

Article

Where Our Bright Star Is Cast: Religiosity, Spirituality, and Positive Black Development in Urban Landscapes

Jacqueline S. Mattis ^{1,*}, Gordon J. M. Palmer ^{1,2} and Meredith O. Hope ³ 

¹ Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA; palmergj@umich.edu

² School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA

³ National Center for Institutional Diversity, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA; mohope@umich.edu

* Correspondence: jmattis@umich.edu

Received: 19 July 2019; Accepted: 27 November 2019; Published: 29 November 2019



Abstract: Social science research offers a particular, narrow view of the lived experiences of Black urban-residing people. When the religious and spiritual lives of Black urban residents are viewed through this narrow lens, the diversity of religious and spiritual experiences and the connections between everyday life and positive outcomes, such as compassion, hope, liberation, joy, etc., become flattened, doing a disservice to the very people whose experiences we aim to understand. We contend that understanding the link between religiosity, spirituality, and positive development among Black urban-residing people requires us to pay attention to the ways that faith helps Black people to navigate the sequelae of five distinct sociopolitical features of urban life. We propose a conceptual framework that links these sociopolitical factors to religiosity, spirituality, and positive development among Black youth and adults residing in urban spaces. We conclude with recommendations applicable to the study of Black urban religiosity and spirituality.

Keywords: religiosity; spirituality; black; urban; positive psychology

1. Introduction

In a now often-quoted talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) cautions against the dangers of singular stories. She notes that at the root of single stories is the issue of power—the power not just to tell another person’s story but to make a story the definitive story. Definitive single stories, she says, erase nuance and complexity, deny possibilities, and essentialize people and places in ways that make them unknowable. The dangers hailed by Adichie are evident in the body of social science research on the lives of Black¹ youth and adults residing in America’s urban settings and in the ways that that body of empirical research examines and describes the role of faith in urban life. Much of the research in psychology on the lives of “urban” Black children and adults focuses disproportionately on stress, violence, adverse health conditions, grief, the sequelae of poverty, etc. The disproportionate emphasis on these outcomes suggest that urban-residing Black people generally live lives characterized by adversity and steeped in social chaos. Perhaps, because so much of the research on Black urban life focuses on adversity, researchers interested in the psychology of religion and spirituality have attended disproportionately to the ways that religion and spirituality inform urban-residing Black children,

¹ We use “Black” as a descriptor in this paper to represent the diverse wealth of ethnic and cultural groups (e.g., African American, Afro-Latinx, Caribbean American, immigrants) represented in the United States that may identify as Black.

youth, and adults' ability to cope with life's adversities and to develop such positive outcomes as hope, forgiveness, and perseverance.

Certainly, a substantial body of quantitative and qualitative empirical work exists that carefully and persuasively documents the power of faith in the lives of Black people (Brown and Brown 2003; Cone 2010; Harding 1997; Hope et al. 2019a; Hope et al. 2019b; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Miller 2005; Taylor and Chatters 2010). However, Black urban life, generally, and Black urban faith life, in particular, are more expansive and more nuanced than even this carefully hewn body of empirical research reveals. In this paper, we seek to broaden the discourse in psychology by exploring how critical attention to urban sociopolitical, spatial, and structural arrangements might expand the ways that we understand and study the role of Black religiosity and spirituality in the life-course development of Black people living in the United States.

We organize this work around three broad questions: What does "urban" mean? What does "urban religiosity/spirituality" mean? How might we study the roles of religiosity and spirituality in facilitating positive developmental outcomes of urban-residing Black children, youth, and adults? We address each of these questions in turn. Our responses to these questions culminate in a socio-ecologically grounded, transactional conceptual framework that we offer as a general guide for future qualitative and quantitative empirical work on the link between religiosity–spirituality and positive development in urban contexts. We believe that our conceptual framework can be adapted to examine the role of religiosity and spirituality in the development of any social identity group that resides in urban settings. However, given our team's empirical interest in the spiritual and religious lives of Black adults, youth, and children, in this paper, we apply this framework to Black individuals and communities. We endeavor to demonstrate how our framework opens up possibilities for more nuanced scholarship on the roles of religiosity and spirituality in the positive development of Black children, youth, and adults who reside in urban contexts. We end with a series of points that must be considered if we are to optimize the utility of our proposed framework—particularly in future research on Black urban-residing individuals.

2. What Does "Urban" Mean?

The United States (U.S.) Office of Budget and Management and, by extension, the U.S. Census Bureau, uses the term "urban area" to refer to both "urban clusters", which consist of "densely settled census tracts and blocks and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 2500 people", and "urbanized areas", which consist of "densely settled census tracts and blocks and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people" (Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce 2011, p. 37252). In addition to size and density, scholars interested in the study of urban areas also characterize urban areas in the U.S. by the diversity of their populations (Fincher and Jacobs 1998; Pew Research Center 2018b).

Although formal definitions of "urban" center focus largely on spatial and population statistics, in the field of psychology, scholarship on "urban" life has tended to follow one of three streams—each of which reveals implicit meanings of urban. In the first stream, scholars have tended to define urban in terms of population characteristics (e.g., population size, density, heterogeneity) and have explored correlations between these characteristics and key outcomes (e.g., epidemiology of crime, health outcomes, substance use, helpfulness). The findings of these correlational studies have been used to make important claims about the benefits and perils of large, densely packed cities and about the consequences of urban diversity (Levine et al. 2008; Mouratidis 2018).

In the second approach, scholars have conceived of "urban" in largely spatial/geographic terms and have examined the complexities of urban life by centering their work in specific microsettings (e.g., schools, neighborhoods) located in contexts classified as urban. In this approach, the conditions of a single microsetting (e.g., a neighborhood) and the experiences of residents of these settings often stand as representative of the conditions of the urban setting and of urban dwellers as a whole. There often is

no explicit exploration in these studies of the ways that the microsetting(s) (e.g., the focal neighborhood) are situated within the larger urban milieu.

In the third approach to the study of urban life, scholars tend to locate the “urban” in people, often in people living in disordered conditions. In this approach, scholars focus empirical attention on specific outcomes (e.g., substance use, violence) among particular demographic subgroups (e.g., poor youth, Black youth) with such ubiquity that we come to equate studying “urban” life with studying the lived experiences of people who are Black/brown, working class, poor, and who are persistently “at-risk” or antisocially engaged (Clark 2003).

When we examine research across these three streams of scholarship, it becomes clear that “urban” is not solely anchored in geographic or population statistics. The persistent pairing of the word “urban” with social problems and notions of decay and the ubiquity with which these issues are studied among urban-residing Black (and brown) people, highlight the reality that in social science research and in popular parlance, “urban”—and its correlate “inner city”—often operate as racialized and classed tropes for Blackness, ethnic minority status, marginality, poverty, and social disorder. Because these tropes are so central in the prevailing stories of what it means to be Black in the United States, people tend to read “urban” as synonymous with “Black”.

Clark (2003) argues that we must push back against narrow and problematic definitions and representations of urban that equate this term with Blackness, structural and moral decay, risk, and social problems. The call to resist these narrow representations of urban spaces and urban-residing people is a call to intentionally oppose ‘strategic essentialism,’ “a political practice whereby an individual or group foregrounds one or more aspects of identity as significant in a particular situation” (Collins and Bilge 2016, p. 133). Clark notes that any earnest exploration of urban spaces and the experiences of people who live in these spaces requires that we oppose this kind of reductionist thinking and that we pay critical attention to race, ethnicity, gender, class, culture, and other social identities and social locations and to the ways that these identities and social locations are linked to history, power, meaning, knowledge, and well-being for the broad spectrum of groups who live in urban settings. 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 centers are “classed” means that money, wealth, resources, and real and perceived socioeconomic statuses have implications for people’s lives and well-being in urban settings. To acknowledge that urban spaces are gendered, is to recognize that sex and gender, and the public and private performance of these identities, matter in urban settings.

In this paper, we build on spatial and population-based definitions of “urban”, as well as on Clark’s cautions, by conceptualizing “urban” spaces as 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. Certainly, raced, classed, and gendered enactments of power exist in other spatial geographies (e.g., rural and suburban areas). However, we are concerned here with how these enactments create stresses, disadvantages, and privileges, as well as opportunities for people in urban contexts, and the ways that people and institutions located in these contexts make meaning of, respond to, and change urban contexts. Consistent with Freire (1970) analysis, we acknowledge that power imbalances are used by governments, institutions, groups, and individuals to alienate, privilege, dehumanize, and oppress some individuals and social identity groups. We are interested in the ways that such imbalances engender violence in and undermine the humanity of those who benefit from the distress and oppression of others (Freire 1970). However, because our principal focus is on theorizing positive developmental outcomes among urban dwellers, we are concerned with urban-residing peoples’ efforts to develop what Freire called liberation, “the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 79). We are

especially concerned with the role of religion and spirituality and the role of religious and faith-based institutions in urban residents' everyday efforts to reflect on and challenge oppression and their efforts to develop positively (e.g., to live humanely, optimistically, compassionately, altruistically, justly).

3. What Does Urban Religiosity/Spirituality Mean?

The overwhelming majority of Black Americans self-identify as religious and spiritual. While we do not have national data on religious involvement and the religious lives of Black people in urban America in particular, the [Pew Research Center \(2014\)](#) "Religious Landscapes Study" reports that approximately 83% of Black people in America (i.e., monoracial and multiracial people living in the U.S. who self-define as Black) say that they "believe in God with absolute certainty" ([Pew Research Center 2015](#)). Similarly, data from the National Survey on American Life (NSAL), a nationally representative study of African American and Black Caribbeans, indicate that 81.2% of Black American adults report attending religious services at least a few times a year, 37.9% attend services at least once per week, 82.8% pray every day, and 83.7% believe that it is very important that parents take their children to religious services ([Chatters et al. 2008](#); [Taylor et al. 2004](#)). Only 10.5% of Black Americans report that they do not have a current denomination, only 8.57% say that they have not attended religious services since the age of 18 ([Taylor et al. 2014](#)), and only 1% identify as atheist or agnostic ([Pew Research Center 2008](#)).

Qualitative findings suggest that African American adults conceive of and experience spirituality and religiosity as distinct but overlapping phenomena. In particular, Black American adults define spirituality as "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), whereas, religiosity refers to "the degree to which individuals adhere to the prescribed beliefs and practices of an organized religion" (see also [Mattis 2002](#), p. 310; [Newlin et al. 2002](#)). However, there is overlap between spirituality and religiosity. Indeed, 81.2% of Black Americans adults self-identify as both spiritual and religious ([Chatters et al. 2008](#)), and quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that religiosity and spirituality are associated with the same functions including meaning-making, guidance, purpose, a sense of peace, and with the capacity to cope ([Mattis 2000](#); [Newlin et al. 2002](#)).

The definitions that Black adults assign to spirituality and religiosity are important, but they highlight the need for definitions of "urban spirituality and religiosity", generally, and "Black urban spirituality and religiosity", in particular. In keeping with prevailing approaches to the study of urban life, urban theologians have often privileged population characteristics as defining aspects of urban spirituality and religiosity. For example, [Kenel \(1987\)](#) notes the following:

... (a) the urban dweller must deal with a great number and variety of people; (b) population density makes the notion of personal space a significant one; and (c) the number and variety of people may place great demands on a person as well as enable one to find people of like mind. In dealing with these factors, the Christian must bring Gospel values into dialogue with them. It is in such application that an urban spirituality has its roots. Thus, one can speak of an urban spirituality not in the sense that urban dwellers are essentially different from other human beings, but in the sense that urban life calls for sensitivity to particular aspects of the Gospels. (p. 304)

Kenel cogently argues that what marks urban religiosity and spirituality as distinct—i.e., as "urban"—is the set of ecological conditions, questions, and needs to which spirituality and the tenets of faith must be applied. The focus on the Gospels in Kenel's framing reveals the Christian slant of much of urban theology—a slant that is consistent with the religious and spiritual history of Black Americans. Indeed, the majority (79%) of Black Americans who identify as religious identify as Christian ([Pew Research Center 2015](#)). Sans the reference to the Gospels, Kenel's conceptualization of urban spirituality is relevant across lines of religious and spiritual identity.

We agree with Kenel that the size, density, and diversity of urban settings create conditions that impact people's experience of God, faith, and the sacred. However, scholarship in Black urban

theology offers more focused thinking about the ecological and contextual conditions that define Black urban religiosity and spirituality. Black theologies, generally, and Black urban theologies, in particular, attend to the intersecting realities of racism, classism, and (in the case of Black feminist and womanist theology) sexism in the lives of Black people (see [Crenshaw 1991](#); [Gilkes 2001](#); [Isiorho 2008](#); [Junior 2015](#); [Stewart 1995](#)) and to the ways that these “isms” create a complex matrix of injustices that mark Black bodies and urban communities as spaces of contestation, surveillance, and control. Black children and adults are challenged to develop religious and spiritual beliefs and practices that help them to navigate the everyday joys, beauties, and challenges of life (e.g., finding love, managing loneliness, identifying purpose), as well as the complexities of injustice and oppression ([Martin and McAdoo 2006](#); [Martin 2011](#)). Black children and adults must also find ways to integrate religiosity and spirituality into their lives in ways that allow them to achieve the outcomes (e.g., forgivingness, joyfulness, gratitude, hope, purpose) that are aligned with what it means to develop positively. At present, psychologists interested in studying the religiosity/spirituality–positive development link among people in urban settings do not have a coherent conceptual framework to guide their qualitative or quantitative empirical work. We endeavor to fill this conceptual gap.

4. Our Framework

Drawing from scholarship in psychology, urban studies, and theology, we offer the socioecological, transactional framework for the study of religiosity and spirituality (SET-RS Urban) as a model for future quantitative and qualitative research on the links between religiosity/spirituality and positive development in urban settings. As is the case with all transactional, ecological frameworks, the SET-RS model views positive developmental outcomes as the result of dynamic interactions between people and contexts as they occur over time (see [Sameroff and Mackenzie 2003](#) for a discussion of transactional frameworks of development). SET-RS highlights the multidirectional and layered nature of development. The bidirectional arrows highlight the reality that urban structures, religious institutions, families, communities, and individuals mutually influence each other. Time is not explicitly modeled in the visual representation of SET-RS. However, as a model of development, time and change are “baked in” to SET-RS. In sum, structural arrangements, families, social networks, individuals and religious/spiritual institutions, and communities are expected to change over time, and we expect these changes to impact development. As such, SET-RS can be viewed within the context of theories of change and can be used to model development cross-sectionally as well as longitudinally.

SET-RS Urban (see [Figure 1](#)) recognizes that, in addition to being large, densely packed, and demographically diverse spaces, urban contexts, in general, are also defined by five sociopolitical features: (1) inequality (e.g., uneven distribution of wealth, uneven access to resources and power), (2) mobility and dynamism (e.g., daily movement by foot, car, or public transportation; residential transitions), (3) the use of coercive power (e.g., fines, taxes, surveillance), (4) contextually specific norms of engagement (e.g., unspoken rules about eye contact, beliefs about who has the right to occupy certain spaces), and (5) social identity-based representational regimes (e.g., historically situated ethnoracial, class, and gender stereotypes) that influence peoples’ quality of life, how they are treated, the opportunities they will have, and their life outcomes. These five sociopolitical conditions are conditions of urban settings generally ([Davies 2014](#); [Isiorho 2008](#)). Further, these five conditions operate together and influence each other. For example, stereotypes about particular social identity groups as dangerous (social identity-based representational regimes) can trigger the use of surveillance and harassment (coercive power) against these groups and can prompt residents and vital institutions to move out of a community (mobility/dynamism), thereby changing the demographic composition of a community over time (sociostructural change).

SET-RS attends to the ways that these five sociopolitical features of urban life cascade through urban settings in ways that shape urban structural arrangements, including the design of urban settings; the location, quality, functioning of, and access to structural resources/assets (e.g., parks, reliable public transportation) and risks (e.g., abandoned buildings); environmental risks (e.g., noise

and light pollution) and assets (e.g., access to potable water); media risks and assets (e.g., affordable internet access, positive and negative media content); sociostructural risks (e.g., laws, policies, school zones that reproduce disadvantage) and resources (e.g., laws, policies, school zones that support well-being); social organizational risks (e.g., concentrated poverty/disadvantage) and resources (e.g., communities high on material and social capital); and institutional risks (e.g., liquor stores, predatory lending services) and resources (e.g., high quality schools, farmers markets).

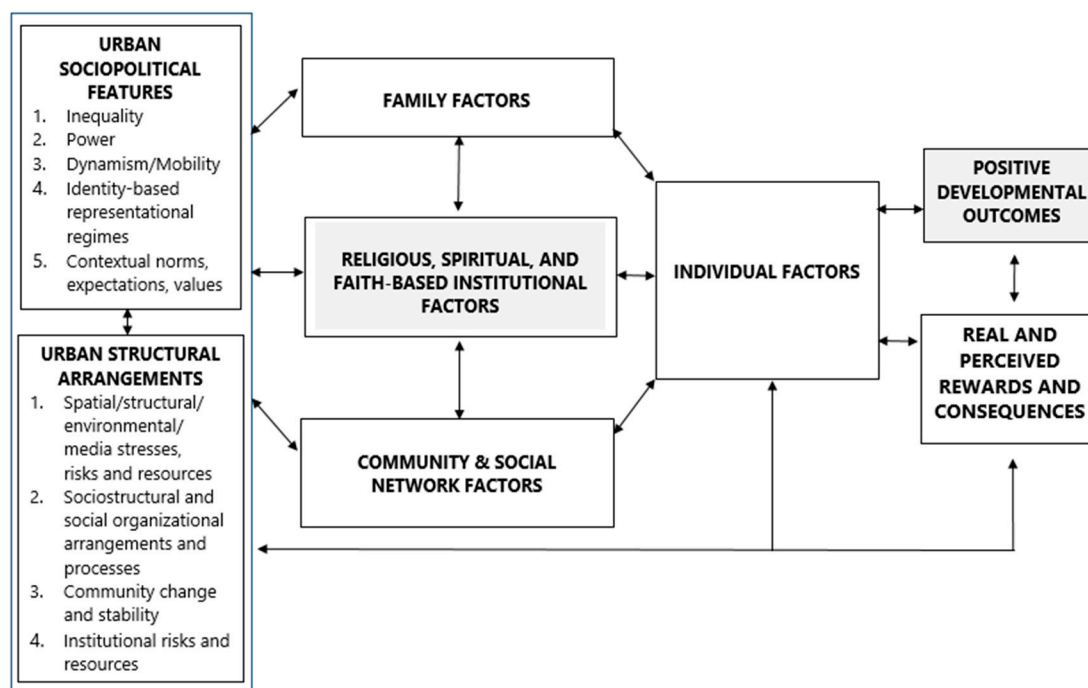


Figure 1. Socioecological, transactional model of religiosity, spirituality, and positive development in urban contexts (SET-RS Urban).

Urban settings vary with respect to their social organization (e.g., size, density, ethnoracial composition, concentration of wealth and poverty, levels of segregation). They also differ with respect to their social structures (e.g., governance structures, laws, policies); in the ways that policies, laws, etc. are applied; and in who can access structures of governance. Further, urban settings differ in the types, quality, and accessibility of institutions and organizations that they contain (Small and McDermott 2006). Some urban settings are sites where policies and practices of governance honor the dignity and humanity of residents. In other urban settings, people are oversurveilled, treated with indignity, and disproportionately exposed to policies, practices, and conditions that compromise their health and well-being (Davies 2014; Estrada and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2010). Some communities have a high density of risks. Others have a relative abundance of assets.

SET-RS has two intersecting aims. First, the model examines the ways that urban sociopolitical and structural realities work together to create particular experiences, risks, and assets for (a) families, (b) communities and social networks, (c) religious institutions, and (d) individuals. Second, the model aims to explore how religiosity and spirituality operate within and across the various levels of the social ecology (e.g., family, individual, peers) to help urban residents to navigate the complexities of urban life and to develop positively. SET-RS is not prescriptive with respect to the particular aspects of family, individual, social network, or religious and spiritual life to which it attends. We expect that researchers will identify elements within each domain that are relevant for understanding particular positive outcomes for the specific communities that are central in their research. However, below, as we highlight each domain of the ecology, we make note of the kinds of characteristics and experiences that researchers might consider including in their studies.

At the *family level*, SET-RS calls us to pay attention to the ways that the structures and conditions of urban settings affect families and the ways that families ultimately inform positive individual development. Among the inter- and intragenerational aspects of family life that may be associated with positive developmental outcomes are the following: family social location (e.g., immigrant status, socioeconomic status); family structure (e.g., single parent, multigenerational family); relational practices, processes, and quality (e.g., parental–child communication practices); current and accumulated family stresses, risks, resources, assets, and needs; core family values, beliefs, expectations, and goals (e.g., expectations that children and adults will care for siblings or elders); family histories of trauma; family religious socialization (e.g., family religious service attendance); and the presence in families of moral and spiritual models (i.e., family members who enact or undermine tenets of faith and goodness).

At the *community level*, SET-RS attends to the ways that positive development may be informed by factors such as the size, composition, and proximity of peoples' networks of friends, peers, neighbors, and associates; relational practices, processes, and quality (e.g., perceived closeness and dependability) of these networks; current and accumulated stresses, risks, resources, assets, opportunities, and needs of network members; the values, expectations, goals, and perceived agency of members; the religious and spiritual beliefs and identities of network members; and the influence of moral and spiritual models within the network (e.g., the presence of prosocial and antisocial peers, neighbors, or friends).

Central to the SET-RS model is attention to religious and faith-based institutional factors that inform positive development. These factors may include the size, location, and demographic composition of institutions; institutional history and leadership (e.g., history of community non-engagement, presence of charismatic activist leaders); religious community's resources/assets and social and political capital (e.g., the wealth of the faith community, peoples' level of community trust in a religious institution; the number, type, and effectiveness of outreach programs); religious and spiritual ideologies/beliefs, values, and expectations; practices (e.g., rituals, devotional expectations); relational dynamics with the religious community (e.g., opportunities to question religious/spiritual leaders or believers); and religious social support.

At the *individual level* SET-RS pays particular attention to ways that positive development is informed by factors such as age, individuals' social identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual identity), and social location (e.g., education, income); health status; physical characteristics (e.g., skin color, gender presentation); personality orientation (e.g., neuroticism, impulsivity); current and accumulated stresses, risks, resources, assets, opportunities, and needs; cognitions (e.g., meanings, doubts, values, expectations, goals, perceived agency); emotions (e.g., guilt, gratitude); personal history and experience (e.g., military experience, travel, volunteerism); religiosity/spirituality; and access to moral and spiritual models.

The SET-RS model contends that these sociopolitical, structural, family, religious and faith-based institutional, community/social network, and individual factors dynamically influence each other to produce positive developmental outcomes. Importantly, positive developmental outcomes can take multiple forms: affective, cognitive, behavioral, social, political, etc. Further, outcomes that are developmental will, by definition, change with time and across situations and settings (Funder 2009).

In keeping with social and emotional learning theories (see Taylor et al. 2017), SET-RS attends to the fact that developmental outcomes are affected by *real or perceived rewards and consequences*. As people act (e.g., speak out against injustice), institutions, individuals, families, and structures of power will respond by rewarding, punishing, or ignoring the developmental expressions. In some instances, rewards and consequences accrue solely to the individual. However, in other instances family, friends, neighbors, and communities may experience rewards or negative consequences directly or vicariously (e.g., an individual's engagement in social justice work may cultivate a sense of pride in family members and have cascading positive effects among peers). The way that positive developmental outcomes are responded to has implications for whether, when, and how these outcomes will be expressed in the future. For example, a Black high school student who is enrolled in an elite school may, as a function

of her spiritual values, challenge injustice in that school context. The student's challenges may be met with threats of expulsion from school officials, and she may receive pressure from family to be silent. That student will have to weigh the costs to herself and her family of continued outspokenness. She may experience spiritual doubts and conclude that there is little value in agitating for change. Alternatively, she may choose to hold to her convictions and pride in being a principled person of faith even while she suffers consequences at the hands of others.

5. About SET-RS

Before we elaborate on the SET-RS framework and its logics, we will pause here to draw attention to four clarifying points about this model. First, SET-RS shares much in common with another ecologically and culturally-grounded transactional model—the phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST). As ecologically and culturally grounded transactional models, both SET-RS and PVEST consider the ways that development is informed by spatial contexts, inequality, intersecting social identities (particularly race, ethnicity, class, and gender), relationships, emotions, and biology (e.g., health, physical characteristics) over time (see [Spencer et al. 2019](#) for a review of PVEST). However, SET-RS is distinct from PVEST in a number of key ways: (a) unlike PVEST, SET-RS is singularly concerned with urban contexts and with the specific features, conditions, and dynamics in urban settings that influence the positive development of urban dwellers; (b) while SET-RS does not ignore the developmental relevance of other institutions and ideological systems, this framework is principally concerned with understanding and modeling the ways that religious and spiritual institutions and religious and spiritual beliefs and practices operate within and across ecologies (e.g., families, peer networks, communities) to inform positive developmental outcomes; and c) while SET-RS attends to the importance of inequality and stress in urban settings and in the lives of urban dwellers, our focus is not limited to theorizing stress and coping. Instead, SET-RS endeavors to be broad enough to account for experiences that are advantageous, joyful, and that may invoke wonder, zest, etc.

Second, SET-RS is a socioecological, transactional model that accounts for religiosity, spirituality, and the reality of stress in the lives of urban-residing Black youth and adults. Certainly, other scholars have offered transactional models that examine religion and spirituality's roles in coping with stress. For example, Gail and colleagues ([Gail et al. 2005](#)) borrow from [Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#) by proposing that, in response to stress, people engage in spiritual appraisal where they make attributions about the spiritual causes and consequences of events and determine whether they have the spiritual capacity to cope effectively with the stressors at hand. This appraisal process, they note, occurs in the context of spiritual connections (e.g., to nature and the divine), personal spiritual factors (e.g., personal spiritual beliefs), spiritual meaning-making, and spiritual coping behaviors. Both SET-RS and Gail et al.'s model take a transactional approach. However, there are important differences between the two models. One difference is that SET-RS is not intended to be a model of stress and coping. While SET-RS acknowledges that people do experience and cope with stress, our framework also accounts for the reality that people in urban settings experience events (e.g., falling in love, witnessing acts of creativity), emotions (e.g., joy), and cognitions (e.g., gratitude) that are not inherently stressful or stress-related. Another point of difference is that, unlike models of stress and coping (e.g., Gail et al.'s model) that are largely concerned with intrapsychic processes, such as appraisal, SET-RS also deliberately considers the way that outcomes are informed by the broader social ecology in which people operate. In this way, SET-RS leaves open the possibility that beyond their own faith, people's outcomes may be affected by the religiosity and spirituality of family and peers, as well as by the actions of faith-based institutions to which they may have no direct connection.

Third, SET-RS is a socioecological and transactional model that, in keeping with Bornstein's specificity principle, highlights the point that within and across ecologies, developmental processes will unfold in different ways for different individuals. As [Bornstein \(2017\)](#) argues: "the life-span development of specific characteristics in specific individuals is affected by specific experiences in specific ways at specific times—this is the specificity principle. To complement universals,

understanding often depends on what is studied, in whom, how, and when" (p. 5). Consistent with the specificity principle, we recognize that whether and how religious and spiritual individuals actualize positive outcomes depends on the particular contexts and circumstances in which they find themselves, the person(s) involved, and the outcomes in question. For example, a Black woman who describes herself as only moderately religious/spiritual may be overcome with joyful awe at God's power and grace when she witnesses a profound act of forgiveness or an inexplicable experience of healing. This spiritual experience of awe may inspire this woman to forgive others.

Finally, SET-RS recognizes that developmental outcomes are the result of bi/multidirectional processes that unfold in complex ways over time. The model also accommodates the reality that each domain (e.g., family) contains factors that can motivate, amplify, undermine, or otherwise change the trajectory of development. Further, at different times and under particular circumstances, the same factor may motivate, amplify, undermine, or change developmental outcomes for different people. For example, a person who lives in a community where a decline in affordable housing causes housing instability for economically fragile families (structural inequity) may volunteer for a program to help families (positive developmental outcome). The decision to volunteer may be amplified (moderated) by exposure to messages of compassion from religious institutions and religious leaders (e.g., sermons that assert that we are called by God to help others) and by the influence of family models of spiritual sacrifice (e.g., grandparents or siblings who intentionally live out the tenets of their faith by helping others). However, exposure to those same institutional and family-level factors may undermine volunteerism among people who are experiencing compassion fatigue and among those who believe that messages of compassion from religious institutions and family are misguided (individual-level cognitions).

With these four points in mind, we apply the SET-RS framework in relation to the lives of Black youth and adults. We highlight research that supports its logics. We expound on the ways in which this framework might be used to yield a more nuanced and layered set of stories about the religious, spiritual, psychosocial, and sociopolitical development of Black children, youth, and adults who reside in urban settings. We conclude with questions and recommendations for future work.

6. Urban Contexts as a Unique Developmental Niches

Urban centers are sites of innovation, entrepreneurship, wealth, creativity, knowledge production, opportunity, resistance, intergroup social contact, and intercultural competence (Mouratidis 2018; Park and Peterson 2010; van Leeuwen 2010). However, research in social science disproportionately represents urban settings as sites of stress and as generators of risk and negative developmental outcomes. Scholars have argued that, as urban communities grow larger, more densely populated, heterogeneous, unequal, coercive, etc., members of these communities become overwhelmed by the sheer scale of both stimuli (e.g., noise) and human need (Davies 2014; Milgram 1970; Levine et al. 2008; Thoits 2010). Theorists suggest that the stresses of urban life compromise peoples' physical and mental health and undermine positive development. Scholars theorize that urban dwellers tend to develop values and behaviors that erode empathic concern, promote differed responsibility or nihilism, reduce the likelihood of prosocial engagement, and promote social disorder (Levine et al. 2008; Milgram 1970). The challenges encountered in urban life are, indeed, associated with a host of deleterious effects on the health and psychological well-being of many Black urban-residing individuals and families (Jacobson et al. 2009). Stressors such as unaffordable, unstable, and overcrowded housing; limited options for safe, affordable, and high-quality childcare; and under-resourced and punitive schools create cycles of stress that can undermine the health and mental health of children, youth, and adults (Riina et al. 2016). Urban contexts that have a high density of structural risks, including liquor stores, alcohol ads, and abandoned properties Theall et al. (2011), hypersurveilled and carceral neighborhoods (Alexander 2010; Sewell 2016), and punitive and under-resourced schools (Dumas 2014) have particularly strong negative developmental effects (e.g., addiction, violence), particularly among economically vulnerable Black youth and adults.

While research in psychology attends largely to urban structural failures and negative developmental outcomes among urban-residing Black youth and adults, a small but growing body of scholarship crafts a picture of positive development among urban-residing Black youth and adults. For example, research on Black placemaking in urban contexts points to the roles of collectivist ideologies, traditions of self-help, and commitments to activism in Black peoples' efforts to create and sustain businesses, community schools, creative enterprises, music, art, community uplift programs, digital spaces of knowledge production, sociopolitical development and protest, and spaces of entertainment, pleasure, and celebration in urban contexts (Hill 2018; Hunter et al. 2016). Studies have also begun to highlight outcomes, such as respectfulness, faith, love (Morris 2012), altruism (Mattis et al. 2008, 2009), and civic engagement (Ginwright 2010) among Black urban-residing youth and adults and to demonstrate the role of family, schools, afterschool programs, peers, and natural mentors and positive role models in yielding those positive outcomes (Guillaume et al. 2015; Hurd et al. 2009).

Importantly, research consistently demonstrates that religiosity and spirituality play critical roles in buffering against the stresses and negative developmental consequences of life in the city for urban-residing Black youth and adults (Butler-Barnes et al. 2012; Kim et al. 2018; Rowland and Isaac-Savage 2014; Sullivan 2008). Religiosity and spirituality also support meaning-making, a sense of purpose, effective coping, resilience, and the development of a range of virtues, including humility, compassion, forgiveness, optimism, and prosociality (Gooden and McMahon 2016; Gutierrez and Mattis 2014; Mattis 2002; Mattis et al. 2000, 2003, 2017; Utsey et al. 2007; Yeh et al. 2011). However, the mechanisms and processes by which religiosity and spirituality influence positive development for Black children, youth, and adults who reside in urban settings, in particular, remain understudied. SET-RS provides a guide for filling that gap in knowledge.

7. Urban Religiosity/Spirituality and Positive Development: Pathways and Mechanisms of Influence

Research on the interplay between urbanicity, religiosity, spirituality, and positive development among Black youth and adults is limited. However, the scholarship that does exist points to multiple pathways and mechanisms through which religiosity and spirituality may inform positive developmental outcomes. Religious institutions play particularly powerful roles in the positive development of Black urban-residing people.

7.1. Urban Contexts, Religious Institutions, and Positive Development

Factors such as segregation, residential instability, gentrification, access to high wage jobs, and changes in transportation routes influence the geographic location and demographic composition of religious and faith-based institutions and inform both the needs of communities and the particular programs and outreach activities that urban religious institutions develop (Lowe and Shipp 2014; McCutcheon 2015; Ward and Billingsley 1994). Because of their focus on social missions, Black religious institutions have, either independently or with public and private sector support, advocated for changes in laws and policies and invested in building housing, healthcare facilities, schools, and businesses (Lowe and Shipp 2014; McRoberts 2003). These kinds of investments transform the physical and legal landscape of urban settings. They also have far-reaching impacts on the lives and well-being of individuals and families.

Religious institutions also support the positive material, social, moral, educational, physical, and behavioral outcomes of Black community members by providing outreach and in-reach programs and initiatives including social events (e.g., concerts, dances), educational programs, leadership opportunities, health initiatives, financial supports, and family support programs (Beyerlein and Chaves 2003; Brown and Brown 2003; Caldwell et al. 1995; Jeynes 2002; Johnson and Carter-Edwards 2015; Morris 1996; McRoberts 2003; Rowland and Isaac-Savage 2014; Sullivan 2008). Further, these institutions support positive development by noticing and building on the talents, intellectual resources, and skills of individuals within the community and by

cultivating in people a sense of responsibility to use these assets for both personal development and family and community enrichment (Gilkes 2001; Grayman-Simpson and Mattis 2013; Mamiya 2006; Reese et al. 2007).

Scholars committed to exploring the impact of faith-based institutions on the positive development of urban-residing Black individuals and families should attend to the ways that factors, such as the number, location, longevity, size, investments, demographic profile, outreach programs, and network connections of Black religious and faith-based institutions in an urban community inform positive psychological and prosocial attitudes and civic commitments of urban-residing people over time. Given the dynamism of urban settings, researchers should also explore how changes in structural arrangements in urban settings (e.g., demographic changes and changes in key policies) affect Black urban religious institutions and how these institutional changes inform developmental outcomes among Black youth and adults.

It bears saying here that, although we often study religious institutions and religious communities in terms of the resources and the power that they wield in urban settings, these institutions are not invulnerable. Religious institutions are, for example, subject to the challenges and indignities of racism and xenophobia. The vulnerability of Black spaces and people of faith is evident in the racist defacing and burnings of Black churches and racist shootings of worshippers in Black churches at the hands of white supremacist groups (Howell et al. 2018). This vulnerability is also evident in the surveillance of mosques and the criminalization of Muslim communities in urban settings (Ali 2016). Spaces of faith are considered by congregants, at the very least, to serve as havens of physical and spiritual safety from the onslaught of systemic and individual forms of injustice. Hypersurveillance of and racist attacks on Black spaces of worship and on Black faith communities register as part of a long, painful history of racialized violence in America (Carter 1999; Howell et al. 2018). These kinds of events can evoke traumatic memories for Black people whose families have been touched by racial violence in America (Carter 1999). The violation of Black sacred spaces may also jeopardize Black peoples' access to trusted sources of help, support, and resilience. Injustice, whether levied against institutions or individuals within them, can create spiritual challenges that can affect how individuals develop. Future research must seek to understand how vulnerability and trauma experienced in and by spaces of faith impact the communities in which these institutions are located and inform the long- and short-term positive development of Black people who reside in urban settings.

As we pursue work on the link between urban contexts, faith-based institutions, and positive development, we must be mindful that Black urban dwellers avail themselves of both brick-and-mortar and digital spaces of faith. For some urban dwellers, the demands of work, the inconvenience and costs of travel, or issues of safety may make technology (e.g., live-streamed religious services) a more viable structure through which to meet their spiritual needs (Helland 2013). Digital spaces of faith may feed the immediate spiritual needs of those who use them and may help to enhance people's sociomoral development (e.g., their reasoning about the merits of love, forgiveness, compassion). However, the extent to which participation in digital faith "communities" translates to positive psychosocial and sociopolitical development is a particularly important area of inquiry. For example, research might explore the extent to which online worship (which is often experienced in isolation from others) is effective in cultivating hope and impacting compassion and commitment to social mission. Similarly, future research should explore how digital literacy and structural access to technology, internet service, mobile devices, etc., or the lack thereof, may influence faith development, as well as novel forms of activism, including digital activism among Black youth and adults.

7.2. Ideology as a Source of Influence on Positive Development

The ideologies espoused by religious institutions and in religious communities also help to shape positive development. While Black religious communities are ideologically diverse, many Black Christian and Muslim communities tend to read sacred texts through the lenses of civil and human rights, and these readings have provided authoritative grounds on which to challenge and dismantle

master narratives that devalue and oppress Black people. Through justice-centered and humanistic readings of sacred texts, Black theologies inspire such positive emotional and cognitive outcomes as pride, hope, love, compassion, justice, forgiveness, self-empowerment, and self-efficacy and positive self-regard among Black youth and adults (Auston 2017; Barber 2011; Cone 2010; Harding 1997; Lee 2010; Wilmore 1998).

In contrast to institutions that emphasize social justice, community uplifting, and altruism, some Black religious institutions privilege themes of personal efficacy, personal prosperity, and self-empowerment (Barber 2011). Institutions that espouse these theologies and ideologies may promote different—e.g., more individually-focused—developmental outcomes than their more activist counterparts. Evidence suggests that exposure to theologies of individual prosperity comes at the cost of social consciousness and social justice orientation (McDaniel 2019). These two approaches to Black uplifting are interestingly reminiscent of historical debates between W. E. B. DuBois, who advocated for political action to uplift Black people, and Booker T. Washington, who preached a seemingly more individual self-empowerment approach to Black uplifting (Cross and Gates 2008). Research should explore how these different ideological approaches impact the developmental trajectories and outcomes of Black children, youth, and adults.

The fact that some institutions work towards messages of personal prosperity over social missions reminds us that, certainly, spiritual and religious institutions do not always espouse beliefs or engage in actions that yield positive outcomes. Some institutions and communities advance ideologies that legitimize exclusion, discrimination, violence, and patriarchal domination of women and girls (Kocet et al. 2011). Many people who find religious institutions to be misogynistic, sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise unsafe and unwelcoming may turn away from religion and spirituality (Hutchinson 2018). However, others may continue to find solace and strength in religion by disentangling their faith from their involvement in religious institutions, deauthorizing harmful messages, and pursuing an individual relationship with God (Pitt 2010). For people in this latter group, both the conflict and personal faith can motivate positive development. Psychology would benefit from studies that explore the extent to which ideological conflicts inform positive outcomes (e.g., compassion) among urban dwellers. Scholars may also benefit from exploring the extent to which religiously disengaged people may benefit indirectly from the religiosity and spirituality of religious and spiritual people in their social networks (e.g., friends who leverage the resources of religious and faith-based institutions on their behalf).

Attention to religious institutions and to religious involvement among Black Americans draws our attention to issues of intersectionality. Within Black communities, religious involvement is informed by an array of social identities, including ethnic origin, immigrant status, and sexual identity (Pitt 2010; Taylor and Chatters 2010). Social identities are associated with religious involvement and may be involved in positive development. For example, Black men are more likely than Black women to hold high status and high visibility posts in religious institutions (Nguyen et al. 2019; Taylor et al. 2004), and those positions may afford men who hold such positions heightened opportunities to be visibly prosocially engaged. However, research demonstrates that Black women tend to score higher than their male counterparts on measures of subjective religiosity, non-organizational religious involvement (e.g., consumption of religious music and media), and formal organizational involvement, including religious service attendance (Taylor et al. 2014; Taylor et al. 2004). Further, while religious institutions continue to be sites of patriarchal dominance, in Black churches and mosques, Black women create powerful spaces for exercising agency, and they do much of the labor involved in developing, leading, and carrying out prosocial, community-transforming work within religious institutions (Gilkes 2001; Prickett 2015). In sum, in understanding religion's and religious institutions' roles in pathways to positive development, the influence of social identities matters.

7.3. Family and Social Networks as Pathways of Influence

Religious institutions and ideologies are important. However, families and social networks are also critical links between urbanicity, religiosity, and positive development. Family is the primary context for the religious socialization of young people. It is the context where children learn religious values and practices (e.g., where children learn to pray) and the place where peoples' commitments to and understanding of faith life are molded. Black youths and adults' religious and spiritual identities, beliefs, and practices are affected by the religious and spiritual values, messages, and experiences that are communicated to them in their relationships with their parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, peers, and mentors (Gutierrez et al. 2014). For Black children religious and spiritual engagement can provide protections against the negative effects of stress and can support positive family relationships (Wilcox and Wolfinger 2008). Religious and spiritual socialization—the everyday process through which messages and traditions about faith are transmitted within and across generations—positively influences peoples' psychological well-being (Butler-Barnes et al. 2017), racial identity (Butler-Barnes et al. 2017; Martin and McAdoo 2006), commitment to justice, and caring action (Mattis et al. 2009). Further, peoples' virtues (e.g., awe, trust) develop as they see evidence of the power of faith in the lives of those close to them (Gilkes 2001; Mattis et al. 2008). The experience of receiving support, care, mentorship, and guidance from members of one's religious community also has positive developmental effects (Taylor et al. 2004).

Black families turn to religious institutions and religious leaders for concrete help and support in times of need (Chatters et al. 2011). Families leverage the resources of religious institutions and religious leaders to help them to make meaning of and navigate the stresses, challenges, and joys that they and their families, friends, and neighbors experience (Ellison et al. 2010). Family members demonstrate care and love for each other by praying for each other (Dill 2017). Further, the presence in family members and peers who serve as models of faith and models of morality (e.g., parents who care for others and who articulate these actions as manifestations of authentic faith) help individuals to envision, normalize, and enact such positive outcomes as altruism (Mattis et al. 2008).

Importantly, although Black families often rely on religious institutions to support their efforts to raise healthy and good children, certain urban structural conditions may serve as barriers to youth's involvement with religious institutions. For example, evidence suggests that parental perceptions of the safety of their neighborhoods affect the extent to which they will allow their children to become involved with religious institutions and activities (Kegler et al. 2005). Future research should seek to identify the range of structural factors (e.g., density of structural risks, community cohesion) and familial factors (e.g., work schedules, children's involvement in extracurricular activities) that might independently and jointly moderate the relation between religious involvement and positive and prosocial development.

7.4. Individual Level Pathways of Influence

Much of the research on religion and spirituality's roles in positive development suggest that, at the individual level, these outcomes are influenced by cognitions, affect/emotions, and behaviors. At the cognitive level, outcomes are influenced by peoples' religious and spiritual beliefs, including their beliefs in their spiritual efficacy, the religious and spiritual attributions that they make about the causes of positive and negative events, and spiritual struggles with family, friends, and members of religious communities (Stauner et al. 2016). Urban life can inspire a range of emotions (e.g., joy, fear, anger) and emotional states (e.g., depression) that affect development. Peoples' cognitions and emotions have implications for their ability to develop such positive outcomes as hope/optimism, forgiveness, perseverance, and life satisfaction (Bennett 2011; Mattis et al. 2009, 2017; Mattis 2002; Rowland and Isaac-Savage 2014; Taylor et al. 2004; Yeh et al. 2011). Cognitions, emotions, and actions intersect to inform development. For example, ethnographic research demonstrates that Black adults in a low-income urban community who were beneficiaries of altruism reported emotions (e.g., awe

and gratitude) as well as beliefs (e.g., the belief that those who receive divine favor must help others), that led them to behave altruistically towards others (Mattis et al. 2008, 2009).

Other individual level factors are beginning to emerge as important for understanding the link between religiosity, spirituality, and positive developmental outcomes among urban-residing Black people. One promising but underexplored individual-level factor in the relation between urban structure, religiosity, and positive development is social position/social role. In particular, there is evidence that Black people may use their social roles as vehicles through which to enact positive aspects of their faith. Witherspoon and Taylor (2010), for example, described ways that Black school principals use their roles as school administrators in urban settings as vehicles for enacting divine purpose and justice and for inflecting hope, compassion, forgiveness and dignity in their relationships with students, teachers, and staff who are often devalued in urban school settings (Dantley 2005; Witherspoon and Taylor 2010). Future work should explore the extent to which religiosity and spirituality may inform the ways that Black people in a variety of other social roles (e.g., corporate leaders, investors, mentors) achieve positive outcomes.

Existing work on the relations between urban life, religiosity, spirituality, and positive development raises important questions that must be addressed as we pursue future research. What does it mean to develop positively? How should our understandings of positive development be informed by the particularities of urban life? How do we study positive development in urban landscapes? Who have we included and excluded in our work? How do we account for urban spatial arrangements in our studies of the link between urbanicity, religiosity, spirituality, and positive development? We offer some insights into these questions as we conclude.

8. Studying the Roles of Religiosity and Spirituality in Facilitating Positive Developmental Outcomes of Black Children, Youth, and Adults Who Reside in Urban Settings

What Constitutes “Positive Developmental Outcomes” in Urban Landscapes?

Because SET-RS is ultimately concerned with positive development, we are compelled to think critically about how to understand what is “positive” about positive developmental outcomes. Social scientists are predisposed to define positive developmental outcomes in fairly conventional and conservative ways (e.g., as engagement in compassionate care, altruism, hope, forgiveness, academic persistence, and positive academic performance). Certainly, children, youth, and adults who are kind, cooperative, academically engaged, and conventionally successful can be said to be developing positively. However, there are numerous markers of positive development (e.g., curiosity, innovation, generative thinking, sense of humor, humility, self-sacrifice) that receive little attention in empirical psychology research focus on Black urban communities—particularly in research on marginalized communities. We know little about how religiosity and spirituality may inform these outcomes among Black youth and adults in urban settings.

As we encourage an expanded view of positive development, we note that research on positive psychology lists spirituality as one of the strengths of transcendence (Dahlsgaard et al. 2005). We suggest caution, however, against uncritically defining religiosity and spirituality as positive developmental outcomes. Religiosity and spirituality do not necessarily lead to positive outcomes. Many of the conditions that negatively impact the lives of urban dwellers are created and sustained by people of faith. People of faith sometimes show callous disregard for the plight of vulnerable individuals and communities; they bully others, they commit hate crimes, and they sometimes privilege personal greed over the welfare of others. Given that urban centers are sites that are deeply affected by factors such as inequality and unjust uses of power, it would be useful to develop a body of scholarship that examines how urban-residing people are affected by these hypocrisies of faith. For example, it would be useful to explore the conditions under which encounters with such hypocrisies undermine faith and goodness and the conditions under which such encounters lead people to reify their own faith and commit to lives of virtue and care.

Scholars must consider that some outcomes that we traditionally define as positive may be contextually unrealistic, and some positive outcomes may be expressed in unexpected ways. For example, religious/spiritual youth who attend school or live in contexts where adults fail to provide safety for children may be compelled to express positive/prosocial motivations (e.g., compassion, love) in ways that may appear on the surface to be antisocial (e.g., fighting). In some instances, religious and spiritual devotion and agency may show up as anger, outrage, civic rebellion, protest, and oppositionality (Auston 2017). Similarly, for some people, the primary goal for positive development may be to behave in ways that are aligned with concepts such as “righteousness” and “holiness” rather than with conventional ideas of goodness (e.g., kindness). Scholars (and interventionists) interested in studying positive development in urban contexts must be careful to align judgements of what constitutes positive development with nuances of the context in which studies are being conducted. Social scientists and interventionists must also be careful to discern the obvious as well as nonobvious ways that positive outcomes may manifest for Black urban-residing children, youth, and adults from various backgrounds and to clarify the complex ways that religiosity and spirituality may influence, sustain, and limit these positive outcomes for people as they grow. This will sometimes mean recognizing that, because of urban structural and contextual failings, positive motivations may be expressed in nonpositive ways in some situations and settings and in positive ways in other circumstances and settings.

In this regard, it may be useful to take both an expansive view of positive outcomes and a multi-place (e.g., home, work, school, church) approach (Bonnes et al. 1990) to the study of positive developmental outcomes with Black children, youth, and adults. This approach will allow us to honor the reality that any given person may engage positively in one urban setting but not in others. A multiplace approach to the study of positive development would also allow researchers to understand how people’s readings and experiences of situations and contexts inform the expression of different forms of goodness.

In the work of studying religiosity, spirituality, and positive development among Black urban-residing individuals, it is also important to engage with Black urban communities to obtain their emic conceptualizations of what it means for a person to develop positively and their perspectives on how religions and spirituality inform various manifestations of positive development. It is also important to explore community members’ understandings of how contextual factors and intersectional identities (e.g., how being a Black, upper-middle class, cisgender, a Muslim woman living in a predominately Christian urban neighborhood) shape expressions of positive outcomes across settings, situations, and time. An open-minded, emic approach will allow us to better align research, intervention, and policy with the diverse lived experiences of Black children, youth, and adults who live in urban settings.

9. Who Do We Include in Research on Urban Religiosity and Spirituality?

If we are to create a more nuanced story of the roles of religiosity and spirituality in the lives of Black Americans, then we must ask: Who have we included and who have we forgotten in our research on positive urban development? How do we develop models that allow us to better understand the ways that religiosity and spirituality inform the positive development of the broadest possible cross section of people? Our goal in asking these questions is to remind ourselves that psychology as a field must be more intentionally inclusive as we build bodies of research on Black urban religiosity and positive development. Forgetting can be an unintentional form of misrepresenting. In forgetting, we risk reifying narrow representational regimes about Black people. By understanding who we have been conditioned to forget (and who we are socialized to remember), we will be better equipped to become more inclusive in the ways that we theorize, study, and interpret the intersectional narratives of Black religious life within urban contexts.

In our efforts to be clear about who has been included and who has been forgotten in extant research, we must first account for the heterogeneity in religious expressions of urban-residing

Black people. The Religious Landscape Study estimates that more than 80% of Black Americans indicate that they believe in God, and approximately 79% of Black Americans identify as Christian (Pew Research Center 2015). Although the majority of Black Americans who identify as Christian (Taylor et al. 2014; Taylor et al. 2004), are Protestant, a diversity of doctrinal beliefs and praxis exists (e.g., Catholicism) within Black Christian communities. Black people are also present across a spectrum of religious and spiritual traditions including Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and diasporic and syncretic religious and spiritual expressions, such as Rastafarianism, Yoruba, and Vodun (Harvey 2008; Pinn 2006). Broadening our work to include people who occupy a range of religious and spiritual identities and individuals who identify as areligious, agnostic, and/or atheist (Hutchinson 2018) would optimize our ability to understand the range of ways that religion and spirituality might shape developmental trajectories and outcomes.

Second, we have yet to fully explore the religiosity and spirituality of Black people from diverse social locations and social identities. An emerging body of research has begun to highlight differences in the religious and spiritual lives of native-born Black Americans and their Caribbean American counterparts (see Chatters et al. 2009; Taylor and Chatters 2010). However, we have yet to examine whether and how differences in religiosity and spirituality map onto differences in positive developmental outcomes among groups from various intersecting social identities and social locations, including Black immigrants. Given that there are over 4 million Black immigrants residing in the U.S. (Pew Research Center 2018a), attention to the factors that support positive development for members of this group is a worthwhile pursuit.

Third, it will be critical to explore religiosity, spirituality, and positive development among members of the Black community who hold contested and/or marginalized social identities. The mass incarceration of Black people (an outgrowth of inequality, coercive power, and representational regimes), particularly in urban contexts, means that for a subset of urban Black communities, faith life develops, in part, in carceral contexts. As such, attention to the religious and spiritual lives of people with contested and marginalized identities should also include people who have histories of incarceration and those who are engaged in behaviors that might be seen as antisocial (e.g., people struggling with addiction, gang-involved individuals). The religiosity, spirituality, and positive development link must also be examined among others who hold marginalized and contested identities including LGBTQ+ individuals (see Miller 2005). Urban-residing youth and adults who hold these identities often endure the everyday consequences of hypervisibility and precarity, and they do so in high-risk urban settings where spatial and sociopolitical arrangements may undermine their well-being. Faith is likely to play a central role in their efforts to thrive (Dill 2017). It is important to understand the roles of religiosity and spirituality in their development.

Fourth, family is the primary socializing context for the development of faith. However, research on the ways that Black families use religious and spiritual means to cultivate positive developmental outcomes within and across generations remains understudied. We must remain mindful that, in Black communities, the definition of family is broad and includes biological relatives, extended family members, social parents, fictive kin (“play aunts”), and church families. As such, future studies of the role of family in positive development among Black youth and adults must take a broad view of the range of individuals who influence both faith and positive outcomes for these youth and adults. Further, while we tend to conceive of families as a unit, we must be cognizant that the impact of urban structures on “families” requires us to attend to the reality that structures do not impact all members of families in the same way and that members of any given family may have vastly different religious and spiritual beliefs. Here, our focus on intersectional identities and on the interplay between structures, structures of power, and intersecting identities becomes particularly salient (Collins and Bilge 2016; Crenshaw 1991). Gender, race, class, sexual identities, and other social identities (and intersections among these identities) inform the ways that structures of power relate to people, influence the kinds of stressors to which people are exposed, and shape the options that they have for navigating those stressors (Collins and Bilge 2016; Crenshaw 1991). Because, by virtue of their age and other

identity markers (e.g., gender, skin color), the various members of families will experience and have to navigate different events and conditions, they will likely experience different emotions (e.g., fear, doubt, compassion, joy) and cognitions (e.g., different interpretations of events, and different understandings of how God and faith are implicated in those events) and engage in behaviors (e.g., oppositionality, helpfulness) that shape family life and affect their individual developmental pathways. Because age, gender, and sexuality can also influence involvement in formal religious activities and connection to religious institutions (Taylor et al. 2014; Taylor et al. 2004), family members will vary in the extent to which and the ways in which they can access or use religiosity and spirituality (e.g., religious institutional supports) to cope with the stresses and complexities of life and to help guide them in ways that will allow them to become good people.

Finally, when we consider Black people in urban spaces, we often assume that these urban spaces are predominantly Black. Black children, youth, and adults do not necessarily live or develop their religious and spiritual sensibilities solely in predominantly Black spaces. Indeed, Black individuals living in urban settings may, for various reasons, choose to attend services in religious institutions that are multiethnic, predominantly white, etc. (Marti 2009; Marti 2010). Further, Black urban-residing adults who are a part of diverse social networks, including friendships and romantic relationships, may be exposed to a range of religious and spiritual ideologies and practices that shape their religious and spiritual perspectives and inform their views on what it means to develop positively. Future studies should explore how the demographic composition of the contexts in which people live, learn, and worship informs development.

10. Where Do Religiosity, Spirituality, and Goodness Show up in Urban Settings?

Urban settings, particularly large urban settings, are aurally and visually dense settings. One challenge facing researchers conducting work in urban settings is to understand how sound and visual images operate in the built environment and how people use sound and images as part of the text of their religious and spiritual expressions. For example, ringing church bells, calls to prayer, and electronically amplified sermons and religious music create urban soundscapes through which people articulate their spiritual identities, proselytize, announce their presence as faith communities, and remind community members of their religious/spiritual commitments to faith life (e.g., remind people to pray). Similarly, urban settings are often marked by religiously themed structures (e.g., murals). These objects operate as structural texts that convey important themes about faith, love, compassion, hope, justice, etc. Yet, the spiritual and psychosocial impact of these contextual aspects of urban American religious and spiritual expression have yet to be examined in psychology research. Research can capitalize on ethnographic methods, including the use of observational techniques and photovoice to explore community members' views of the developmental impact of living with these visual and sonic stimuli.

Other cultural products including religious and secular music, spoken word, and memes reveal important information about people's religious and spiritual values, commitments, journeys, and identities (Pinn and Valentin 2009). Formal and informal urban witness wear (e.g., religious clothing, religious-themed jewelry) and spiritually and religiously themed body art (e.g., tattoos) are also text. These markers of spiritual and religious life may serve as means by which people declare their faith. However, in urban contexts that devalue Black bodies and Black communities, Black men and women may also use these markers of faith to designate their living spaces and bodies as sacred. In sum, these aspects of urban life may be important, albeit generally ignored, in empirical conversations about urban religious/spiritual identity, belief, and such positive developmental outcomes as dignity, hope, and sociopolitical awareness. Failure to include these forms of text in our work on religiosity, spirituality, and development is a missed opportunity.

11. Conclusions

Much of the research on the lives of Black children, youth, and adults takes place in urban centers. However, in psychology, we do not have a conceptual framework that allows us to examine how urban life informs religiosity and spirituality and how the religiosity and spirituality that emerges in urban contexts ultimately shapes positive developmental outcomes. In this paper, SET-RS addresses this gap by linking urban sociopolitical and structural arrangements to institutional and personal religion and spirituality, family and social relationships, individual experiences, and, ultimately, to positive development. We note that positive developmental outcomes should be emically defined, because the demands of urban settings and the ways that urban residents use faith to meet life challenges vary by social identity, social location, and context.

The SET-RS framework has important conceptual, methodological, analytic, and conceptual implications. The framework's attention to power, inequality, identity, and representational regimes make it compatible with theoretical frames that bring feminist, cultural, critical, and intersectional lenses to the study of human development. Methodologically and analytically, SET-RS's focus on positive development as spatially, socio-politically embedded, personally specific, and multi-directionally influenced, points to opportunities to employ quantitative techniques, such as multilevel modeling, moderation and mediation analyses, and person-centered analyses in exploring the links between urban arrangements and positive developmental outcomes. However, the SET-RS framework is equally amenable to qualitative and mixed-methods approaches (e.g., to the use of ethnographic and participatory methods that center the voices and lived experiences of urban dwellers). In future work, it may be useful to examine the model through interviews and through novel methods (e.g., experience sampling and participatory geographic information systems (PGIS) approaches) that allow us to understand and "see" urban settings and microsettings through the eyes of people who live in these contexts. We might use such techniques to understand how religiosity and spirituality emerge in everyday moments for urban dwellers and how these factors inform the everyday decisions, emotions, and actions that reflect positive development.

For example, we can imagine studies that seek to discern whether structural reminders of faith (e.g., religious institutions, religious themed murals) serve as triggers for positive emotions, such as hope and gratitude, and triggers for engagement in everyday acts of goodness in urban areas. In such a study, smart-phone based daily diary methods may be used to ask people to record their emotions, and to note real-time experiences of everyday acts of helpfulness and kindness that they witness or in which they engage as they move through the city. GIS data can be used to create maps of the movements of participants and to document the extent to which affective states and recorded acts of goodness coincide with spatial markers of religiosity and spirituality (e.g., the location of religious institutions). Data from this kind of study might be used to create affective and goodness density maps of urban areas and to explore whether such positive events tend to be proximal to spaces that are markers of faith. These data might be augmented with in-depth interviews with participants about what spaces they associate with religiosity and spirituality and what leads them to make these associations. Content analysis of these interviews would offer useful information about how to code spatial information as religiously/spirituality relevant or not. Experience sampling approaches such as this may allow us to gain some insight into the ways that real and perceived rewards and consequences affect the expression of positive outcomes over time.

Author Contributions: J.S.M. developed the original conceptual frame for SET-RS, contributed research, wrote most of the initial draft of the manuscript, and assisted with editing all drafts. G.J.M.P. assisted in developing and refining the SET-RS model, contributed research, played a substantial role in drafting and refining the manuscript, and oversaw the revisions of the manuscript. M.O.H. contributed research and assisted in drafting key parts of the early manuscript. We also wish to thank ELATED Lab: Kayla Fike, Janelle Goodwill, Christina Morton, Naomi Wilson, and Casta Guillaume for their feedback on the SET-RS model.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- Adichie, Chimamanda N. 2009. Transcript of “The Danger of a Single Story”. Available online: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en (accessed on 18 July 2019).
- Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-Blindness*. New York: New Press.
- Ali, Arshad I. 2016. Citizens under suspicion: Responsive research with community under surveillance. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 47: 78–95.
- Auston, Donna. 2017. Prayer, protest, and police brutality: Black Muslim spiritual resistance in the Ferguson era. *Transforming Anthropology* 25: 11–22. [CrossRef]
- Barber, Kendra H. 2011. “What Happened to All the Protests?” Black megachurches’ responses to racism in a colorblind era. *Journal of African American Studies* 15: 218–35. [CrossRef]
- Bennett, Oliver. 2011. The manufacture of hope: Religion, eschatology and the culture of optimism. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17: 115–30. [CrossRef]
- Beyerlein, Kraig, and Mark Chaves. 2003. The political activities of religious congregations in the United States. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42: 229–46. [CrossRef]
- Bonnes, Mirilia, Lucia Mannetti, Gianfranco Secchiaroli, and Giancarlo Tanucci. 1990. The city as a multi-place system: An analysis of people-urban environment transactions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 10: 37–65. [CrossRef]
- Bornstein, Marc H. 2017. The Specificity Principle in Acculturation Science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12: 3–45. [CrossRef]
- Brown, Richard K., and Ronald E. Brown. 2003. Faith and works: Church-based social capital resources and African American political activism. *Social Forces* 82: 617–41. [CrossRef]
- Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. 2011. Urban Area Criteria for the 2010 Census. In *Federal Register*; No. 164/Wednesday, August 24, 2011/Notices; Suitland: Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, vol. 76.
- Butler-Barnes, Sheretta T., Terrinieka T. Williams, and Tabbye M. Chavous. 2012. Racial pride and religiosity among African American boys: Implications for academic motivation and achievement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 41: 486–98. [CrossRef]
- Butler-Barnes, Sheretta T., Pamela P. Martin, and Donte T. Boyd. 2017. African American adolescents’ psychological well-being: The impact of parents’ religious socialization on adolescents’ religiosity. *Race and Social Problems* 9: 115–26. [CrossRef]
- Caldwell, Cleopatra, Linda Chatters, Andrew Billingsley, and Robert Taylor. 1995. Church-based support programs for elderly Black adults: Congregational and clergy characteristics. In *Aging, Spirituality, and Religion: A Handbook*. Edited by Melvin Kimble, Susan H. McFadden, James W. Ellor and James J. Seeber. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp. 306–24.
- Carter, Carolyn S. 1999. Church burning in African American communities: Implications for empowerment practice. *Social Work* 44: 62–68. [CrossRef]
- Chatters, Linda M., Robert J. Taylor, Kai M. Bullard, and James S. Jackson. 2008. Spirituality and subjective religiosity among African Americans, Caribbean Blacks, and Non-Hispanic Whites. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47: 725–37. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Chatters, Linda M., Robert J. Taylor, Kai M. Bullard, and James S. Jackson. 2009. Race and ethnic differences in religious involvement: African Americans, Caribbean Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32: 1143–63. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Chatters, Linda M., Jacqueline S. Mattis, Amanda T. Woodward, Robert J. Taylor, Harold W. Neighbors, and Nyasha A. Grayman. 2011. Use of ministers for a serious personal problem among African Americans: Findings from the National Survey of American Life. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 81: 118–27. [CrossRef]
- Clark, Jude. 2003. Introduction: Urban culture: Representations and experiences in/of urban space and culture. *Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 17: 3–10.
- Collins, Patricia H., and Sirma Bilge. 2016. *Intersectionality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Cone, James H. 2010. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. Mapping the margins. Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review* 43: 1241–99. [CrossRef]

- Cross, June, and Henry L. Gates. 2008. *The Two Nations of Black America*. Alexandria: PBS Home Video.
- Dahlsgaard, Katherine, Christopher Peterson, and Martin E. P. Seligman. 2005. Shared virtue: The convergence of valued human strengths across culture and history. *Review of General Psychology* 9: 203–13. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Dantley, Michael E. 2005. African American spirituality and Cornel West's notions of prophetic pragmatism: Restructuring educational leadership in American urban schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 41: 651–74. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Davies, Jonathan S. 2014. Coercive cities: Reflections on the dark side of urban power in the 21st Century. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36: 590–99. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Dill, LeConté J. 2017. "Wearing my spiritual jacket": The role of spirituality as a coping mechanism among African American youth. *Health Education & Behavior* 44: 696–704.
- Dumas, Michael. 2014. 'Losing an arm': Schooling as a site of black suffering. *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 17: 1–29. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Ellison, Christophe G., Amy M. Burdette, and W. Bradford Wilcox. 2010. The couple that prays together: Race and ethnicity, religion, and relationship quality among working-age adults. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72: 963–975. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Estrada, Emir, and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. 2010. Intersectional dignities: Latino immigrant street vendor youth in Los Angeles. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40: 102–31. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Fincher, Ruth, and Jane M. Jacobs. 1998. *Cities of Difference*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.
- Funder, David C. 2009. Persons, behaviors and situations: An agenda for personality psychology in the postwar era. *Journal of Research in Personality* 43: 120–26. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Gail, Terry L., Claire Charbonneau, Neil H. Clarke, Karen Grant, Anjali Joseph, and Lisa Shouldice. 2005. Understanding the nature and role of spirituality in relation to coping and health: A conceptual framework. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne* 46: 88–104. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Gilkes, Cheryl T. 2001. *If It Wasn't for the Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Ginwright, Shawn. 2010. *Black Youth Rising: Activism and Radical Healing in Urban America*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gooden, Adia S., and Susan D. McMahon. 2016. Thriving among African-American adolescents: Religiosity, religious support, and communalism. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 57: 118–28. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Grayman-Simpson, Nyasha, and Jacqueline S. Mattis. 2013. "If it wasn't for the church": Organizational religiosity and informal community helping among African American adults. *Journal of African American Studies* 17: 243–52. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Guillaume, Casta, Robert Jagers, and Deborah Rivas-Drake. 2015. Middle school as a developmental niche for civic engagement. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 56: 321–31. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Gutierrez, Ian A., and Jacqueline S. Mattis. 2014. Factors predicting volunteer engagement among urban-residing African American women. *Journal of Black Studies* 45: 599–619. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Gutierrez, Ian A., Lucas J. Goodwin, Katheirne Kirkinis, and Jacqueline S. Mattis. 2014. Religious socialization in African American families: The relative influence of parents, grandparents, and siblings. *Journal of Family Psychology* 28: 779. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Harding, Vincent. 1997. Religion and resistance among antebellum slaves: 1800–1860. In *African American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture*. Edited by Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau. New York: Routledge, pp. 107–30.
- Harvey, Marcus. 2008. Engaging the Orisa: An exploration of the Yoruba concepts of Ibeji and Olokun as theoretical principles in Black theology. *Black Theology* 6: 61–82. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Helland, Christopher. 2013. Ritual. In *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. Edited by Heidi A. Campbell. New York: Routledge, pp. 25–40.
- Hill, Marc L. 2018. "Thank you, Black Twitter": State violence, digital counterpublics, and pedagogies of resistance. *Urban Education* 53: 286–302. [[CrossRef](#)]

- Hope, Meredith O., Daniel B. Lee, Hsing-Fang Hsieh, Noelle M. Hurd, Haley L. Sparks, and Marc A. Zimmerman. 2019a. Violence exposure and sexual risk behaviors for African American adolescent girls: The protective role of natural mentorship and organizational religious involvement. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 64: 1–14. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Hope, Meredith O., Robert J. Taylor, Ann W. Nguyen, and Linda M. Chatters. 2019b. Church support among African American and Black Caribbean adolescents. *Journal of Child & Family Studies* 28: 3037–50.
- Howell, Frank M., John P. Bartkowski, Lynn M. Hempel, and Jeremy R. Porter. 2018. When faith, race, and hate collide: Religious ecology, local hate cultures, and church burnings. *Review of Religious Research* 60: 223–45. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hunter, Marcus A., Mary Pattillo, Zandria F. Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. 2016. Black placemaking: Celebration, play, and poetry. *Theory, Culture & Society* 33: 31–56.
- Hurd, Noelle M., Marc A. Zimmerman, and Yange Xue. 2009. Negative adult influences and the protective effects of role models: A study with urban adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 38: 777–89. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hutchinson, Sikivu. 2018. Respectability among heathens: Black feminist atheist humanists. In *Humanism and the Challenge of Difference*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 47–50.
- Isiorho, David. 2008. Faithful cities and their theology of context: Even our diversity is diverse. *Black Theology: An International Journal* 6: 98–118. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Jacobson, Nora, Vanessa Oliver, and Andrew Koch. 2009. An urban geography of dignity. *Health & Place* 15: 725–31.
- Jeynes, William H. 2002. A meta-analysis of the effects of attending religious schools and religiosity on Black and Hispanic academic achievement. *Education and Urban Society* 35: 27–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Johnson, James H., and Lori Carter-Edwards. 2015. Entrepreneurial spirituality and community outreach in African American churches. In *The Changing World Religion Map*. Edited by Stanley D. Brunn. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 1229–43.
- Junior, Nyasha. 2015. *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Kegler, Michelle C., Roy F. Oman, Sara K. Vesely, Kenneth R. McLeroy, Cheryl B. Aspy, Sharon Rodine, and LaDonna Marshall. 2005. Relationships among youth assets and neighborhood and community resources. *Health Education & Behavior* 32: 380–97.
- Kenel, Sally A. 1987. Urban psychology and spirituality. *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 15: 300–7. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kim, Dong H., Justin Harty, Lois Takahashi, and Dexter R. Voisin. 2018. The protective effects of religious beliefs on behavioral health factors among low-income African American adolescents in Chicago. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 27: 355–64. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kocet, Michael M., Samuel Sanabria, and Michale R. Smith. 2011. Finding the spirit within: Religion, spirituality, and faith development in lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling* 5: 163–79. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lazarus, Richard S., and Susan Folkman. 1984. *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*. New York: Springer Publishing.
- Lee, Victoria J. 2010. The mosque and black Islam: Towards an ethnographic study of Islam in the inner-city. *Ethnography* 11: 145–63. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Levine, Rober V., Stephen Reysen, and Ellen Ganz. 2008. The kindness of strangers revisited: A comparison of 24 U.S. cities. *Social Indicators Research* 85: 461–81. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lincoln, C. Eric, and Lawrence H. Mamiya. 1990. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Lowe, Jeffrey S., and Sigmund C. Shipp. 2014. Black church and black college community development corporations: Enhancing the public sector discourse. *Western Journal of Black Studies* 38: 244–59.
- Mamiya, Larry. 2006. *River of Struggle, River of Freedom: Trends among Black Churches and Black Pastoral Leadership*. Pulpit & Pew Research Reports. Durham: Duke Divinity School.
- Marti, Gerardo. 2009. Affinity, identity, and transcendence: The experience of religious racial integration in diverse congregations. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48: 53–68. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Marti, Gerardo. 2010. The religious racial integration of African Americans into diverse churches. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49: 201–17. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Martin, Pamela P. 2011. Theology and faith development among African American adolescents: An integrative approach. In *African American Children and Mental Health*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, pp. 151–71.

- Martin, Pamela P., and Harriette P. McAdoo. 2006. Sources of racial socialization: Theological orientation of African American churches and parents. In *Black Families*, 4th ed. Edited by Harriette P. McAdoo. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, pp. 125–42.
- Mattis, Jacqueline S. 2000. African American women's definitions of spirituality and religiosity. *Journal of Black Psychology* 26: 101–22. [CrossRef]
- Mattis, Jacqueline S. 2002. Religion and spirituality in the meaning-making and coping experiences of African American women: A qualitative analysis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 26: 309–21. [CrossRef]
- Mattis, Jacqueline S., Robert J. Jagers, Carrie A. Hatcher, C. Dawn Lawhon, Eleanor J. Murphy, and Yohance F. Murray. 2000. Religiosity, volunteerism, and community involvement among African American men: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Community Psychology* 28: 391–406. [CrossRef]
- Mattis, Jacqueline S., Dwight L. Fontenot, and Carrie A. Hatcher-Kay. 2003. Religiosity, racism, and dispositional optimism among African Americans. *Personality and Individual Differences* 34: 1025–38. [CrossRef]
- Mattis, Jacqueline S., Nyasha Grayman, Sheri-Ann Cowie, Cynthia Winston, Carolyn Watson, and Daisy Jackson. 2008. Intersectional identities and the politics of altruistic care in a low-income, urban community. *Sex Roles* 59: 418–28. [CrossRef]
- Mattis, Jacqueline S., Powell W. Hammond, Nyasha Grayman, Sheri-Ann Cowie, Meredith Bonacci, William Brennan, and D. Massie. 2009. The social production of altruism: Motivations for selfless giving in a low-income community. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 43: 71–84. [CrossRef]
- Mattis, Jacqueline S., Wizdom A. Powell, Nyasha A. Grayman, Yohance Murray, Yasmin Cole-Lewis, and Janelle R. Goodwill. 2017. What would I know about mercy? Faith and optimistic expectancies among African Americans. *Race and Social Problems* 9: 42–52. [CrossRef]
- McCutcheon, Priscilla. 2015. Food, faith, and the everyday struggle for black urban community. *Social & Cultural Geography* 16: 385–406.
- McDaniel, Eric L. 2019. The prophetic and the prosperous: Religious ideologies and the maintenance of group consciousness. *Political Research Quarterly* 72: 488–503. [CrossRef]
- McRoberts, Omar M. 2003. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Milgram, Stanley. 1970. The experience of living in cities. *Science* 167: 1461–68. [CrossRef]
- Miller, Robert L., Jr. 2005. An appointment with God: AIDS, place, and spirituality. *Journal of Sex Research* 42: 35–45. [CrossRef]
- Morris, Aldon. 1996. The Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement: The SCLC as the decentralized, radical arm of the Black Church. In *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social-Movement Activism*. Edited by Christian Smith. New York: Routledge, pp. 29–46.
- Morris, Edith J. 2012. Respect, protection, faith, and love: Major care constructs identified within the subculture of selected urban African American adolescent members. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 23: 262–69. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Mouratidis, Kostas. 2018. Built environment and social well-being: How does urban form affect social life and personal relationships? *Cities* 74: 7–20. [CrossRef]
- Newlin, Kelley, Kathleen Knafl, and Gail D. Melkus. 2002. African-American spirituality: A concept analysis. *Advances in Nursing Science* 25: 57–70. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Nguyen, Ann W., Robert J. Taylor, Linda M. Chatters, and Meredith O. Hope. 2019. Church support networks of African Americans: The impact of gender and religious involvement. *Journal of Community Psychology* 47: 1043–63. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Park, Nansook, and Christopher Peterson. 2010. Does it matter where we live? The urban psychology of character strengths. *American Psychologist* 65: 5355–547. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Pew Research Center. 2008. *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey. Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*. Washington: The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Available online: <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2013/05/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf> (accessed on 28 August 2019).
- Pew Research Center. 2014. Religious Landscapes Study. Available online: <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/> (accessed on 28 November 2019).
- Pew Research Center. 2015. America's Changing Religious Landscape. Available online: <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/belief-in-god/> (accessed on 28 November 2019).

- Pew Research Center. 2018a. Key Facts about Black Immigrants in the U.S. Available online: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/24/key-facts-about-black-immigrants-in-the-u-s/> (accessed on 19 November 2019).
- Pew Research Center. 2018b. What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities. Available online: <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/05/22/what-unites-and-divides-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/> (accessed on 28 November 2019).
- Pinn, Anthony B. 2006. *The African American Religious Experience in America*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Pinn, Anthony B., and Benjamin Valentin. 2009. *Creating Ourselves: African Americans and Hispanic Americans on Popular Culture and Religious Expression*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Pitt, Richard N. 2010. "Killing the messenger": Religious black gay men's neutralization of anti-gay religious messages. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49: 56–72. [CrossRef]
- Prickett, Pamela J. 2015. Negotiating gendered religious space: The particularities of patriarchy in an African American mosque. *Gender and Society* 29: 51–72. [CrossRef]
- Reese, Laura A., Ronald E. Brown, and James D. Ivers. 2007. Some children see him: Political participation and the Black Christ. *Political Behavior* 29: 517–37. [CrossRef]
- Riina, Elizabeth M., Adam Lippert, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. 2016. Residential instability, family support, and parent-child relationships among ethnically diverse urban families. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 78: 855–70. [CrossRef]
- Rowland, Michael L., and Paulette Isaac-Savage. 2014. The Black church: Promoting health, fighting disparities. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 142: 15–24. [CrossRef]
- Sameroff, Arnold J., and Michael J. Mackenzie. 2003. Research strategies for capturing transactional models of development: The limits of the possible. *Development and Psychopathology* 15: 613–40. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Sewell, Abigail A. 2016. The racism-race reification process: A mesolevel political economic framework for understanding racial health disparities. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2: 402–32. [CrossRef]
- Small, Mario L., and Monica McDermott. 2006. The presence of organizational resources in neighborhoods: An analysis of average and contextual effects. *Social Forces* 84: 1697–724. [CrossRef]
- Spencer, Margaret B., Bronwyn N. Lodato, Charles Spencer, Lauren Rich, Christopher Graziul, and Traci English-Clarke. 2019. Innovating resilience promotion: Integrating cultural practices, social ecologies and development-sensitive conceptual strategies for advancing child well-being. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior* 57: 101–48.
- Stauner, Nick, Julie Exline, Joshua B. Grubbs, Kenneth I. Pargament, David F. Bradley, and Alex Uzdevins. 2016. Bi-factor models of religious and spiritual struggles. Distinct from religiousness and distress. *Religions* 7: 68. [CrossRef]
- Stewart, Carlyle F., III. 1995. *Street Corner Theology: Indigenous Reflections on the Reality of God in the African American Experience*. Nashville: Winston-Derek Publishers.
- Sullivan, Susan C. 2008. Unaccompanied children in churches: Low-income urban single mothers, religion, and parenting. *Review of Religious Research* 50: 157–75.
- Taylor, Robert J., and Linda M. Chatters. 2010. Importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of African Americans, Caribbean Blacks and Non-Hispanic Whites. *The Journal of Negro Education* 79: 280–94.
- Taylor, Robert J., Linda M. Chatters, and Jeff Levin. 2004. *Religion in the Lives of African Americans: Social, Psychological, and Health Perspectives*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Taylor, Robert J., Linda M. Chatters, and R. Khari Brown. 2014. African American religious participation. *Review of Religious Research* 56: 513–38. [CrossRef]
- Taylor, Rebecca D., Eva Oberle, Joseph A. Durlak, and Roger P. Weissberg. 2017. Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development* 88: 1156–71. [CrossRef]
- Theall, Katherine P., Brooke P. Lancaster, Sara Lynch, Robert T. Haines, Scott Scribner, Richard Scribner, and Vimal Kishore. 2011. The neighborhood alcohol environment and at-risk drinking among African-Americans. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 35: 996–1003. [CrossRef]
- Thoits, Peggy A. 2010. Stress and health: Major findings and policy implications. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S41–S53. [CrossRef]

- Utsey, Shawn O., Mark A. Bolden, Yzette Lanier, and Otis Williams III. 2007. Examining the role of culture-specific coping as a predictor of resilient outcomes in African Americans from high-risk urban communities. *Journal of Black Psychology* 33: 75–93. [[CrossRef](#)]
- van Leeuwen, Bart. 2010. Dealing with urban diversity: Promises and challenges of city life for intercultural citizenship. *Political Theory* 38: 631–57. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Ward, Naomi, and Andrew Billingsley. 1994. Black churches in Atlanta reach out to the community. *National Journal of Sociology* 81: 49–74.
- Wilcox, W. Bradford, and Nicholas H. Wolfinger. 2008. Living and loving “decent”: Religion and relationship quality among urban parents. *Social Science Research* 37: 828–43. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Wilmore, Gayraud. 1998. *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Witherspoon, Noelle, and Dannie L. Taylor. 2010. Spiritual weapons: Black female principals and religio-spirituality. *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 42: 133–58. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Yeh, Christine J., Noah E. Borrero, and Munyi Shea. 2011. Spirituality as a cultural asset for culturally diverse youth in urban schools. *Counseling and Values* 55: 185–98. [[CrossRef](#)]



© 2019 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).