows up (e.g., places of safe play for children and families in Study 1, and personal safety from surveillance and from sexual and physical violence in Study 3) were familiar. One important step in future investigations concerning the role of place in SPD, particularly among Black women, may be to identify 1) how Black women define and identify safety in places, 2) how these meanings of safety emerge, and 3) what perceptions of safety mean for identity-based (e.g., gendered and racially gendered) manifestations of sociopolitical development.

Directions for Future Research

This dissertation and the studies therein suggest a number of future research directions. First, one of the limitations of Study 1 were the measures used to capture religiosity/spirituality and sense of urban place. Although the measures of religiosity/spirituality are standard in the field, developing measures that more adequately reflect Black emerging adults' understanding of religiosity/spirituality, may allow more robust studies of religiosity/spirituality and SPD. Additionally, the measurement of sense of urban place in study 1 was limited. Future work quantitatively investigating the relationship between place and SPD would benefit from more robust multi-item measures of perceptions of place.

Relatedly, study 2 offered that there may be an avenue for future research concerning the measurement of religious and spiritual dimensions of political efficacy. In several bodies of literature, and in this study, religiosity and spirituality are theoretically and empirically associated with the motivation for and efficacy towards critical action and resistance (Cone, 1997; Dancy, 2010; Herndon, 2003; Watson, 2006). There are measures that capture the ways that spirituality and self-efficacy interact (e.g., assessments of how efficacious one is in learning from spiritual models; Oman et al., 2012). That said, the current measures of spiritual efficacy standard in the SPD literature do not capture the meanings and nuances of this particular manifestation of efficacy. Future measurement studies that allow us to develop measures of political efficacy including items that capture how political change work may be rooted in one's relationship with the Divine and in theology.

The results of study 2 also prompt us to more intentionally consider the collective and relational aspects of SPD. In Study 2, the participants were women activists. Future work investigating SPD should seek to understand the ways that identities work in gendered (and gendered and racialized) communities to shape the SPD of community members. Four-year colleges and universities may be rich grounds for the undertaking of this research. Higher education scholars have pursued the study of gender-based communities (e.g., sororities and fraternities) for some time (Cohn, et al., 2017; Harris, 1998). However, scholars should also explore the ways that these gendered relationships may function outside of higher education (e.g., in community-based organizations).

Finally, the results of study 3 prompt several avenues of future research. First, more investigations into the everyday ways that Black women college students engage in Black placemaking may offer richer and more holistic understandings of SPD. Further, investigating

how these everyday actions happen in the communities that students create may allow researchers to more robustly theorize how the collective dimension of SPD operates alongside individual efforts towards change. Second, this study urges researchers to investigate place-based and gender-based forms of critical reflection. That is, SPD scholars need to more thoroughly investigate how place shapes reflection, and how gender shapes critical reflection about places in SPD. Importantly, although there is a strain of work on SPD concerning race, racial identity and SPD, there are few investigations concerning gender, gender identity, and SPD.

Finally, future research should explore the place and gender based navigational strategies of Black emerging adult college students in cities and urban higher education institutions. Moreover, these results highlight the need for scholars of higher education to account for this navigation of urban colleges as being explicitly policed for Black women. More thoroughly understanding these forms of policing will no doubt be good for the study of SPD, but more importantly, understanding and dismantling this policing will create safer and freer campuses for Black emerging adult women.

Conclusion

won’t you celebrate with me
what i have shaped into
a kind of life? i had no model.
born in babylon
both nonwhite and woman
what did i see to be except myself?
i made it up
here on this bridge between
starshine and clay,
my one hand holding tight
my other hand; come celebrate
with me that everyday
something has tried to kill me
and has failed
.- **won't you come celebrate with me, Lucille Clifton**

Appendices

Appendix I: Study 2 Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. We are interested in your experiences as a BAKER Fellow, and in your thoughts about the program. We also are interested in your thoughts about ways that the program might be made more impactful, and ways that it might be shared as a model for young people across the country. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. This interview will be confidential (no identifying information will be included in the transcript). If you are uncomfortable answering any question please let me know and we will move on to the next question. If you need a break at any time please let me know and we will pause. Finally, if you have any questions or concerns please let me know.

The first set of questions that I will ask will be about your experience while you were a BAKER Fellow and your thoughts about the BAKER program's impact on you and others.

Background

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and about what motivated you to apply to the BAKER program?
    a. *Probe*: Are there ways that your family experiences or family members motivated you directly or indirectly to do this work? If so, how?
2. If you think of yourself as a religious or spiritual person, did your religiosity or spirituality motivate you to do the work that you did in BAKER? If so, how?

3. Can you tell me about the project that you designed and carried out as a BAKER Fellow?

4. Did your BAKER project have a life beyond your fellowship year? If so, how?
    a. *Probe*: Did you continue to work on the project? Did the project evolve in any way?
    b. *Probe*: Did you keep in touch with participants in the project?

5. Have you participated in other programs through SNCC? If yes, can you tell me which programs?
    a. *Probe:* Outside of BAKER have you been involved with SNCC in other ways (as an employee, donor etc.)
    b.

Program Definition and Impact

1. As a BAKER fellow how would you describe the BAKER program and its mission to someone who did not know about the program?

2. I'd like you to think about your experience in BAKER and the experience you had with other fellows. How would you describe the impact of being a BAKER Fellow on the individuals who participate?
3.

a. *Probe:* What were the most important things that you got out of your time as a BAKER?
b. *Probe:* Do you think that being in the program changed Fellows in any way? Please tell me more.

Before the interview I invited you to bring pictures or objects or artifacts that speak to who you were before BAKER, during BAKER, and that speak to who you are now. May I ask you to share those with me?

4. Please tell me about the pictures/objects.
    a. *Probe:* What do these pictures and objects say about the person you were before being in BAKER?
    b. *Probe:* What do they say about you during your time in BAKER?
    c. *Probe*: What do they say about you now?
    d. *Probe:* When you look across these pictures/objects what do they reveal about how being a BAKER Fellow affected you personally? Please tell me more.

5. What aspects of BAKER had the greatest impact on you and the others in the group?
    a. *Probe:* Did you find *the coordinator* to be helpful? Please tell me more (e.g., what was most helpful? How did it help?).
    b. *Probe:* Did you find the *full day retreats* to be helpful? Please tell me more (e.g., what was most helpful? How did it help?).
    c. *Probe: Did you find the stipend* to be helpful? What was helpful about receiving the stipend?
    d. *Probe*: *Did you have a mentor* while you were a BAKER Fellow? If yes, can you tell me about that relationship? How did that relationship affect you? What was helpful about having a mentor? What was least helpful? Are there ways that the mentorship component could be made more effective?
    e. *Probe*: *What other aspects of the program* did you find to be especially helpful?

6. Please tell me a little about your cohort (your peers and your coordinator(s)) and your relationship with them.
    a. *Probe:* How did your relationship with your peers and your coordinator change over your time as a BAKER? What were the high points and low points in those relationships?
    b. *Probe:* What did you find most challenging and most helpful about being a part of this cohort?
    c. *Probe:* Did you stay in touch with people from your cohort after BAKER? Are you still in touch with anyone from your cohort?
    d. *Probe:* Can you tell me about what contributed to you staying in touch with each other, or not staying in touch with each other?

7. What social impact, if any, do you think BAKER (and if you have participated in SNCC, ways that SNCC) has? Please tell me about that.
    a. *Probe:* Do you think BAKER (and SNCC) have an impact on the world in any way? Do you think they affect social inequality in any way? Please tell me more about that.

b. *Probe:* In your opinion what are the most important ways that BAKER (and SNCC) affects the young people who participate in its programs?

8. How is SNCC different from other programs that you have participated in?

Now I'd like to ask about the way that being a BAKER Fellow affected other aspects of your development as a person.

Educational and Professional Impact

1. How, if at all, did being a BAKER Fellow affect your educational and/or professional trajectory?
    a. *Probe*: Did the BAKER Fellowship affect your educational/professional choices and goals? If so, how?
    b. Did your professional/academic goals change after participating in the BAKER Fellowship? If so, how?

2. Since your time in BAKER have you been involved in other community projects? If so, can you tell me about that work?
    a. Are you currently working on any projects that have been inspired by what you learned in BAKER?

3. Are there tools/lessons you learned in BAKER that you used after BAKER (at school, work, in other organization etc.)?
    a. Are there tools/lessons that you learned in BAKER that you still use in your work today?

4. How, if at all, did the perspectives that you developed within BAKER Fellowship affect the way that you relate to others?

Sociopolitical Awareness, Activism and Leadership

1. How has being a BAKER Fellow affected your interest in learning about political and social justice issues and your knowledge about these kinds of issues? Please tell me about that.

2. How, if at all, has being a Fellow affected how you think of yourself as an agent of change in the world?

3. Since completing the BAKER Fellowship, have you continued to be involved in community or social justice work?
    - *Probe*: Can you tell about some of the work you have been involved in?
    - *Probe*: How do you think that your time in BAKER affected your decision to do this work? If so, how?

4. Since becoming a BAKER Fellow have you found that you have been able to encourage other people to become more politically aware, or to be more involved in justice work? Can you please tell me about that?

Leadership Development

1. How did your work as a BAKER Fellow affect the way that you think about what it means to be a leader?

2. Do you think that your experience in BAKER/SNCC helped prepare you to take up leadership positions once you completed BAKER? If yes, please tell me how the experience in BAKER prepared you.
    - *Probe:* How did your experience in BAKER/SNCC affect the kinds of leadership roles you took on?
    - *Probe:* How did it affect the way that you lead?
    - *Probe:* What are some skills you learned in BAKER that you still use today?

Health & Mental health

1. Do you think that being in BAKER/SNCC affected the way that you think about and the way that you take care of your physical health or mental health? If yes, how so?
    - *Probe:* How do you think the program affected the ways that you think about stress? How you do self-care?
    - *Probe*: How do you think that the program affected the ways that you think about your health?
    - *Probe:* Has being in the program affected the kinds of conversations that you have with people about their health? Can you tell me more about that?

Social Connectedness

1. How did being in BAKER (and SNCC if you were in other programs in SNCC) affect your sense of connection or your sense of kinship with other people in the program?
    - *Probe:* Are there things that happened during the program that led you to feel a sense of connection or kinship to others in the program? Are there things that led you to feel disconnected from others? Can you tell me more about that?
    - *Probe:* Did you maintain connections with any of the BAKER Fellows or with facilitators in BAKER or in SNCC beyond your time in the program? If yes, what roles do those relationships play in your life?

2. How, if at all, did being in the program affect your relationship with your family and friends?
    - *Probe:* Did being in the program create challenges, or did it help your relationship with family or friends in any way? Please tell me about that.
    - *Probe:* Did being in the program change the way that you think about what family means?
    - *Probe:* Did being in the program change the way that you understand your family's strengths or the challenges that your family faces? Please tell me about that.

3. How, if at all, did being in the program impact your relationship with your social community(ies)?
    - *Probe:* Did being in the program change the way that you think about what community means? If so, how?

- *Probe:* Did being in the program affect your sense of community? Did it affect your level of investment in your community(ies)? If so, how?
- Did being in the program impact your ability to build/foster community? If so, how?

4. How, if at all, did being in the program affect how you build social support systems?

Other Outcomes

1. What other effects do you think BAKER have on participants, institutions, or community members who participated in the projects, or others?

2. Is there anything that I didn't ask about, or that you didn't have a chance to share with me that you would like to share before we end?

Thank you so much for taking this time to talk with me.

Appendix II: Study 3 Interview Protocol

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions ask about experience in cities and urban universities. 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. You can end this interview at any time.

Narrative Geography and Mapping

I would like to get a map of the city as you know it, so I will ask you a number of questions that will help me get a picture of you and how you experience the city.

- What city(ies) do you call home? What leads you to think of that city as home?
- Where in the city do you live? How long have you lived there?
- Please describe the neighborhood where you live.
- Where is your campus located?
- If you had to describe the city that you are living in to someone who doesn't know it, how would you describe it?
- If you had to describe your campus to someone who doesn't know it, how would you describe it?
- Again, I want to get a sense of your experience of the city. I'd like to ask you to walk me through your day. From the time you wake up to the time you go to bed where do you go? What do you do in those places? Now, I am going to ask you to think about an average weekend. From the time you get up in the morning to when you go to bed at night, where do you go? What do you do in those places?
    - *Probe*: Where do you eat out? Shop?
    - Where on campus do you spend time? How do you as a Black woman describe the campus climate?
    - Where do you feel safe? Where do you feel unsafe? What leads you to feel safe or unsafe in these places? Please describe the places to me.
- Tell me about a place in the city that has changed in the last 5 years.
    - *Probe*: How has it changed?
    - *Probe*: How is it different for you being there?
    - What is like for you to be there as a young Black woman?
    - Are there ways that the changes that you have seen remind you of justice or injustice?
- Are there places in the city that you associate with spirituality?
    - Please describe them. What makes them feel particularly spiritual to you?
    - Do attend a place of worship?
    - *Probe*: Are you involved in social justice work through your place of worship? Please tell me more about that.
    -

- Are there places in the city where you like to go as a Black woman? Please describe the places and tell me why you feel the way you do there?
- Are there places in the city that you prefer *not to go* to as a Black woman (e.g., where you feel unsafe, not valued)? Please describe the place and tell me why you feel the way you do there?
- Where are the places in the city where you do your work? Please describe those places.

Place

Now I want to ask a few questions about the city and campus.

- How has XX city shaped who you are?
- Have you been to or seen places in (city XX) that made you say, "people shouldn't live like this?"
    - Please describe these places. (What do they look like? What sounds do you hear, smell when you are there?
    - What was it about the place that made you think that?
- Have you gone to places in the city where you've said this is the way people should be living?
    - Please describe the places.
    - What was it about those places that made you think that this is how people should live?
- How, if at all, does your spirituality guides how you think about the kinds of places that are good/healthy for people to live in and the kinds of spaces where people should not have to live?
- How has college shaped what you think of as "good/healthy places" and not good/not healthy places?"
- What do you think it would mean for the entire city to be "a good place?"
- How has XX city shaped the ways you seek to enact justice or pursue activism?
- How does your activism seek transform XX city?
    - Does your spirituality guide any of that?
- How do you think young Black women shape the city? The campus?
- How would you describe the racial and gender climate on campus?
- How would XX be if it was the most just place?
    - How are you trying to make that place real?
- What experiences in the city have motivated you to reflect on injustice?
- What experiences on campus have motivated you to reflect on injustice?
- What everyday experiences or places in the city make you the happiest? Why?

Vicarious and Explicit Dignity Violations

Now I want to ask a few questions about injustice and dignity

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. How, if at all, have those events affected the ways that you think about justice or fairness, or human goodness?

a. *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?
b. *Probe*: Have they affected the places in the city where you go or what you do in certain places in the city?
c. *Probe*: Have they affected the way that you think about protesting, or being politically involved etc.?
d. *Probe*: Have they affected your sense of hope or your outlook on life?

As a Black woman in (name of city) and attending (name of university) are there places where you go or don't go, or things that you do or don't do so that you can make sure that you are treated with respect? Can you tell me about that? (Ask for specific examples)

a. Probe: Are there things you do or don't do at work to make sure that you can stay safe as a Black woman?
b. Are there things you do or don't do when you are in public to make sure that you are treated with respect?
c. 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?

COVID

- How, if at all, has COVID-19 changed the way you approach your activism?
- How, if at all, has COVID-19 changed the way you approach others in the city?
- Has your spirituality helped you in these changes? How?
- Where do you find hope in the current moment?
- How do you think being a Black woman changes how you are experiencing the pandemic?

Liberation, Last Checks, and Anything I May be missing

As wrap up, I have a few last questions

- How do you think this interview might have been different if you were speaking to a Back woman?
- Is there anything else that I may be missing that you think could be helpful?
- Finally, if you could imagine this, what does freedom look like for Black women? In this city? The world?

Thank you so much for your time and your story.

Appendix III: Example Map

Figure 3. Example Map for Study 3

Appendix IV: Recruitment Flyer

Figure 4. Recruitment Flyer

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