CO-VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE: HOW BLACK WOMEN NAVIGATE SPACES OF TRAUMA

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by
Alisa G. Shockley
December 2022

Examining Committee Members:

Dr. Hamil Pearsall, Advisory Chair, Department of Geography and Urban Studies
Dr. Melissa Gilbert, Department of Geography and Urban Studies
Dr. Allison Hayes-Conroy, Department of Geography and Urban Studies
Dr. Judith Levine, External Member, Department of Sociology

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how relatives of gun-violence victims, specifically Black women, move about their environments in the aftermath of sudden and tragic loss. I explore the following research questions: 1) How do Black women, who are co-victims of gun homicide, navigate spaces of trauma? 2) How does the experience of trauma extend into other spaces and spatialities of their lives? 3) What are the social, political, and health implications for Black women with limited mobility who are co-victims of gun homicide? This study draws on a literature synthesis on health geographies, geotrauma, and Black Feminist Geographies, as well as auto-methods, specifically a Black Feminist auto-ethnography (BFA). BFA involves analyzing your own experiences in relation to others in their family and community. My autoethnography of my lived experiences in the neighborhood I grew up in started with the observation of my mother in the aftermath of losing my brother to gun violence in 2012. My dissertation develops a research agenda to theorize how racism, poverty, and trauma compound and how Black women craft survival strategies as they navigate landscapes of trauma. I describe the ways that conventional approaches to understanding gun violence can overlook the layers of trauma and fail to capture the nuances or lived experience of being a co-victim of gun violence. I propose BFA to center and understand the lived experience of co-victims of gun violence and to bear witness to the ways we engage with the world around us while processing the trauma that is carried with us. My autoethnography uncovers key strategies my mother and I used to cope with our loss, especially in the face of institutional failures from the policy. This research points towards a need for better mental health resources for co-victims of gun violence as they process their grief.

DEDICATED TO:

Black women, and other co-victims who have lost loved ones to gun violence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation has been a very long time coming; ten years and several health issues later, I'm here. This journey would not have been made possible if not for a supportive, and loving community, both inside and outside of academia. I struggled so hard with mental and physical health and having people who love and care about you and your journey makes a difference.

I would first like to thank my advisor, Dr. Hamil Pearsall. From the beginning you have been one of my biggest advocates and supporters, offering me guidance when I truly needed it. It may not seem like much, but you helped me immensely, thank you for sticking with me and my vision for my research. I would also like to thank Dr. Melissa Gilbert, for also being one of my biggest advocates and supporters. For joining my committee when needed and providing me with continue knowledge and resources. I'm grateful for all your help. To Dr. Allison Hayes-Conroy and Dr. Judith Levine, thank you for joining my committee at short notice and thank you for your time and feedback. I was surprised and happy with your comments and questions. You have left me with lots to think about moving forward. I really appreciate you both.

A special thank you to my previous committee members, Dr. Rickie Sanders, and Dr. Jeremy Mennis. Thank you for your support through my comprehensive exams, and my original research design pre-Covid. I truly appreciate all your support and feedback. I would like to thank Dr. David Organ, one of my first mentors in the department, friend and colleague who has also supported me through my journey. A big thank you to the rest the faculty in the department.

I would like to thank my family and friends who had my back when I couldn't stand. They kept me alive and moving. To my mom Gwendolyn Armstead and bloodmother Shayne Mason, to my older sister Katrina Shockley and brother-in-law Ivan DeJesus, who survived being trapped with me throughout Covid lockdown, and saw my breakdowns and buildups. Thank you for loving, caring and rooting for me. To my Aunties Katrina Kolade and Sandi Jackson thank you for your love and support. To my cousin Donna Congo, and all my many cousins young and old, thank you for having my back. To my younger siblings, Raymond, Randell, and Ranisha, thank you. To my great friend, Erin Watley and family, we share so many laughs together, you have been so supportive during my journey. Thank you for letting me use your office and discussing my work. To my great friend and colleague, Sarah Heck, thank you for working with me on Zoom for hours, almost daily during the writing process. Thank you for holding me accountable and for being a good friend and scholar; I am forever grateful.

Thank you to my study crew and good friends, Ritwika Biswas, Stephen Dickinson, and Rebecca Croog for holding space for me to finish and providing feedback on my work. Thank you for all your support even after finishing your own Ph. D journey. I really appreciate you all. To my good friend and colleague, Melissa Tolosa, you have been one of the highlights during this process. I love kicking it with you and working with you, you are brilliant. Thank you for your support and laughter. Thank you, Dirk Kinsey, for your support and feedback, you always have very thoughtful questions. Thank you to all graduate students in Geography and Urban Studies for fostering a very supportive community that is very much needed in a graduate program.

Special thanks to my fluff lord, Miss Freyja, my serotonin provider.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My research stems from my brother's death through gun violence, the experience of loss from my mother, and my own reflections in the aftermath of his death. I started watching and observing my mother's interaction with the outside world. Where she went, what she did, how she felt (if she told me). I was focused on her grief because I had seen it before, a mother losing children, but I know it especially hurt her because it was a sudden and violent loss. His murder was her true fear realized whenever he would step outside. We are honest about his position as a citizen of the carceral system, but my mother felt more relieved when he was in custody because she knew where he was. I always thought it was important to understand the worries and fears of Black[1] mothers towards their children in the streets because we know how dangerous it can be. Still, we must live, move, and occupy these same spaces as the danger. Thoughts kept entering my mind about how we deal with these concerns. How do we move about these spaces? How has loss to gun violence changed our spatial perception of where and how we live? These questions of a few of many that formed from my lived experiences. To better understand where I am coming from, it is best to discuss the gun violence happening in Philadelphia.

Gun violence has shaped and transformed many lives globally and locally. In recent years, even earlier this year of 2022, there have been mass shootings around the United States. These mass shootings have been place-based targets such as schools, grocery stores, and festive events; while others have been conflict or situational and occur in many inner cities. Gun violence is a major public health issue even outside of mass

---

[1] Black and African American is used interchangeably.

shooting events. Over the span of three days, from August 10th to August 12th, there have

been 280-gun violence incidents across the United States (Gun Violence Archives, 2022).

I would like to start by contextualizing gun violence in Philadelphia. For this

work and, as of July 26, 2022, there have been 1077 nonfatal and 278 fatal shootings in

Philadelphia alone and majority of the victims, tend to be young Black males between the

ages of 18 and 45. Black males made about 75.2% of gun homicides back in 2021, and so

I look at a lot of these victims as well within the inner city also tend to know each other,

there is a connection between. Victims of homicide and their assailants but also there's

less has been studied is the effect of gun violence on for the families of victims and

known forward as Co victims of gun violence and that's what this dissertation seeks to

address is sort of the experience of co victims with.

Figure 1.1 shows a map of Philadelphia neighborhoods and highlighted is the

neighborhood of Kingsessing.

Figure 1.1 Kingsessing neighborhood in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

This neighborhood is where my brother was killed. The map in Figure 1.2 shows gun violence from the years 2015 to 2022 in Kingsessing with the star representing my home. I created a 500- and 1000-foot buffer that indicated a block and two-block radiuses from my home. The points on the maps are shootings, red being fatal and blue being nonfatal.
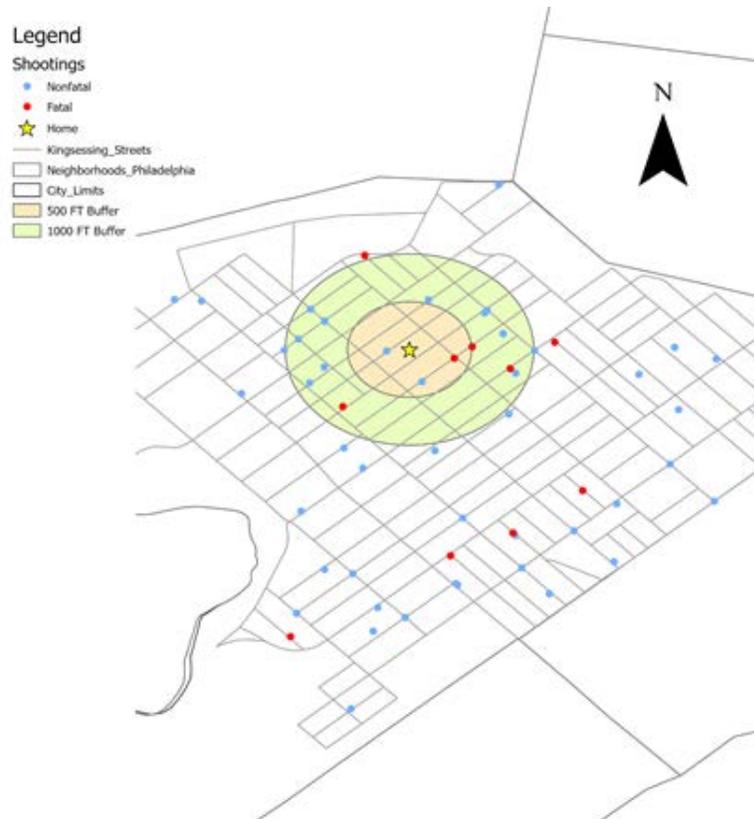
Figure 1.2. Gun violence in Kingsessing, 2012-2015

From open-source data for 2015 to 2022 the fatal shootings jumped about 95%, with shooting deaths in 2020 being 35% higher than in the previous year before the pandemic (Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, 2022). We are still seeing an increasing rise in gun violence. In Figure 1.3, the map shows gun violence data from the year 2012. Here you can see clustering around my home. Included in this map are two

fatal shootings of Black men that I knew, a childhood associate and youth mentor who was killed in April of 2012; and my brother who was killed in June of 2012. Their deaths happened months apart, but also a few hundred feet away from each other.
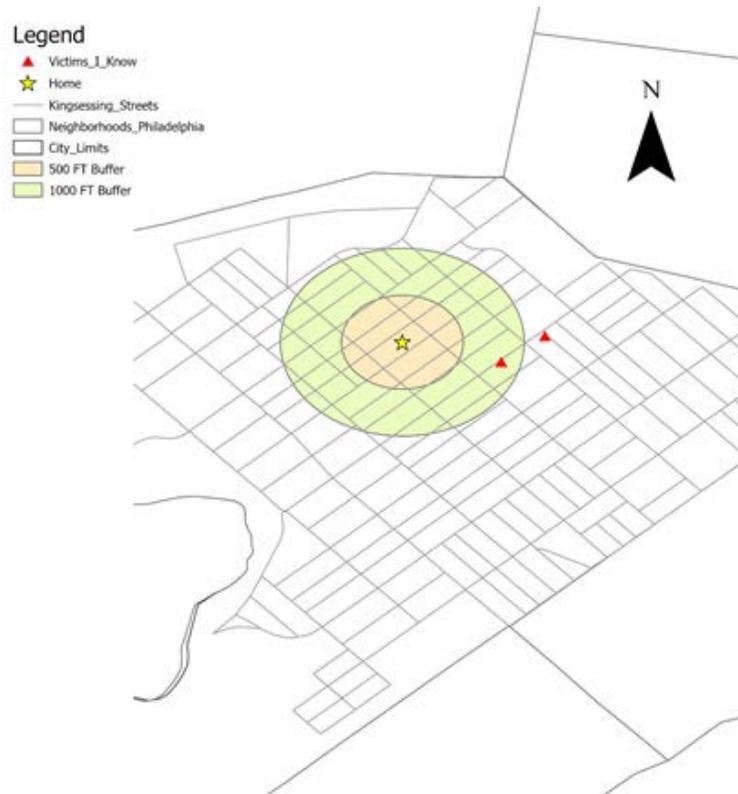
Figure 1.3. Victims I know from 2012 gun violence in Kingsessing

These maps are an important visualization of how prevalent gun violence is, and just how close it happens to co-victims who must live in said environments. The shootings are the dangers we must navigate every day, right outside your home, stores, transit stops, schools, and other places you may pass by with ease. They are not just points on a map, but life-changing, tragic events that happen to real people, and communities. My research reflects the co-victims left behind after those tragic events.

Dissertation Research Questions

This dissertation examines how relatives of gun-violence victims, specifically Black and African American women, move about their environments in the aftermath of sudden and tragic losses. I use the terms Black and African American as interchangeable through my dissertation. I address three research questions:

1. How do Black women, who are co-victims of gun homicide, navigate spaces of trauma?

2. How does the experience of trauma extend into other spaces and spatialities of their lives?

3. What are the social, political, and health implications for Black women with limited mobility who are co-victims of gun homicide?

Methods

My research was unfortunately impacted by COVID-19 which required a change in the research design. The work was changed to an elicit literature synthesis on health geographies, geotrauma, and Black Feminist Geographies. I had to re-strategize my mixed method approach from a Participatory Photo Mapping and Activity Space Analysis to an Autoethnographic method. I use Black feminist autoethnography (BFA) as a method that focuses on my experiences as a Black woman with intersecting identities that (or to) interrogate my positionality with self, my community, and the larger society. BFA is a merriment of Black feminist thought and autoethnography, autoethnography being the use of personal experience and self-reflection to understand and explore social phenomenon and larger social contexts (Butz & Besio, 2009; Adams et al., 2017).

Overview of Dissertation Chapters

The first chapter develops a research agenda based on a literature synthesis to theorize how racism, poverty, and trauma compound and how Black women craft survival strategies as they navigate landscapes of trauma. There is research on health and trauma, however, there has been less attention given to the role of place in reinforcing trauma for co-victims of gun homicide. Trauma can be viewed through transformations of the physical, social, and symbolic environments associated with landscapes. Trauma mobility can be seen in the collective traumas of certain populations who share collective histories and as such collective memories.

Geotrauma is described as "bridging" or "clasping," a place with lived experiences and impacts of diverse forms of trauma (Pain, 2021). Understanding the relational, multi-scalar, embodied and somatic aspects of trauma provides a framework to better understand African American women's diverse and complex experiences of trauma due to gun violence. We need to examine how the sharing of historical or cultural traumatic experiences on top of gun-violence-related trauma can be devastating to the group of people who are experiencing it. Using intersectionality to observe the way trauma can help us understand how levels of oppression operate to form a "Black sense of place" and personal landscapes which are then transformed as a result of a tragedy.

The research agenda follows the same research questions for the overall research paper. Firstly, how do African American women who have experienced loss of a loved one through acts of gun violence move about their active environment? Second, we need to better understand if and how experiences of trauma extend into other spaces and spatialities of their lives. Thirdly, after understanding how African American women

navigate their active environments, what are the social, political, and health implications for those women with limited mobility?

The next chapter examines feminist methods for addressing trauma and gun violence and proposes auto-methods to center and understand the lived experience of co-victims of gun violence. This chapter describes the ways that conventional approaches to understanding gun violence and overlook the layers of trauma and fail to capture the nuances or lived experience of being a co-victim of gun violence. I argue how these gaps can be addressed by using non-conventional methods and feminist approaches. The gaps are as followed:

Gap #1: Need to understand the history of marginalized groups and the ways that media coverage of gun violence becomes part of the traumatization process.

Gap #2: Need to recognize important distinctions in gun violence as a mass event vs. and everyday event that places certain people at greater risk; and

Gap #3: Need to understand the nuances or the lived experiences of people facing/have faced the reality of gun violence and can't pick up and move but are left facing the spaces.

Autoethnography as an auto-method is widely used among Feminist geographers, however Black feminist autoethnography has not been highly present in geographic scholarship. Auto-methods, BFA specifically, and a geographic context can offer another analysis on experiences with the aftermath of gun-violence. Bearing witness to the ways we engage with the world around us while processing the gun violence related trauma that is carried with us. The experience of PTSD is often described as disembodied (Connolly, 2017; Stupiggia, 2019). Autoethnography is one way to embody the

experience, give agency back to the person, and may lead to healing through narrative work (Priddis, 2015).

In the fourth chapter, I present an autoethnography of my experience as a co-victim of gun violence through a conversation with my mother on the 10-year anniversary of my brother's death. This autoethnography addresses the third gap identified in my previous chapter. Through the sharing of memories, experiences and reflection, I discovered some themes that were threaded throughout our conversation. Most often came up were the importance of social networks and community, the role of faith and the Black church, motherhood, institutional failures by Law Enforcement, and spatial (im)mobility. All of which were part of the personal, community and institutional realms that shaped our daily lives and experiences.

Research Significance

I identified key research gaps on trauma and gun violence, specifically how conventional approaches to understanding gun violence and overlook the layers of trauma and fail to capture the nuances or lived experience of being a co-victim of gun violence. Also, demonstrated how intersectionality and a Black Feminist Geography Framework can theorize how racism, poverty, and trauma compound and how Black women craft survival strategies as they navigate landscapes of trauma. Finally, illustrated how Black feminist autoethnography (BFA) as a feminist geographic approach can improve our understanding the lived experiences of Black women living with gun violence-related deaths.

The importance of this work is the focus on the experience of Black women co-victims. Given the high number of gun-violence victims being young Black men, their

loss will influence their community, especially the Black women in their lives who are caregivers, lovers, bloodmothers, or othermothers. Understanding how these women live in the aftermath of their loved one's death, and within their neighborhood communities where gun violence is prevalent can offer insight for victims and families of victim advocacy in addressing their needs for support.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIZING MOBILITIES OF TRAUMA

Introduction

Gun violence persists as a main cause of death among inner-city homicide victims, impacting Black men at higher rates (Heron, 2018). Recent research on co-victims of gun violence has focused on the effects of homicide on co-victims (Connolly and Gordon, 2015) revealing the connections between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the exposure of violence among inner-city residents (Gillikin et at., 2016). Yet few studies have considered how such spatialities of tragedy can aggravate the mental health of co-victims, particularly as they pass through these traumatic spaces on a regular basis. The relatives of gun violence victims, or co-victims of gun homicide, specifically African American women, are invisible. To better understand the impact of gun violence in US cities, we need to develop an agenda that places Black women at the center of our research as they must cope over time with the sudden loss of a loved one while navigating spaces of trauma. I argue that by bringing a Black feminist theoretical framework to understand geographies of trauma, we can develop a research agenda that charts new pathways to theorize how racism, poverty, and trauma compound and how Black women craft survival strategies as they navigate landscapes of trauma.

Gun violence persists as a main cause of death among inner-city homicide victims, impacting Black men at higher rates (Heron, 2018). Recent research on co-victims of gun violence has focused on the effects of homicide on co-victims (Connolly and Gordon, 2015) revealing the connections between posttraumatic stress disorder

(PTSD) and the exposure of violence among inner-city residents (Alim, et al., 2006; Gillespie et al., 2009; Breslau, 2009; Gillikin et at., 2016). Literature has focused on the traumatic effects of community violence on adult populations (Jenkins, 2002; Walling, et al., 2011; DeCou & Lynch, 2017), and youth (Breslau, et al., 2004; Post, et al., 2014), while other literature centered co-victim's meaning-making (Armour, 2003; Bailey et al., 2013), grief and coping (McDevitt-Murphy et al., 2012; Sharpe et al., 2014; Sharpe, 2015; Hannays-King, Bailey & Akhtar, 2015) and their overall experiences (Armour, 2002a; Armour, 2002b; Bailey et al., 2013; Englebrecht et al., 2014; Metzger et al., 2015). However, very few studies have considered how such spatialities of tragedy can negatively impact the mental health of co-victims, specifically African American women, particularly as they pass through these traumatic spaces on a regular basis. Studying their experiences through a spatial lens can also help with understanding how trauma is socially reproduced in marginalized communities, through the actions of gun violence

Health Impacts of Trauma

The experience of place is essential in much of health geography literature, from the use of therapeutic landscapes (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 2009; Foley, 2011; Bells et al., 2015; Finlay, 2015), to substance use (Mason and Mennis, 2010; Mennis and Mason, 2011; Mennis, Stahler and Baron, 2012; Mason et al., 2015; Mennis et al., 2016). Place has a strong influence on everyday experiences such as well-being (Andrews, Chen, and Myers, 2014); environmental justice (Anguelovski, 2013); and cultural trauma (Talebreza-May, 2015). Exposure to community violence has been linked to posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD in youth (Breslau et al., 2004) and primary care patients who reside in inner cities (Gillespie et al., 2009; Gillikin et al., 2016),

specifically low-income, predominantly African American neighborhoods. Mental health disparities revealed that African Americans have higher rates of traumatic exposure and are more likely to have witnessed a traumatic event (Alegria et al., 2013). Low-income populations in urban areas are at greater risk of community violence exposure and victimization (Kelly et al., 2010; Kirkpatrick & Heller, 2014). Female victims who suffer a traumatic event are at even higher risk for PTSD (Breslau, 2009; Kirkpatrick & Heller, 2014). Stressful environmental conditions and life circumstances that follow a traumatic event without little or no social support increase susceptibility to PTSD (Kelly et al., 2010). While research on trauma and stress-related traumas such as PTSD have been more prevalent in social science and public health disciplines, research studies have also been conducted on grief and coping among African Americans who have suffered loss through homicide (Hannah-King, Bailey & Akhtar, 2015; Jenkins, 2002; McDevitt-Murphy et al., 2012; Sharpe, 2008; Sharpe & Boyas, 2011; Sharpe, Joe & Taylor, 2012; Sharpe et al., 2014). The previously mentioned research gives a broader look into how community gun violence has impacted African American mental health, ever, there has been less attention given to the role of place in reinforcing trauma for co-victims of gun homicide.

<center>Rethinking Trauma through Space, Place, and Landscapes</center>

The literature in health geography has used landscapes as a method of viewing different health-promoting scenes, especially around mental health well-being, and the life course. Space and place are well-established foundations of the geography field, and for health geographers go beyond the utilization of place as fixed points and locations or units used to analyze spatial patterns of diseases or phenomena. Places are recognized as

dynamic locations that will inevitably change (Gesler, 1991) and hold meanings for people (Gesler, 1991: Kearns and Gesler, 1998; Kearns and Moon, 2002). Humanist traditions of place focus on the subjective experiences of people within place (Tuan 1977; Gesler, 1991) in which those experiences are constantly changing, positively or negatively, shaped by the processes that occur over space (Kearns and Joseph, 1993). Places are meaningful because we always exist and act in place. Landscapes are lived and interpreted in different ways based on an individual's experience in that place but also based on exposure by power structures (Cresswell, 2010).

Place is embedded in the landscape where symbolic meaning and culture is imprinted into it (Gesler, 1991), and these same landscapes can be characterized in many forms (Gesler, 1992). Landscapes have been operationalized in the study of health processes in the field of geography. Such is the beginning of therapeutic landscapes, landscapes associated with healing and well-being (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 2009), as well as places where grief, mourning, and remembrance occurs, properly coined deathscapes (Sidaway and Maddrell, 2016). Therapeutic landscape is a conceptual framework developed by Gesler (1992), arising from cultural geography and cultural ecology, to analyze the physical, social, and symbolic environments where healing takes place (Gesler, 2009; Gesler, 2017).

Since Gesler's introduction to the concept of therapeutic landscapes, there have been numerous applications for understanding the relationships or interconnectedness between people, place, health, and identity. An example would be Gesler's own work on water-based establishments and their healing reputations such as bathhouses and spas (Gesler, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2003). Over time these aquatic health enabling places were

given the name of the concept of blue spaces: 'health-enabling places and spaces, where water is at the center of a range of environments with identifiable potential for the promotion of human wellbeing' (Foley and Kistemann, 2015). Another example is Wilson's (2003) work on First Nations people emphasizes the social and spiritual connections to place in their everyday lives. This body of work does not just focus on the physicality of the land as having healing properties, but instead focuses on the interconnectedness of the symbolic environment, social, spiritual, and cultural aspects of the First Nations people.

Death, grief, mourning, and remembrance are experienced spatially as well as temporally (Sidaway and Maddrell, 2016). The intensity in which people grieve is marked by certain sites but affects and unfolds in other spaces and places. The authors argue that death and bereavement are mediated through the intersections of the body, identities, and society (Sidaway and Maddrell, 2016). Bereavement and remembrance of loss can alter one's sense of self and sense of place. Relationships and other significant associations with certain places are accessed in the present or through memory. Informal memorials, or as the authors call it, spontaneous memorialization is a cultural phenomenon that follows traditions of the public acknowledgment of loss in public space. These memorials are often expressed through material possessions associated with the deceased as seen in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Memorial of gun-violence victim, Jaquan "Moo" Alexander, 17. He was killed in my neighborhood December 14, 2016.

While landscapes have provided the necessary framework for viewing health and death, it can also be used to understand how trauma is experienced and/or transformed because of tragic, sudden loss. Deathscapes touch upon a part of the process that is the bereavement and remembrance, however, what is absent is understanding how these spaces can reinforce trauma, and permanently alter the co-victim's neighborhood landscapes. Trauma can be viewed through transformations of the physical, social, and symbolic environments associated with landscapes.

Understanding Trauma as Being Mobile

Mobility is seen as being in contention with place to some humanistic geographers (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). Place is considered to represent an authentic existence imbued with meaning that could only exist if roots were established, such a place is the home. Mobility represents the antithetical to place (Adey, 2017), it represents placeless(ness) (Relph, 1976). However, views on the definition of place are changing (Cresswell, 2006; Massey, 2008). Some scholars even suggest viewing place as being relational and 'in process' (Merriman, 2009). Mobility and movement happen in and around landscapes as well; experiences and viewpoints change and shift with events that occur through the environment. These changes to the landscape can change how inhabitants move differently through their environment (Merriman, 2009). As with writings on place, then, academics are increasingly suggesting that we should approach landscapes as open and produced through mobilities and movements, paying attention to the embodied mobilities by which we inhabit, traverse, and view the landscape.

In the past decade, social science has seen a shift in the study of mobility-- mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Mobilities reach beyond the movement and transportation of people and goods, including the flow of imagery and information, and other forms of communication (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Such mobilities can necessitate research methods engaging with memory and recall, such as the use of photos, images, and objects (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Those visuals can leave footprints of former and/or current landscapes or show proof of society's production of unequal mobility.

Trauma mobility can be seen in the collective traumas of certain populations who share collective histories and as such collective memories. Those memories, if not

experienced directly, can be passed onto future generations through narratives and oral

histories coupled with visual and written evidence. The trauma suffered by those

impacted by the events, directly and/or indirectly, can be passed on through space and

time (Degloma 2009; Trigg 2009). Chattel slavery happened hundreds of years ago in the

United States, but the consequences are still being felt by their descendants today.

Through different institutions such as police brutality, mass incarceration, housing

discrimination, and income inequality, African Americans are reminded of their history

that is steeped in racial violence and which currently occupies their presence. The trauma

of slavery is passed on from generation to generation through personal narratives of the

ancestors to history textbooks taught in schools (Alexander, et. al, 2004).

GeoTrauma

Geographers have begun to explore the spatialities of trauma particularly from the

perspective of critical feminist, postcolonial, queer, and Black geographies. In a recent

article, Pain (2021) reviews how geographers have approached the relationship between

trauma and place through several angles that help ground what she calls "geotraumas"

not only at the individual level but also at the structural level. She cites recent authors

who "have begun to map the ways that knowledge and experience of trauma is

profoundly shaped by the cultural and structural contexts in which it is located (e.g.,

Coddington and Micieli-Voutsinas, 2017; Pain et al., 2020)" (P. 973). Pain (2021) cites

the need for more geographical approaches to trauma, offering geotrauma as framing for

research with trauma. Geotrauma is described as bridging, or as the author uses the term

"clasping," a place with lived experiences and impacts of diverse forms of trauma. The

author reviewed previous work on trauma that has utilized Black, post-colonial,

indigenous, feminist, and queer analyses to suggest that we pay close attention to geographical work in trauma (974). She identifies seven ways in which trauma is geographical, which can also be overlapping. These placings of trauma as the author calls them are memorial places, retraumatizing places, layered places, hardwired places, mobile places, places of repossession, and healing places. Furthermore, she points out the necessity of seeing "victims" as active agents of their own lives and experiences so as not to retraumatize them.

Pain's "placings of trauma" provide a useful framework as a starting point for understanding the experiences of Black women in marginalized communities in U.S. cities (2021). First are memorial places that are specific sites of past traumatic events and ongoing implications that serve as memory spaces, such as sites of memorialization, loss of place and displacement. Secondly, are retraumatizing places in which the re-traumatization is based on lived experiences triggered by environments, often away from the original traumatic site. Thirdly, are layered places where traumatic events are not only fixed to places in the past, but are also active, renewed, and reshaped. For example, there may be sites of traumatic past where new violence continues to be present. Fourth, are hardwired places where trauma is held and hardwired internally within the brain and body, and may be re-hardwired due to material, social, and/or emotional experiences of place. Fifth, are mobile places where trauma is mobile across place, space, and time. She argues that these mobilities are layered and multi-scalar ranging from individual biographies of trauma to sites and places of trauma. The sixth placing is places of repossession in which the reclaiming of place and space through acts of resistance, resilience, and healing sites of traumatic spaces and places takes front action. The seventh

and final placing of trauma are healing places, which is finding a way of being in the world through integration and sharing of experiences that foster and promote collective healing. This is usually done through community activism and politics.

While geographers have examined the relationship between space and trauma through all these angles, Pain argues that mobile places are the most distinctive from a geographic perspective (p. 981). In a special issue on trauma, geography and mobilities in Emotion, Space and Society edited by Coddington and Micieli-Voutsinas in 2017, several key points are instructive. Trauma is embodied, not only in individuals but within communities and the body politic. Coddington (2017) focuses on trauma as a contagion, highlighting the relational nature of trauma's embodiment. Adams-Hutchenson (2017) argues that somatic qualities of trauma mean that emotion and affect, which involve movement, can help us to understand how bodies can act. She argues "the focus on trauma's somatic qualities exposes the lack of demarcation between interior exterior, nature-culture, mind, and body. Instead, these concepts are intimately linked allowing focus on borders, envelopes, boundaries, fluidity, porosity, and similar spatial vocabularies" (p. 111).

Understanding the relational, multi-scalar, embodied and somatic aspects of trauma provides a framework to better understand African American women's diverse and complex experiences of trauma due to gun violence. But as Pain (2021) argues, there needs to be more geographical analyses of the relations of place and trauma, particularly from Black and feminist epistemologies.

Focusing on Trauma through Intersectionality and a Black Feminist Lens

Trauma does not discriminate. However, the impact it has on an individual may be exacerbated by personal histories and identities they live with. Using intersectionality to observe the way trauma can help us understand how levels of oppression operate to form a "Black sense of place" and personal landscapes which are then transformed because of a tragedy. It is appropriate to use a Black feminist approach since Black women should be at the center of research examining gun violence in the US and are agents of knowledge through their collective and individual experiences (Collins 2009). Also, important to note is that homicide by gun violence is the leading cause of death among Black youth and young adults in the United States (Center for Disease Control, 2019). Black bloodmothers, othermothers (e.g., aunts, grandmothers, etc.), and community othermothers bear the burden of such loss (Hannays-King, Bailey, and Akhtar, 2015).

Patricia Hill Collins presents her ideas on intersectionality through the form of a matrix of domination and intersecting oppressions (Collins 2009). According to Collins, the *matrix of domination* "describes this overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained" (Collins 2009). This matrix operates at three levels: the individual, the community, and the structural. At the individual level, biographies are formed from our unique experiences. These experiences are based on our identities, beliefs, values, and emotions which themselves are shaped and situated in larger structural systems. At the community level, individual biographies form a community through shared experiences in cultural contexts. The strongest cohesive cultural context is one formed from shared histories, geographies, and social

institutions. The third level, the structural level, is controlled by the dominant group through social institutions such as schools, businesses, government agencies, and the media. (Collins 2009)

Cultural trauma operates on the community level where the members share a collective memory of horrendous events that due to remembrance has helped form a collective identity (Alexander 2004; Eyerman 2004). In the case of African Americans, the collective cultural trauma is the history and memory of chattel slavery. This shared cultural trauma is a result of larger structural systems that operated and continue to operate, although in different configurations (e.g., mass incarceration). Racial trauma is situated next to cultural trauma in that it can also be a collective experience. Racial trauma refers to the experience of anxiety, threats, and hopelessness from repeated exposure to racial discrimination (Bryan-Davis & Ocampo, 2006). This form of trauma is commonly triggered by direct or indirect experiences of racial harassment, discrimination, and racial violence at individual and institutional scales.

Black women have the collective identities of being Black and being women. Although this is the case, Black women are not homogenous and do exist in different social strata. Racism and sexism, oftentimes racial sexism, is a constant across the Black woman's identity. Coupled with individual trauma are these structural systems that continue to perpetuate these collective traumas along with social and economic inequalities.

Black American women suffer from many forms of trauma, spatially and temporally. Yet we do not look at the impact of trauma-related gun violence coupled with

the other life traumas of people. We need to examine how the sharing of historical or cultural traumatic experiences on top of gun-violence-related trauma can be devastating to the group of people who are experiencing it. We need to examine Black women in the United States who have experienced trauma through state institutions and public policy, economic processes and institutions, and social institutions such as the media. We also need to better understand their responses to such traumas both individually and collectively. Finally, we need to examine how Black women's experiences and responses are differentiated from each other.

A Black Feminist Mobilities Research Agenda of Gun Violence

Using a Black feminist theoretical framework and trauma mobilities to understand how gun violence impacts African American women as co-victims requires that we broaden our research. We can use a Black feminist intersection approach to understand how the matrix of oppressions operates at three levels including the individual, community, and structural levels while paying attention to how the intersection of different forms of power and identity shape Black women's experiences of trauma. To understand these different intersections of identity and power in relation to gun violence-related trauma, we must understand the experiences of African American women who have experienced loss through gun violence. We can explicitly spatialize this framework by paying attention to the relations, multi-scalar, embodied, and somatic aspects of the differentiated experiences of Black women's trauma. We need to understand how women experience and navigate their environments. We need to understand how women understand and experience their neighborhoods and communities.

Firstly, how do African American women who have experienced loss of a loved one through acts of gun violence move about their active environment? That is, how do they experience and interact with spaces and places of everyday life after sudden and traumatic loss. Acts of violence happen in active spaces and places usually in the neighborhood or community in which the victims live. After violent loss, do the women alter their behavior and routines when moving around their neighborhood? Do they perform acts of avoidance, reclamation, or change nothing? How do they feel when moving about their active daily routes?

Second, we need to better understand if and how experiences of trauma extend into other spaces and spatialities of their lives. It is important to understand what features of the landscape may elicit re-traumatization. Identifying these features can then help determine if they are important in how women move through their neighborhood or community, be it emotionally, mentally, and/or physically. Traumas are not fixed to lace and can extend into other spatialities. For example, media reports of violence may be experienced as traumatic in their own homes. Reports on mainstream media and social media of institutional violence, such as police brutality that has led to the deaths of several Black Americans can be seen and felt as continuous assault on a marginalized community with a history of racism and discrimination. Similarly, oral narratives and histories of racial violence and trauma are passed down from one generation to the next and throughout the community, as lessons on what can and does happen to Black Americans.

Thirdly, after understanding how African American women navigate their active environments, what are the social, political, and health implications for those women

with limited mobility? For example, there may be social implications for those with limited mobility such as avoidance of social networks and limited engagement in other social environments. Gilbert (1998) in her research on the survival strategies of economically marginalized African American and white women in a US city, argued that lack of mobility could be understood as simultaneously empowering and disempowering. For example, lack of mobility can be understood as a sense of being rooted in a place providing strong place-based personal networks–family, friends, church contacts– in neighborhoods. These networks may help women emotionally or financially. They may provide childcare or link women to jobs. Simultaneously, these place-based networks may constrain women by keeping them in places with limited job opportunities or social services (Gilbert, 1998). Limited mobility, or rootedness may impact involvement in organizations that work with gun violence control and support for victims and families of victims of gun violence, as well other political activism rallying for support of their communities. Health may also be affected by limited mobility, both mental and physical, if one is constrained to living in a neighborhood heavily impacted by community violence (DeCou and Lynch, 2017; Voisin et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2017), but also having limited access to social support networks (Feeney and Collins, 2015; Holt-Lunstad and Smith, 2012). To understand these implications, we must understand what, if any, survival strategies they have developed to cope with potential re-traumatization spaces and places.

Finally, it challenges us to develop new methodologies to answer these questions. While traditional methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups would likely be useful, I would like to suggest less traditional methods that may be useful. Activity space

analysis allows for a better understanding of how co-victims view their daily landscape after a traumatic loss, while also allowing for exploration of their movements through potential traumatic spaces. Using a modified version of the Ecological Interview (Mason et al., 2004) and eliciting the use of Free Listing (Quinlan, 2017), a form of recall methodology, women could be asked to identify and list geographic locations they perceive to be safe, risky and/or important. Important locations would refer to places of significance for each woman, this could be directly related to their loss, indirectly related to their loss, or a general sense of place. The places could hold a special meaning or evoke specific memories. This kind of research can be done with women in groups since social networks are important for building support, and Black women have built those social relationships through community resources such as the church as well as support from family, friends, and neighbors (Gilbert, 1998; Joassart-Marcell, 2014).

Another approach that would be useful is Participatory Photo Mapping (PPM). PPM is a qualitative GIS method that uses participatory photography and photo-elicitation interviews. PPM is used to document and explore the lived experiences of place while communicating those experiences to community stakeholders and decision-makers (Dennis, Gaulocher, Carpiano, and Brown, 2009). This method has primarily been used to document the lived experiences of adolescents/youth in their neighborhoods (Teixeira, 2018; Teixeira and Gardner, 2017; Teixeira, 2015; Dennis et al., 2009). Women could take photos of the places that hold significant meaning or that evoke emotional responses. They can record where they took the photo in a small journal. They can choose photos of particular significance to them and then explain why they are significant. The photos can be geotagged to their activity patterns as well.

In so doing, this research agenda will contribute to broader discussions on geographies of trauma from a Black feminist standpoint. By bringing a geographical perspective about the experiences of trauma and the consequences of limited mobility, this research speaks to ongoing debates around (im)mobility and inequity. Finally, this research will chart new pathways to theorize how racism, poverty, and trauma compound and how Black women craft survival strategies as they navigate landscapes of trauma.

CHAPTER 3

FEMINIST METHODS FOR ADDRESSING TRAUMA AND GUN VIOLENCE

I watched you leaving
So determined to go
On this journey
Neither of us seems to know
I waved so long
And cried my tears
And I silently pondered
My secret fears
I don't know how
Nor do I know when
But I'm sure God will have us together again
The fight has been fought
And the battle is won
We'll be together again
My dear son
      ---Unknown, *"Hurry Back, I Watched"*

Introduction

      This poem was found in the belongings of my mother, along with other keepsakes

from them time of my brother's passing. Written in black ink, on a single piece of folded

college ruled paper. There is no name on the poem, given no indication of an author. The

obvious action is to ask my mother if she wrote it, however, to do so could potentially

bring up overwhelming emotions she may not want to experience. The poem displays the

fears and grievances of a mother who lost her son. The "secret fears" mentioned

resonated with my mother's constant worry about my brother's safety in the streets.

Whenever he left the house, I would observe her anxious stares out the front door. Her fears were actualized one day when my brother, her son was gunned down a few blocks from our home.

This act of violence changed the way we interacted with our neighborhood. I observed my mother's actions looking for witnesses on the block where it occurred, which made me hyper aware of my surroundings while also fearing for her safety. We avoided the area for years after his death, a place we used to frequent for errands then became a sad reminder of a personal, traumatic event. Also observed with my mother was those sad reminders were not limited to that one place but traveled along her active bus routes. She would point out places where her son used to hang out. These were places she would wave at him from the bus or places where he was a known regular from the patrons. I would listen to the change in her voice and watch her saddened eyes moisten just holding back her tears.

This personal story is the basis for my research. I have often asked myself how many other women, especially mothers, felt the same? Have they experienced a change in their environment with such great loss? If they always carried it with them as they moved about their world. How many places that served as typical neighborhood spaces were then changed after incidents of gun violence? This article describes the ways that conventional approaches to understanding gun violence and overlook the layers of trauma and fail to capture the nuances or lived experience of being a co-victim of gun violence. This article begins by laying out the limitations of conventional approaches. Next, this article proposes auto-methods to center and understand the lived experience of co-victims of gun violence. Furthermore, I propose to reimagine auto-methods from a Black

Feminist theoretical framework that emphasizes how the self must be situated in relation to other people and social and geographical contexts.

Research gaps on trauma and gun violence

Researchers and policymakers are increasingly framing gun violence as a public health concern and even an epidemic in the United States (Butts et al., 2015; Bauchner et al., 2017; Cook, 2018; Christensen et al., 2019; Skorton, 2022). Factors associated with gun violence are typically understood in terms of substance abuse behavior (Chen & Wu, 2016; Banks et al., 2017), social networks (Kalesan et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2020), and to a lesser extent, risky places where people may be exposed to gun violence. Additionally, there has been a shift from looking at gun violence as an individual issue to a community one, and there is increasing concern for the trauma experienced by the co-victims of gun violence. There has been a push to bring in new disciplinary perspectives and approaches to studying trauma. Here I lay out key research gaps on trauma and gun violence.

Gap #1: Need to understand the history of marginalized groups and the ways that media coverage of gun violence becomes part of the traumatization process

In a country rift with historical and present-day violence, feelings of dread, hopelessness, pain, and being "sick and tired of being sick and tired" are a constant presence among communities of color. People are worried about their lives being destroyed either through forced deportation, encounters with law enforcement, and most recently the continuous wave of mass shootings. Video coverage of traumatizing events on repeat from 24-hour news stations while civilian images and video recordings are

streamed live and circulated around the web and social media. The sadness and grief are overwhelming. These places meant to foster learning and enrichment are violated repeatedly by violent engagements and the victims and their families, along with the rest of the world, will be reminded every day of the tragic events that occurred…until the next one, then the cycle continues.

After the untimely, and tragic death, of then 17-year-old, Trayvon Martin, in 2012 and the verdict acquitting George Zimmerman of murder under "Stand Your Ground" laws, photos of Trayvon Martins lifeless body was shared on social media by the formerly accused Zimmerman, which then made its way to mainstream media outlet, MSNBC, who aired the photos on live television. A graphic picture of a lifeless Black minor, on display for the world to see. Trayvon wasn't the end of it; more victims of extrajudicial violence appeared on camera and went viral. From Eric Garner's chokehold death, screaming to officers "I can't breathe," Walter Scott running from a traffic stop and being shot in the back, Alton Sterling, Michael Brown with his hands up then shot dead with his body lying in the streets uncovered for hours, 12-year-old Tamir Rice playing in a park and didn't have a chance, and Philando Castile whose death was recorded on Facebook Live. The audios, videos and images of Black death were shared over news media and circulated around social media networks. Arguments can be made that sharing such visual imagery is reminiscent of Mamie Till-Mobley's open casket funeral of her 14-year-old son, Emmett Till, whose mutilated body was seen by tens of thousands, and even more in the release of *Jet* magazine which bore its cover. Emmett Till's badly beaten, mutilated body was America's racism on display and the country was forced to reckon with it (Onwuachi-Willig, 2016). However, his lynching was during the

Jim Crow era (1955) when racial violence was prevalent, and his murderers were acquitted. Imagery has the power to move people, and it did, it moved communities into protesting the injustice carried out by the courts and became a symbol of the Civil Rights Movement.

I understand the power of imagery and I see the resemblance in using imagery in a call to action, but I argue that Black Lives Matter wasn't mobilized from the visual images of Trayvon Martin's death, but by the injustice carried out by the judiciary. How many pictures of dead Black bodies at the hands of police will it take for justice to be served? At what point does the power of imagery move from inaction to action, action to desensitization, apathy, and voyeurism in the form of snuff media (Mowatt, 2018)? The constant display of Black death on the news and on social media eventually takes a psychological toll (Hackett, 2017). Being a Black woman in America and witnessing another unarmed Black death, then hearing no justice being carried outweighs your spirit. Feelings of anxiety, fear, and hopelessness are experienced just by being Black in America. The "Talk" is culturally known in almost every Black family. It is given when teenagers, especially young, Black boys, reach driving age. What to do when a cop pulls you over, how to behave, how to speak, keep all limbs visible, don't make any sudden movements, etc. Now we are inundated with so many videos of young Black men and women dying in altercations with police, even when following directions.

Gap #2: Need to recognize important distinctions in gun violence as a mass event vs. and everyday event that places certain people at greater risk

Like the events of mass shootings are the fatal altercations between Black civilians and law enforcement officers. This is not to compare the tragedy of events, only

31

the coverage, for they are all tragic losses in the end. The loss of Black lives from police brutality is not displayed in a similar fashion on mainstream media. The Las Vegas shooting back in October 2017, which left 58 victims dead and nearly 900 injured, was the deadliest mass shooting in over three decades. After each mass violent incident, the media goes into overdrive to report the breaking news and to keep the public informed and watching. However, something is different in the coverage of violence. Rarely do you see videos and images of shooting victims circulating on the television. The Las Vegas incident had plenty of firsthand accounts and recordings of the firing shots, but what you didn't see, at least on national television, were the bodies of the victims being brutalized by bullets. The same observation can be made of Virginia Tech; Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida; Aurora, Colorado; Sandy Hook Elementary; the church in Sutherland Springs, Texas; and most recently the high school shooting victims in Parkland, Florida. I find the censorship on video and imagery of such events, a respectful one, for these are not events that need to be re-lived by the survivors, the families and friends of the victims, and the public. Their deaths should not be for public consumption. Why isn't the same respect and courtesy given to Black victims of police brutality?

The case of 18-year-old Michael Brown, who was shot and killed by former Officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, MO sparked protests and riots in the streets. The depiction of the unarmed victim, Brown, in the media also sparked criticism and condemnation. While images of Michael Brown's cold, bloody, lifeless body made rounds in media circuits, so were his other photos. Photos of Brown posing with hand signs were shown on the news and in newspapers. Similar exposure happened with Trayvon Martin, with images of young Trayvon posing with hand signs, grills, and the

occasional middle finger. The media chose to use those photos instead of the more flattering ones in which Brown was in graduation attire or listening to music. The media chooses to perpetuate stereotypes of Black people (young Black men as thugs), and in doing so criminalizes Black bodies. What is noticeable is the treatment of Black victims by the media, especially when compared to White suspects (Leonard, 2017; Wing, 2017). These microaggressions triggered a reaction among Black Twitter users using the hashtag #IfTheyGunnedMeDown (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Hackett, 2017; Lewis, 2014; Vega, 2014) which put on display the racial bias of the "deserving vs. undeserving" (Neely, 2015, p. 17) victim narrative.

Sharing images of Black Death by social institutions such as the media, requires the power and privilege of not being a part of a marginalized group. The dominant power structure controls the media and will quite often display its racial biases by criminalizing Black victims and humanizing white criminals. By criminalizing Black bodies, the media is then able to share, not just the stereotypes, but also the videos of unarmed, Black people being killed on film. These institutions will not be affected, mentally, physically, or emotionally because they are the ones controlling the narrative of Black people. Black Lives Matter was established out of the racial injustice of the bureaucratic system and has used social media to gain momentum, establish an activist community, and shed light on other racist acts of police brutality (Bonilla and Rosa, 2015).

Gun violence is a daily occurrence in America, and it takes many forms, including school shootings, accidental shootings, suicide, mass shootings, domestic violence, police-related shootings, gun homicide, and so on. Gun violence does not always lead to death, but the violence itself still makes an impact on the victims, witnesses, and loved ones of victims (co-victims). The ramifications of gun violence can impact entire communities. Direct and indirect exposure to community violence, specifically gun violence is not just an urban concern, as we have seen across the United States, however, due to the increased density of urban areas, come higher incidences of community gun violence. Studies have discussed exposure to community violence and its impact on mental health (Jenkins, 2002; Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; DeCou & Lynch, 2017; Boyd et al., 2022), specifically trauma, and depression. Many of these studies focus on children and adolescent youth exposure demonstrating the devastating long-term effects on children.

Despite documentation of the long-term detrimental effects on youth, there has been little discussion of why there is a lack of residential mobility. Why don't people just leave these traumatic places? Historically, redlining has been essential in the hyper-segregation of communities of color for decades; because of this, major cities like Philadelphia have high racially and economically segregated neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were able to build communities among the residents there and establish different social networks, so many families (generations even) have roots in those

neighborhoods. Racial residential segregation also had an economic impact on predominantly Black neighborhoods, where many became poor due to the departure of economic opportunities from those areas.

Low-income households face increased risk for housing insecurity while simultaneously living in high poverty neighborhoods where community violence is highly active. At times low-income households may be forced to relocate elsewhere, that tends to be in other high crime areas, but usually away from their communities that they have built. However, what does that mean for residents who choose to remain in their neighborhood that still experience high rates of community violence? While a focus on residential immobility as hindering people moving is missing from the literature, it also misses the ways in which communities can provide support to people struggling with the aftermath of gun violence.

Communities, however large or small individuals want to make them, can be a source of support on an individual or even collective level. The collective neighborhood community may be a source of support while also being a source of concern regarding health and safety. This is evident by the informal memorials and vigils performed by loved ones of victims of gun violence that bring people in the community together in remembrance of the victim. This may turn into community collectivism regarding informal protest of violence that keeps happening in the neighborhood. These social ties to the neighborhood are situated in rootedness and familiarity of one's environment. For residents who have chosen to stay, and for those who have no means to move, it is important to understand their everyday lived experiences of existing in these

environments. This is especially true for people who have lost loved ones to gun violence.

While living in neighborhoods with increased violence, particularly gun violence, residents might change how they move about their environment. Gun violence has happened outside establishments frequented by many patrons of the neighborhood, such as a local corner store or grocery store. A location that provides a useful, oftentimes much needed, service to the community has now become a crime scene, and a site of tragedy where "[insert person] was killed." Said person is often well known in the community. How will people react to that location in the future? Will they continue to visit the location, or will they avoid it? These communities provide a sense of safety and cohesion, while also sharing a space with gun violence. What is important to understand is how people who have lost loved ones to gun violence in the community still hold on to that sense of safety and social support when they cannot leave or chose to not leave their neighborhood.

All three gaps intertwine into understanding the different levels, from the macro to the micro level in understanding how people who have lost loved ones to gun violence navigate and experience the world around them in the aftermath. How should I address the gaps related to understanding gun violence and trauma for Black women? Feminist geographers have used many non-conventional methods to address a variety of research areas, have included the realms of emotional geographies, affect geographies as well as intimate feminist geographies (Moss and Donovan, 2017). Auto-methods has been an emerging form of analytical content (Moss and Besio, 2019) in Feminist geography. The importance of engaging with memory and experience as data in research is imperative to

utilizing auto-methods. Experience and memory surrounding gun violence might be a sensitive issue, an intimate subject to touch upon as a researcher-scholar but may offer insight into the subject area that has not been analyzed before. Auto-methods alone is not enough to fully capture the experience of mobile trauma and gun violence. A Black woman centered approach is most appropriate in understanding how gun-violence impacts our daily lives. Black women standpoint is imperative to understanding how we experience place, and the spatial strategies used to navigate those spaces.

I make the case for auto-methods to engage with my research subjects, Black women, to bring them from the margins to the center of my analysis. Centering the lived experiences of Black women, they are made experts in Black womanhood and Black motherhood. The combination of Black feminist praxis and auto-methods to produce Black feminist autoethnography (BFA) has its roots in anthropology, specifically Black feminist anthropology (McClaurin, 2001). The use of auto-methods allows the researcher to make accounts of their own experiences to convey information that can be contextualized to the broader concept. Engaging with the use of my own experience exposes intimate telling for academic understanding of complex relationships. For understanding the co-victims of gun homicide, specifically Black women, and their spatial experience of moving around their daily environments using auto-methods such as autoethnography can provide self-reflection and observation of why we think and move as we do.

Black feminist autoethnography (BFA) has been used as a method among Black women researchers outside of its origin anthropology, such as in praxis (Boylorn, 2016; Brown-Vincent, 2019) in communications (Griffin, 2012; Osei, 2019), higher education

(James-Gallaway & Turner, 2021; Maraj, 2021), and even geography (Cahill, 2019). Autoethnography as an auto-method is widely used among Feminist geographers, however Black feminist autoethnography has not been highly present in geographic scholarship, with the exception of Loren Cahill's (2019) use of Blackgirl autoethnography (Boylorn, 2016) to reflexively explore space making, spatial legacies, and geographies of ancestor Harriet Tubman. Auto-methods, BFA specifically, and a geographic context can offer another analysis on experiences with the aftermath of gun-violence. Black feminist autoethnography can be included in Black feminist geographic methods of positionality, intersectionality, and reflexivity in understanding the spatialities of trauma.

Using Black feminist auto-methods to research mobile trauma provides an outlook on Black women's lived experience of being in place and spaces, observing how the environments effect our bodies, mentally, physically, emotionally, even spiritually, in a way that is not generalizable, but can be relatable to other Black women experiencing similar realities. The way in which we live in, and identify with, different spaces can determine what spatial strategies we use to navigate. Bearing witness to the ways we engage with the world around us while processing the gun violence related trauma that is carried with us. The experience of PTSD is often described as disembodied. Autoethnography is one way to embody the experience, give agency back to the person, and may lead to healing through narrative work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I make the case for feminist methods to address the research gaps between trauma and gun violence as it relates to geography. More specifically, I call for the use of auto methods as a feminist approach to understanding the lived experiences of those facing gun violence related deaths. As a Black woman scholar, I see the use of auto methods as imperative for understanding the lived experiences of people. Using Black feminist autoethnography as a method to engage with the history of marginalized groups, particularly Black women, and also recognizing how Black women navigate the world around them, their reality in the aftermath of gun violence. Auto methods as experience and data offers a different view of the subject matter that cannot be studied otherwise and while it is not generalizable it is still important to analyze these experiences and reflections as data that addresses the needs for understanding trauma and gun violence.

CHAPTER 4

EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE: A BLACK FEMINIST AUTOETHNOGRAPHY ON
THE EXPERIENCING LOSS TO GUN VIOLENCE

Introduction

Gun violence is prevalent in Philadelphia, just as in many cities in the U.S. As of

Jul 7, 2022[2], there have been 1,226 cases of gun violence since the start of the year. Of

those cases, 252 were fatalities. Most of the fatality victims were male (91%), Black non-

Hispanic (81%), and were between the ages of 18 to 45 years (78.6%). Young adults

between 18 to 30 years make up just under fifty percent of those cases at 46%. While

many gun violence incidents span from domestic/intimate partner violence, police

brutality, and mass shootings, much of the gun violence stems from people who know

each other. In 2022 there have been nine mass shootings, mass shootings meaning 4 or

more victims, not including the gunman. Gun violence is particularly high in areas of

North Philadelphia and sections of West and Southwest Philadelphia. While there is

substantial research on gun violence, there is a need for more research on the nuances of

the lived experiences of people facing/have faced the reality of gun violence and cannot

pick up and move and are left facing the spaces. There is also a need for more research on

co-victims of gun violence and their everyday experiences navigating their

neighborhoods. This research is not particularly focused on the aforementioned kinds of

gun violence, but more specifically on violence among people who somewhat know each

other.

---

[2] Data from the Office of the Controller of Philadelphia, Mapping Philadelphia's Gun Violence
Crisis interactive map and data. This site uses real-time data, at the time of this publication the
information on the number of gun violence cases in this chapter will be outdated.

In this article, I am going to expand on addressing the need to understand the nuances of lived experiences of Black women who have faced and continue to face the realities of gun violence. Specifically focusing on the spatial aspects of mobility in spaces, or Black women's spatial strategies for navigating their neighborhood environment. I argue for the use of auto-methods, specifically Black feminist autoethnography (BFA) as a feminist geographic approach to understanding the lived experiences of Black women living with gun violence-related deaths. Geographers have begun using autoethnography as a method (Butz & Besio, 2004; Butz & Besio, 2009; Sircar, 2022), particularly within the areas of; intimate geographies (DeLyser, 2015; Besio, 2017) and socio-political geographies (Besio, 2005; Bitsch, 2018). Black feminist anthropologists have started to use collaborative auto-ethnographies, and my methodological contribution is to bring this approach into feminist geography to fill the gap in experiences of gun violence in communities among co-victims (daily experiences) of people who do not move. I want to expand on BFA to include a geographic perspective of spatial realities in the realm of gun violence, grief, and loss. As a Black woman scholar, I recognize the importance of centering Black women's lived experience around gun violence as there are many social and institutional underpinnings that are involved in how Black women experience such trauma.

I present an autoethnography of my experience as a co-victim of gun violence through a conversation with my mother on the 10-year anniversary of my brother's death. In 2012 June, my brother was gunned down in the streets of our neighborhood after a dispute with another man a day prior. It was someone he knew; someone his homies knew. Since that time, my mother and I have not been able to have a conversation

surrounding his death. It has been a decade since, but using autoethnography, we were able to finally have a sit down in her living room on his 10-year anniversary and reflect on how this experience has transformed our lives. I use Black Feminist Autoethnography to explore my spatial realities with loss to gun violence. In conversations with my mother, I refer to my memories and experience during the time we lost my brother. I listen to her story and memories of that most painful and difficult time while reflecting on my role as a daughter and sister.

I draw out the themes of spatialities, mobilities, motherhood, social networks and institutions including the role of the Black church and Law enforcement, and demonstrate the need to reflect on how positionality may change the way Black women engage with and move about in their neighborhood and community after loss to gun violence. I conclude the need to incorporate autoethnography as both a research methodology that can capture complexities of co-victims lived experiences and offer a potential site of healing and closure that I argue needs to be centered on intimate and visceral methodologies.

In the Aftermath: It Started with an Observation

This autoethnography is an adaptation of my pre-Covid dissertation research. The basis for the paper remains the same; it started with the observation of my mother in the aftermath of losing my brother to gun violence. I watched her as she moved about the neighborhood trying to find the person who killed her son. She would leave out almost every day to the block where it happened and would ask the people living there where the man was who did it. Whenever she did that, I would get so anxious and fearful for her safety because the person was still out there. I tried to reconcile my feelings of fear,

42

worry, and anxiety with her feelings as a mother looking for justice for her son. I understood why she did what she did, but I could not stop myself from wanting her to stop the pursuit. While she moved about streets with ease, I found myself avoiding them. She eventually stopped going around to the scene where it happened, but she still carried it with her. Months later when we rode the bus together, I would hear and watch her point to places, like the gas station, and mention my brother. She would do this whenever we rode the bus together on the same route, but sometimes I wondered if she was talking to me or if she was saying it for herself. Every time she mentioned it, sorrow would show on her face.

These observations of my mother, and eventually myself, stirred questions in my mind. I questioned if other people had similar experiences. Did they avoid the location of the gun homicide victim? Did they continue in those areas as if it were any other day? How did they move about their neighborhood afterward? Did how they view their spaces change after losing a loved one to gun violence? The questions kept coming to mind because I wanted to know if others were feeling and experiencing what I felt, and what my mother felt. It happened so close to home, in an area, we interacted with, by someone the neighbors knew. At the time I didn't know all the details of what happened, what my mother was getting into, what was happening with the culprit or where he was, or what the police were doing. A lot of things came to light when I sat down with my mother and had a much-needed talk. We spent 2 hours conversing about that time that doesn't seem too long ago.

During our conversation, and after listening again while transcribing I started noticing minor themes. Thematic analysis wasn't my primary goal; I just wanted to share

Black mothers' lived experience of losing a child to gun violence and offer a critical voice as a Black woman scholar, and daughter who shares in that experience. This article reflects how Black women experience space in the aftermath of gun violence. Through the sharing of memories, I discovered some recurring themes. The importance of social networks and community, the role of faith and the church, motherhood, institutional failures by Law Enforcement, and spatial (im)mobility. In what follows, I will present my autoethnographic analysis of my conversation with my mother on the ten-year anniversary of my brother's loss of life to gun violence. I focus on our experience as co-victims of gun violence, who are sometimes underrepresented in the public discourse, media, and policies on gun violence.

What's in a Neighborhood

Everything that transpired happened in our old Kingsessing neighborhood in Southwest Philadelphia. At the time, we had lived in that house for about 9 years. The area itself is prevalent with gun violence. Since 2015, there have been over 700 shootings in the Kingsessing neighborhood. Just last year in 2021, that area had 134 shootings, 21 of which were fatal. While there are other locations in the city with higher numbers of gun violence, this is the section I am most familiar with; where I partially grew up, and where some of my connections were. During my middle school age, some of my friends and I were playing on our old block with the smaller kids running around. The elders were on their porches chatting it up. On this day, some man was being chased and he ran up our block with all of us kids outside playing. The other man chasing him started shooting at him, with little to no regard for our presence or safety. There were screams as we grabbed the nearest child and dragged them into the nearest house. Besides a few cars

getting caught in the crossfire, no one was physically injured. Events like these stay with you as you grow up in the hood. Community violence is an everyday occurrence that you adapt to survive because most times you have no choice but to. The most you can do is hope and pray that you do not hear news about a friend or loved one.

In June 2012, I lost my brother to gun violence. Months prior to April 2012, a childhood acquaintance lost his life to gun violence while trying to stop an argument. Both incidents happened a block apart. Within 6 years, from 2016 to 2021 and all within a few blocks' radius of my house four young Black men were shot and killed. One happened to be the younger brother of that same childhood acquaintance. He was shot and killed in October 2021. The other three victims were shot and killed in locations I often frequented. I moved from the area in 2018.

A Conversation with my mother

I sat down with my mother in her living room to have a conversation that I had been avoiding for a decade. I was walking on eggshells trying to avoid talking about my brother to my mother, about the events of his death. I thought it could be triggering for a mother who had lost a child even more so because she lost him through gun violence. My fears and anxiety would not let me engage in the topic. Time and healing gave me the courage to finally breach the barrier I had placed around the death of my brother. As I sat in the living room of her apartment, I asked if it was ok if we could talk about that time. She said yeah that it was a long time coming. I told her I was nervous, and she looked at me and said, "what are you nervous about?" It was then that I became more relaxed, I guess it was the permission I needed to talk with her.

The Importance of Place-based Social Networks and Community

Ten years ago, in the month of June, I had gotten a phone call from my aunt. Before answering the call, I had a terrible feeling. The night prior I had a horrible dream and felt put off the entire day. My intuition proved to be correct in this situation, while surrounded by friends in what was to be a celebratory occasion quickly turned into shock, sadness, and grief for me. My older brother was shot in the head and was on life support, or so I was told. That was a month after I graduated from my master's program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. My community came together to get me back home to my family. They packed up my things, loaded my friends' car, and she drove 11-plus hours straight from Illinois to Philadelphia. The journey that usually felt so long didn't seem so at that moment. I still carry that gratitude in my heart.

"I remember [my friend] bringing you home…I thanked her for bringing you home."

She has never forgotten that kind gesture and would always bring it up because she needed me there with her. By the time I arrived, other relatives and everyone was there. My aunt and uncle, and other brothers flew from Atlanta and Florida, making it there before I did. Other relatives eventually made it to the hospital. It was necessary for her to be surrounded by family because as I found out, she was at the hospital alone with my brother. *"…then all the cousins, all the family, everybody was around to help me."* They were with her when I couldn't be there, and while I was upset because I couldn't be there right at that moment, I was relieved that other family members rallied around her as soon as they could. My mother also reminded me that as much as I wished to be there with her, she also wished I was there and was glad when I made it.

But you got there, you were there when I needed you and I think it was more, you felt a little better because you needed me. You needed me too. Then [my other two brothers] were there so you had everybody there, we needed each other.

The support extended into our home from relatives and neighbors who kept providing sustenance for us, as there was no time to do it ourselves. Our neighbor across the street would make and bring over cakes for the family, while the neighbors on our side of the street would come and check in on us.

...all of them, they would bring us stuff that we needed, cases of water, cases of this, cases of stuff and I think helped me a lot, kept me going…sometimes things happen, and you know who your real friends and neighbors are. [Our neighbor], she made all these cakes and stuff.

Community support be it family, friends or neighbors was necessary for us to function in the home space and outside (Sharpe, 2008; Bailey, Sharma, and Jubin, 2013). The social networks we acquired made it possible for us to handle the financial and funeral arrangements. Without the support, I truly believe events would have unfolded differently and not in a positive way. Having family there allowed us to reminisce about our time together with my brother. Everyone had a story to tell and so many jokes. We had to laugh to keep from crying. We had to laugh through the pain, and just being in our home space with us, sharing with us, made the pain more bearable. Studies have shown that social support, both informal and formal, are important for co-victims who have lost loved ones to gun violence, particularly Black women (Sharpe, 2008; Sharpe, and Boyas, 2011; Bailey, Sharma, and Jubin, 2013; Sharpe, Osteen, Frey, and Michalopoulos, 2014; Bailey, Akhtar, Clarke, and Starr, 2015; Hannays-King, Bailey, and Akhtar, 2015).

The instrumental support (Taylor, 2007) from friends, family, and neighbors was needed to get through the grieving process. Having close connections to these social networks offered the option of social support that would not have been available if ties weren't established in our community, or if we weren't in proximity to them. After my brother's death, there were moments when I felt overwhelmed. When everyone had gone from home, we were left with picking up the pieces on our own. Even my other brothers had to return to their own families in other states. During the few months after it was difficult being in the home because we could not function like usual. Realistically, you cannot return to the way things were. Our family was disrupted (Hannays-King, Bailey, and Akhtar, 2015), and while we were not negative toward each other, being in the same space was heavy on me mentally and emotionally. While some studies showed that relationships were disrupted or broken, and social support was absent due to the stigma of gun homicide (Sharpe, and Boyas, 2011; Bailey, Sharma, and Jubin, 2013; Hannays-King, Bailey, and Akhtar, 2015; Sharpe, 2015). Our family and friends were the supportive ones, and it made a difference.

You Have to Give it to God: The role of Faith and Church

The church is a major influence in African American culture. If you were raised in a Black Christian household or had relatives that were Christian, chances are you have been to at least one sermon in your lifetime. My mother, aunts, and uncles grew up in a Catholic household. In later years, they branched out into other denominations, and some practiced Christianity more than others. I attended Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopal churches at some point in my life, but I'm not a practitioner of religion. While I'm not an

active practitioner of religion I still partake in the culture of the Black Church, it is a part of my history and culture. So, it is not surprising how the church is a source of support (Laurie, and Neimeyer, 2008; Mastrocinque, Hartwell, et al., 2020; Moore, Jones-Eversley, Tolliver, Wilson, and Harmon, 2022) for those grieving the loss of loved ones or how faith, spiritual, and religion (Murphy, Clark Johnson, and Lohan, 2003; Sharpe, 2008; Sharpe, and Boyas, 2011; Bailey, Hannays-King, Clarke, Lester, and Velasco, 2013; Sharpe, 2015) are essential for coping with grief.

My mother would go to church on and off with relatives, but she really started attending with my aunt after my brother's death. At the time, I thought I understood why she attended again; it was obvious to me. It was not until speaking with her did I begin to understand how much she was hurting, and how she was hurting.

> I'm gonna be in jail, and this guy is gonna be dead, and my son is not coming back; back to me and that's when I reached out to [her cousin] for the church. I called her and I told her, 'I need to go to church.' She didn't tell anybody else she just came and picked me up and that's when I started going to church because I needed to be there to get this hate away from me. I didn't want to hurt. I don't want to hate anybody that much that you wanna kill him. You say, 'oh you deserve to be dead' and all this **** but that's not for me to say, only God has that right to say that. Everything happened that's the way I felt, that's the way I felt about my child. That I needed some retribution for this guy killing my child. [Her cousin] was picking me up to go to church every Sunday, so I got a chance to talk to the pastor about how I was feeling. We talk and even talking to [her cousin]. She's not telling anybody my business, but I would talk to her and tell her how I felt. Why I was going to church. It's not like I just started going to church, there was a reason why I wanted to go to church.

It was during this time, looking back I started going to therapy. Grief group therapy that I had access to as a graduate student at the university. I was in a few therapy sessions for different reasons, but I was hesitant about the Grief Group because I did not think it would be useful. Students from different years, and backgrounds getting together

to air their grief. Everyone lost someone important to them and it was surprisingly helpful sharing our stories, feelings, and experiences with loss. There was a sense of community and comfort in knowing that others are also grieving for a loved one. While the relationships may have been different, the feelings were similar.

I also found out about my grieving process, and that I never fully grieved the previous losses in my life. I had cried and mourned and then pushed those feelings and thoughts out of my mind so I could carry on. That was my way of coping with the loss. I had to bury my grief to continue. However, this time around, the loss was too great because it was sudden and violent. This loss was stolen. I did not just lose a piece of my heart from sickness or health like with my grandmothers, aunts, and othermothers. That piece was stolen from me, and I could not push it away. I could not hide it, and seal it in the back of my mind.

Before, when the detectives came around, there was barely any mention of counseling services for families of victims of violence. I was privileged enough in my position in academia to research and navigate the resources necessary to aid in my healing. My mother was not afforded that option. Looking back, I cannot remember it all, but I also felt like I dropped the ball when I should have provided resources and aid for her as well. Not too long after, I found out she was going to church with my aunt. We never talked about her feelings at the time, I never knew how she felt, and I was afraid to ask. I was relieved that she was finding support and community within the church.

> The pastor at the time when I first went there was the pastor that---he sort of helped me out. Because he knew what it was, and I think [her cousin] probably told him that I had lost my son. So, he was there, he said 'whenever you're ready to talk Ms. Armstead I'm ready to listen.' That meant a lot to me. It meant a lot that someone who wasn't personally

involved with you was willing to sit down and let you just run your mouth. He said 'I don't know anything about your situation Ms. Armstead or what you're going through so I can't speak on it, but I can listen to you. Then that way I will know what happened. Not what's going on inside. I will know you telling me what happened, and I can all I can do is advise you, comfort you' like that. So, it was helpful, and it just made me want to go to church more…I wasn't getting any therapy, but I guess the church was my therapy…the pastor.

The Black church is a social institution, like many established religious institutions. It is very much cultural for the Black community and is considered a form of social support. They can offer grief groups and perform community services. Members of the congregation can provide support through prayer and service. Establishing a connection with other members of the community who have had similar experiences with loss. Bereavement is disruptive and can lead to other physical and mental health concerns. Mental health is oftentimes stigmatized in the Black community (Codjoe, Barber, et. al, 2021) so seeking help from religious institutions may offer comfort, but in the long run, more professional help might be needed. Religious and faith-based institutions are still essential for minority communities.

If you have a whole, whole group of, of like church, you have a whole group of people that have lost family members and children and stuff like that. There's your group, your grief group right there. I didn't have to go to church, but it got to a point where I felt that the church was what I needed. And it did, it helped me. They helped me.

Black Motherhood: A Mother's Grief

The semi-tension in the household was because of my inability to comprehend the grief of a mother. As a daughter, I knew my grief was not the same as my mother's. The connection between a mother and her child(ren) is something only other mothers would understand. It was my position as a daughter that made it difficult for me to comfort my

mother in a way she needed to be comforted, because I knew nothing, I did would fully

ease her pain. That upset me because I hated seeing her in pain. She said what I always

think that no one ever really knows what you are feeling, because you are the one feeling

it.

> People always tell me I know how you feel. I couldn't say that, but I
> remember people saying that to other people who have lost children…they
> don't really know how you feel…I'm here by myself. Sometimes I cry, but
> I know that's how I feel. And I don't want other people to think when I'm
> around that I don't feel anything for my child. I love my child.
> I wasn't able to comfort you because I wasn't able to comfort myself. I
> wasn't thinking about myself, all I was thinking about was that Vernon
> was dead, and it was like it wasn't a reality to me. The whole process was
> like a daze.

Bereavement makes things hazy. I was not fully comprehending what I was

feeling, or how I was processing my own grief. I was not thinking about finding comfort

for myself, because prior to my brother's death I buried the need for comfort after

previous losses, because I had to keep it moving. Realizing that we were acting similarly

by not thinking about ourselves, we were putting our own needs first. Her reflection on

not being able to comfort me because she was grieving and acknowledging that she was

also unable to comfort or console herself was us as mother and daughter bonded in grief.

Still, I am not a mother, and I will not understand a mother's love or loss until I become

one myself, I believe that. As we continued to talk our conversation brought back

memories of her mother, my grandmother, whom I also miss dearly. They shared a

similar experience as we were sharing, but my mother let it be known the loss of her son

was different.

You don't have to worry about him anymore. You don't have to sit and wonder where he is. And that would bring me back to my mother. She would sit in the window. I remember her doing that all the time. She would sit in the window and look for [my mother's younger brother], and she would always say to herself, 'I wonder where my child is.' Her grief was more, more palpable because she couldn't put her hands on him. Like I have to put my hands on Vernon to know he's gone.

I heard stories from relatives about my uncle, but I did not know him as he went missing before I was born. I know the chair where my grandma sat because I used to stay in her bedroom, what I did not know was if she truly knew what happened to her son. The "put your hands on" is just as it sounds, you can touch, and feel the person. My mother understood she had some comfort in knowing where her child was buried. Unlike my grandmother who never knew where her child was. Her son was one of many aunts and uncles. It really speaks to the connection between a mother and her children.

…I never forget this. I dunno if I ever told you that this lady would say, oh, 'your mother got all these children.' She told my mother that. 'Oh, you got all these children. Look how many.' My mother had 10 children. I wasn't there to make a remark to her. I don't care how many kids you have. Each one of those kids is yours. Each one is something special to you. Just like Vernon was gone, but he was special to me. He was my child. I remember things about my child.

Institutional Failures by Law Enforcement

The relationship between the African American community and law enforcement is and has always been, strained. The mistrust of law enforcement and the criminal justice system is largely due to the encounters that have led to high incarceration rates, and police brutality towards the community (Sharpe, 2008). Communities of color are heavily policed and surveillance which leads to even more tension between the two groups. In cases of homicide, detectives and law enforcement are necessary to attain some sense of

justice. We still must rely on these institutions to seek justice for the murders of our loved ones even when our perceptions of them are unfavorable. The next few quotes from my mother are about her experience with law enforcement and my brother's murder case.

> They told me who he was, and I remember cause I since said I was going to that precinct and ask for this guy, this detective, that was doing Vernon's case. Because I've never heard from them again, I've never heard from them, they never told me who killed Vernon because the detective, told me, he said, "Ms. Armstead we know who it is."

When she mentioned this, I realized we were never told of my brother's case. If they found the person, locked him up, and went to court. Those were all things that wrestled in my mind for years, but I was a bit anxious to bring it up to my mother. I thought maybe she already knew the case was closed and I did not want to bring up bad memories of the time.

> Yeah, they locked him up cause they knew who he was. But I've never got any kind of closure, like from the police, they never came and said "Well Ms. Armstead we got him, we caught him" or this and that and then everything else was happening and I didn't forget. It's that they never even came to me and said that. "You don't have to worry anymore about him, he's locked." They never did that for me. And every year I would say "well I'm going to that precinct to see this guy, this detective, have him look at me and tell me why he never came to me and told me that they had caught this guy. Those ten years now and I feel like I need to go to this precinct, this 12th precinct. Let them know they never gave me the courtesy of letting me know who killed my child. Every time I think about it, it hurts me to think about Vernon.

As she was telling me this, I had only just then found out the detectives never contacted my mother after their second visit to the house. As she stated, the police knew who did it, and eventually caught the person, but there was no line of communication

afterward. We never had a trial for the murder of my brother, but they caught the person who killed him. This lack of communication between law enforcement and co-victims regarding the murder of their loved ones happens frequently (Connolly and Gordon, 2015; Reed, Dabney, Tapp, and Ishoy, 2020). To this day, I wonder if detectives even care about cases of Black male homicide victims in my community because they sometimes aren't seen as the perfect victim (Reed et. al, 2020).

I was sitting back listening and taking in all the feelings of not knowing if the person was still out there, with whispers from the streets through the grapevine, that could be true or just rumors. I then turned to my mother, who is sitting in her chair, where my grandmother also used to sit and thought about how she felt being left out in the cold after her child's murder. If law enforcement had followed up with us, would it have made the grieving process a bit better? Would it have given my mother some closure to be formally notified that the suspect was in custody? Also, we are unsure if the suspect was arrested for the murder of my brother, because we weren't alerted of any charges. He might be in prison for another unrelated offense. Sometimes I ask myself is it good enough that he is in prison, is that even justice?

Neighborhood Spatial (Im)mobility

In this section, I included how my mother experienced navigating around our neighborhood before and in the wake of my brother's death. Even before his passing, commuting to and from home, walking around the neighborhood, to the laundromat, nothing felt unsafe to me even with everything going on. I was familiar with the area, both the good and the bad. There was no second-guessing about my safety going to the corner store. Even walking to the post office required little concern on my part. That

changed a bit after Vernon was killed. Waking up to an empty house only to find out my mother was visiting the block where it happened. Every time she frequented that street, I would worry and panic. Being anxious all the time that something might happen to her as well. See I never did return to that block, and I never went to the post office after that. The most I would come close to is if I were in a car passing by or on the bus. While I avoided those areas, my mother charged right ahead towards them, because she wanted answers.

> I remember all the time when Vernon was first killed...I went through Ruby Street. I went up and down the whole street right around to the post office you know, where he got killed. I was asking people. They knew who killed him. I think I was in that mode where I was…I just wanted to know this punk, that was my whole thing. That I can rest if I found out who this guy was, and everybody knew who he was.
>
> [Regarding the police] And they knew that I was looking for him too, so they told me just don't, it's dangerous.

I remembered watching my mother as we rode the bus. We would ride past houses, stores, and gas stations, and along the way, she would point out different places where my brother hung out, or where they knew him. There was obvious sadness in her eyes, and I could never bring myself to say anything in response, so I just listened. I felt anxious during those rides with her because I knew there was nothing, I could do to relieve that hurt, that pain. As we were talking in her living room, she brought up memories of when she was waiting for the bus on 52nd Street and my brother would pull up in a car and offer her a ride. She talked about the errand runs they did, to the market or pharmacy. The memories of their time together doing mundane things like grocery shopping are kept with her, and so are the remnants of his passing.

I'm cautious I don't wanna let nobody come up on me, rob me, stuff like that...I've never had that kind of fear and I'm glad I don't because I don't want to feel like now. I don't think or feel like I can't get up and go outside. I'd get up and go outside when I want to…No! I wasn't afraid of anybody coming up on me and trying to shoot me. I never worried about that. That was something I never worried about…I was less afraid when Vernon was alive though cause everybody was talking about "oh you Vernon's mom" I said, "yeah I'm his mother." And I felt safer, just them knowing that I was his mom.

While my mother was not afraid of the streets before or after, she mentioned how her perception of safe was related to her proximity to my brother as his mother. This was truer in our neighborhood and "down the way" where most of our extended family reside. These were places where the people knew my brother, and if they knew him chances are they knew of us. My mother felt safe knowing that, and to be honest I never knew how to feel about that.

I have walked past many memorials and vigils of young victims of violence. Many are in places of high foot traffic for daily activities. If I have no connection to the person, I can pay my respects to the deceased and carry on as usual. I still need to catch the bus, I still need to visit the corner store, I still need to go to the laundromat, but I do not need to visit that post office anymore.

Conclusion

In closing, I find the use of auto-methods, specifically BFA, was an essential method to relay my experiences, and that of my mother's as co-victims of gun violence. Centering Black women experiences at the intersections of race, class, and gender as it relates to gun violence sheds light on the ways we experienced the aftermath of gun violence. My "outsider within" (Collins, 1986) status and positionality also allows me as

a Black woman, daughter, Black woman scholar, to speak on such matters. Through BFA I was able to have a much-needed conversation with my mother ten years after my brother's death. Throughout those years, many have been me observing my mother's interaction with our neighborhood, homelife, and other active spaces.

Through the verbal conversation and the transcription of our talk I found some linking themes. These themes were not the primary goal of my BFA, but I found them as important pieces to understanding the roles different social and institutional structures have in shaping the experience of after violence care for co-victims of gun homicide. From our conversation I found answers to questions I had about my brother's murder and the lack of communication surrounding his case. It provided some sense of relief knowing that I was not mistaken about those events. The disconnect between law enforcement and our family made the grieving process more difficult because we were left without information, support, and closure with only word of mouth confirmation from the streets and maybe the police about who had killed my brother. There was no formal confirmation to be had, and if there was, we were not told. This revelation is important information for co-victim care. Not lost is the long history of contention between the Black community and law enforcement. Poor responses and lack of compassion from law enforcement towards co-victims in the handling of their cases can be very harmful towards the co-victim's grief and healing process. Unfavorable perceptions by police towards the victims may also lead to improper handling of their cases and put families, like mine, in limbo about details of their investigation, an oversight of the criminal justice system.

The themes that came about are all connected in community, be it the physical landscape of neighborhood boundaries, or social networks and institutions. Wanting to understand how co-victims navigate spaces of trauma, I looked outwards towards my mother, and reflectivity inward towards myself. Our treatment of the neighborhood in the aftermath was different, for our experiences and positions were different. I avoided the area where my brother was killed, and my mother, full of rage, went straight for it. The relationships with and within the neighborhood changed for the both of us, in dissimilar ways. Memory and experience have altered my perception of certain spaces due to loss from gun violence. Social networks were vital in our grieving and healing process. Family, friends, neighbors, and the church offered places of solace, the church more so for my mother. I acknowledge my position as a scholar in academia at the time I had access to professional mental health resources to cope with my depression and grief, while my mother turned towards her church for spiritual guidance for hers. Given my position I understand how I was privileged to have access to those services while others not in my position might not have such support. This is solidifying the need for more victim advocacy outreach for co-victims.

Black feminist autoethnography has provided a way for me to share my spatial reality of loss due to gun violence. Being able to reflect on how I engaged with and moved through my neighborhood after the murder of my brother gave me some insight into how other co-victims, who live in similar environments, might also share comparable experiences. My mother and I had no choice or option but to leave our home at the time and developed different spatial strategies to cope with living there. Through memory and

lived experience, I was able to express the effects of the grieving process and reflect on

what it means for research in the discipline.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Key Findings

In conclusion, some key findings from this research include the identification of gaps in trauma and gun violence specifically how conventional approaches to understanding gun violence overlook the layers of trauma and fail to capture the nuances or lived experience of being a co-victim of gun violence. Environments such as landscapes can be used to understand how trauma is experienced and/or transformed as a result of tragic, sudden loss. However, we need to understand how these spaces are reinforcing trauma, and permanently alter the co-victim's neighborhood landscapes; and how trauma is viewed through transformations of the physical, social, and symbolic environments associated with those landscapes. Trauma is reflected in the histories and memories of certain populations who have suffered from collective and cultural traumas. The trauma is spatial and temporal making it mobile. Geotrauma describes trauma as being geographical through mobile places, that extend across space, place, and time, making it multi-scalar and not fully situated or fixed to individual sites. To better understand trauma from gun violence as it relates to Black women, it is best to take a Black feminist and intersectionality approach. Black women face racism and sexism that may alter how we experience trauma from the personal to the structural level.

My dissertation also demonstrated how intersectionality and a Black Feminist Geography Framework can theorize how racism, poverty, and trauma compound and how Black women craft survival strategies as they navigate landscapes of trauma. It all started

with my experience of losing my brother to gun violence, my observation of how my mother moved about the world and how I also experienced the world and the changes that came from those experiences. I reflected on how experienced space in my neighborhood and unknowingly crafted spatial strategies for navigating my active daily routes. I have not been to that post office area since it happened, and I avoided the place, not due to fear but, rather an avoidance. My mother had a complete opposite reaction to the events that unfolded. She did not avoid that area; she made her presence known, with no fear of the streets, she wanted justice for her son. Her boldness made me fearful for her safety, coupled with the lack of transparency and involvement from law enforcement made me concerned, fearful and angry. I always carried those fears and anxiety with me when trying to talk about my brother. It was the fear of hurting a still grieving mother. We didn't know what happened and so sharing that observation and those reflections in our conversation sort of helped contextualize some of the concerns and issues that other mothers and co-victims are also experiencing.

Compared to conventional approaches, auto-methods effectively illuminate the lived experiences of people who face the reality of gun violence and who are unable to move from their environments. Additionally, this autoethnography of my experience as a co-victim of gun violence, as an auto-method, provides insights to these lived experiences. For instance, my conversations with my mother show the important role of place-based networks, friends and neighbors, and the church for supporting her through this difficult time. Simultaneously, though, she also experienced the institutional failures of the police to catch the person who killed her child and the lack of closure and justice from her son's death. Additionally, these conversations also revealed the spatial impacts

of gun violence for her and the strategies she used to navigate her neighborhood. While some co-victims have indicated that they started to avoid areas where these tragedies occurred, my mother shared that she was not afraid and that she revisited the place where her son was killed to try to learn who was responsible.

In sum, my dissertation illustrates how Black feminist autoethnography (BFA) as a feminist geographic approach can improve our understanding the lived experiences of Black women living with gun violence-related deaths. Additionally, my dissertation shows how researchers can use auto-methods to make accounts of their own experiences to convey information that can be contextualized to the broader concept.

Practical and Policy Implications

My long-term goal and motivation are to get justice and accountability for victims of gun violence and their loved ones. The practical and policy implications of my dissertation lie in advocacy work and speaking up for families. One important finding from my research is that it is important to see whether co-victims of gun violence get support from organizations. Often co-victims get lost in the criminal justice system and focus on whether the crime has been solved or whether police report back to families and get closure. My dissertation raises the important question of whether these families are getting mental health support to process their grief. This research makes the case for developing better policies that extend outreach to communities who are suffering from gun violence losses. In my view, if this trauma is untreated, it can turn into something else, such as retaliation within communities, alcoholism or substance use and abuse.

My dissertation supports the development of mental health advocacy to ensure families are getting enough resources to process their own grief. There are some

organizations working on these types of initiatives, including Every Murder is Real. These groups are often created by those who have lost loved ones, yet there is a lot of disconnect among these different initiatives and there is a need for funding to provide better coordination and a network of support for mental health outreach.

Limitations

My dissertation fieldwork started just as the pandemic swept around the world, and I was required to change my research design. My initial plans included multiple qualitative and spatial methods, including Participatory Photo Mapping and Activity Space Analysis, which was changed to an Autoethnographic method. I wanted to understand how co-victims saw and navigated their neighborhoods after they lost a loved one to gun violence. The places where violence has occurred can be very emotional for people who have lost someone to gun violence, and they are also often active neighborhood spaces. The work I wanted to do was to ask women who have experienced loss to take pictures of environments that have changed for them and to come together to have a conversation about what these places mean and how they move about their neighborhoods. Those active spaces are places that sometimes are important to us yet can be deadly or risky for us, and I wanted to see any sort of connection between what we hold dear that can be risky or what is safe and still important, because again, people still exist in these high gun violence areas. I wanted included interviews and focus groups with co-victims of gun violence but obviously, it was too risky to do this work during COVID. I had to pivot in a way to try to understand how I could address my dissertation questions. Ultimately, I decided to use auto-methods and found that I could advance our

understanding of geotrauma using auto-methods and a Black Feminist Geography framework.

Future Research directions

Future research on co-victims of gun violence would benefit from engaging with more co-victims, as well as other organizations and agencies who work with co-victims. Specifically, conducting interviews with co-victims of gun violence from diverse urban contexts would allow for a broader and contextualized understanding of how different people experience loss and navigate the criminal justice system, as well as their neighborhood and surroundings. Additionally, conducting interviews with government program directors and non-profit organizations that are working with co-victims would shed light on how their current practices address geotrauma and spatial mobilities, and may open up pathways to develop or extend current programs to better address these issues. Finally, there is a need for co-victims to have better access to resources and support, and future research should examine how to improve these programs and how better reach co-victims to communicate the types of resources available to them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams-Hutcheson, G. (2017). Spatialising skin: Pushing the boundaries of trauma geographies. *Emotion, Space and Society*, *24*, 105–112

Adey, P. (2017). *Mobility*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Agnew, J. A. (2014). *Place and politics: The geographical mediation of state and society*. Taylor & Francis Group.

Aisenberg, E., & Herrenkohl, T. (2008). Community violence in context: Risk and resilience in children and families. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *23*(3), 296–315.

Alegría, M., Molina, K. M., & Chen, C. N. (2014). Neighborhood characteristics and differential risk for depressive and anxiety disorders across racial/ethnic groups in the United States. *Depression and Anxiety*, *31*(1), 27–37.

Alexander, J. C., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N. J., & Sztompka, P. (2004). *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkerley, United States: University of California Press.

Alim, T., Graves, E., Mellman, T. A., Aigbogun, N., Gray, E., Lawson, W., & Charney, D. (2006). Trauma exposure, posttraumatic stress disorder and depression in an Africa-American primary care population. *J. Natl. Med. Assoc.*, *98*(10), 1630–1636.

Andrews, G. J., Chen, S., & Myers, S. (2014). The "taking place" of health and wellbeing: Towards non-representational theory. *Social Science and Medicine*, *108*, 210–222.

Anguelovski, I. (2013). New directions in urban environmental justice: Rebuilding community, addressing trauma, and remaking place. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, *33*(2), 160–175.

Armour, M. P. (2002a). Experiences of covictims of homicide: Implications for research and practice. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *3*(2), 109–124.

Armour, M. P. (2002b). Journey of family members of homicide victims: A qualitative study of their posthomicide experience. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *72*(3), 372–382.

Armour, M.P. (2003). Meaning making in the aftermath of homicide. *Death Studies*, *27*(6), 519–540.

Bailey, A., Akhtar, M., Clarke, J., & Starr, S. (2015). Intersecting individual, social, and cultural factors in Black mothers resilience building following loss to gun violence in Canada. In N. Khanlou & F. B. Pilkington (Eds.), *Women's Mental Health* (pp. 311–325). Springer International Publishing.

Bailey, A., Hannays-King, C., Clarke, J., Lester, E., & Velasco, D. (2013). Black mothers' cognitive process of finding meaning and building resilience after loss of a child to gun violence. *British Journal of Social Work*, *43*(2), 336–354.

Bailey, A., Sharma, M., & Jubin, M. (2013). The mediating role of social support, cognitive appraisal, and quality health care in Black mothers' stress-resilience process following loss to gun violence. *Violence and Victims*, *28*(2), 233–247.

Banks, G., Hadenfeldt, K., Janoch, M., Manning, C., Ramos, K., & Patterson Silver Wolf, D. A. (2017). Gun violence and substance abuse. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *34*, 113–116.

Bauchner, H., Rivara, F. P., Bonow, R. O., Bressler, N. M., Disis, M. L. (Nora), Heckers, S., Josephson, S. A., Kibbe, M. R., Piccirillo, J. F., Redberg, R. F., Rhee, J. S., & Robinson, J. K. (2017). Death by gun violence—A public health crisis. *JAMA Psychiatry*, *74*(12), 1195.

Bell, S. L., Phoenix, C., Lovell, R., & Wheeler, B. W. (2015). Seeking everyday wellbeing: The coast as a therapeutic landscape. *Social Science and Medicine*, 142, 56–67.

Besio, K. (2005). Telling stories to hear autoethnography: Researching women's lives in northern Pakistan. *Gender, Place & Culture, 12*(3), 317–331.

Besio, K. (2016). Hiding in the garden: Autoethnography and intimate spaces. In Moss, P., & Donovan, C. (Eds.), *Writing intimacy into feminist geography* (pp. 188-202). Routledge.

Bitsch, A. (2018). The micro-politics of emotions in legal space: An autoethnography about sexual violence and displacement in Norway. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *25*(10), 1514–1532.

Bonilla, Y., & Rosa, J. (2015). #Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. *American Ethnologist*, *42*(1), 4–17.

Boyd, D. T., Jones, K. V., Quinn, C. R., Gale, A., Williams, E.-D. G., & Lateef, H. (2022). The mental health of black youth affected by community violence: Family and school context as pathways to resilience. *Children*, *9*(2), 259.

Boylorn, R. M. (2016). On being at home with myself: Blackgirl autoethnography as research praxis. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, *9*(1), 44–58.

Breslau, N. (2009). Trauma and mental health in US inner-city populations. *General Hospital Psychiatry, 31*(6), 501–502.

Breslau, N., Troost, J. P., Bohnert, K., & Luo, Z. (2013). Influence of predispositions on post-traumatic stress disorder: does it vary by trauma severity? *Psychological Medicine*, *43*(2), 381–390.

Breslau, N., Wilcox, H. C., Storr, C. L., Lucia, V. C., & Anthony, J. C. (2004). Trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress disorder: A study of youths in urban America. *Journal of Urban Health*, *81*(4), 530–544.

Brown-Vincent, L. D. (2019). Seeing it for wearing it: Autoethnography as black feminist methodology. *Communications on Stochastic Analysis*, *18*(1).

Bryant-Davis, T., & Ocampo, C. (2006). A Therapeutic Approach to the treatment of racist-incident-based trauma. *Journal of Emotional Abuse, 6*(4), 69–90.

Burke, L. A., Neimeyer, R. A., & McDevitt-Murphy, M. E. (2010). African American homicide bereavement: Aspects of social support that predict complicated grief, ptsd, and depression. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, *61*(1), 1–24.

Butts, J. A., Roman, C. G., Bostwick, L., & Porter, J. R. (2015). Cure violence: A public health model to reduce gun violence. *Annual Review of Public Health*, *36*(1), 39–53.

Butz, D., & Besio, K. (2009). Autoethnography. *Geography Compass*, 3(5), 1660-1674.

Cahill, L. S. (2019). Blackgirl geography. *Girlhood Studies*, *12*(3), 47–62.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2019).

Chen, D., & Wu, L.-T. (2016). Association between substance use and gun-related behaviors. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, *38*(1), 46-61.

Christensen, A. J., Cunningham, R., Delamater, A., & Hamilton, N. (2019). Introduction to the special issue on Gun violence: Addressing a critical public health challenge. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, *42*(4), 581–583.

Coddington, K. (2017). Contagious trauma: Reframing the spatial mobility of trauma within advocacy work. *Emotion, Space and Society*, *24*, 66–73.

Codjoe, L., Barber, S., Ahuja, S., Thornicroft, G., Henderson, C., Lempp, H., &

N'Danga-Koroma, J. (2021). Evidence for interventions to promote mental health and reduce stigma in Black faith communities: Systematic review. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *56*(6), 895–911.

Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, *33*(6), S14–S32.

Collins, P. H. (1993). Toward a new vision: Race, class, and gender as categories of analysis and connection. *Race, Sex & Class*, *1*(1), 25–45.

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

Collins, P. H. (2010). The New Politics of Community. *American Sociological Review*, *75*(1), 7–30.

Connolly, A. (2017). Abject bodies. In L. Hinton & H. Willemsen (Eds.), *Temporality and Shame* (pp. 101–118). Routledge.

Connolly, J., & Gordon, R. (2015). Co-victims of homicide: A systematic review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, *16*(4), 494–505.

Cook, P. J. (2018). Expanding the public health approach to gun violence prevention. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *169*(10), 723.

Cresswell, T. (1996). *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis, United States: University of Minnesota Press.

Cresswell, T. (2010a). New cultural geography - an unfinished project? *Cultural Geographies*, *17*(2), 169–174.

Cresswell, T. (2010b). Towards a politics of mobility. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 28*(1), 17–31.

Cresswell, T. (2014). *Place: An introduction.* Hoboken, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Decou, C. R., & Lynch, S. M. (2017). Assessing adult exposure to community violence: A review of definitions and measures. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *18*(1), 51–61.

Degloma, T. (2009). Expanding trauma through space and time: Mapping the rhetorical strategies of trauma carrier groups. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *72*(2), 105–122.

DeLyser, D. (2015). Collecting, kitsch and the intimate geographies of social memory: A story of archival autoethnography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *40*(2), 209–222.

Dennis, S. F., Gaulocher, S., Carpiano, R. M., & Brown, D. (2009). Participatory photo mapping (Ppm): Exploring an integrated method for health and place research with young people. *Health & Place*, *15*(2), 466–473.

Englebrecht, C., Mason, D. T., & Adams, M. J. (2014). The experiences of homicide victims' families with the criminal justice system: An exploratory study. *Violence and Victims, 29*(3), 407-421.

Eyerman, R. (2004). Cultural trauma: Slavery and the formation of African American identity. In J.C. Alexander (Ed.), *Cultural trauma and collective identity* (pp.60-111). University of California Press.

Feeney, B.C., & Collins, N.L. (2015). A new look at social support: A theoretical perspective on thriving relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 19*(2), 113-147.

Finlay, J., Franke, T., McKay, H., & Sims-Gould, J. (2015). Therapeutic landscapes and wellbeing in later life: Impacts of blue and green spaces for older adults. *Health and Place*, *34*, 97–106.

Foley, R. (2011). Performing health in place: The holy well as a therapeutic assemblage. *Health and Place, 17*(2), 470–479.

Foley, R., & Kistemann, T. (2015). Blue space geographies: Enabling health in place. *Health and Place, 35*, 157–165.

Gatrell, A. C., Elliott, P. S. J., & Williams, D. A. (2016). *Mobilities and health*. Farnham, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Gesler, W. (2017). Commentary on the origins and early development of the therapeutic landscapes concept. *Medicine Anthropology Theory*, *4*(1)

Gesler, W. M. (1993). Therapeutic landscapes: Theory and a case study of epidauros, Greece. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *11*(2), 171–189.

Gesler, W. M. (2009). Therapeutic Landscapes. In R. Kitchin & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 371–373).

Gesler, W. M. (1992). Therapeutic landscapes: Medical issues in light of the new cultural geography. *Social Science & Medicine*, *34*(7), 735–746.

Gesler, W. M. (1991). *The Cultural Geography of Health Care.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Gilbert, M. (1998). "Race," space, and power: The survival strategies of working poor women. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 88*(4), 595-621.

Gillespie, C. F., Bradley, B., Mercer, K., Smith, A. K., Conneely, K., Gapen, M., ... & Ressler, K. J. (2009). Trauma exposure and stress-related disorders in inner city primary care patients. *General hospital psychiatry, 31*(6), 505-514.

Gillikin, C., Habib, L., Evces, M., Bradley, B., Ressler, K. J., & Sanders, J. (2016). Trauma exposure and PTSD symptoms associate with violence in inner city civilians. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 83*, 1–7.

Griffin, R. A. (2012). I am an angry black woman: Black feminist autoethnography, voice, and resistance. *Women's Studies in Communication*, *35*(2), 138–157.

Hackett, C. D. (2017). For the world to see. In S. E. Weissinger, D. A. Mack, & E. Watson (Eds.), *Violence Against Black Bodies* (pp. 159–177). Routledge.

Hannays-King, C., Bailey, A., & Akhtar, M. (2015). Social support and Black mothers' bereavement experience of losing a child to gun homicide. *Bereavement Care*, 34(1), 10–16.

Heron, M. (2018). Deaths: Leading causes for 2016. *National Vital Statistics Reports 67*(6), Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Holt-Lunstad, J., & Smith, T.B. (2012). Social relationships and mortality. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *6*(1), 41-53.

James-Gallaway, A. D., & Turner, F. F. L. (2021). Mobilizing betrayal: Black feminist pedagogy and Black women graduate student educators. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *28*(S1), 24–38.

Jenkins, E. J. (2002). Black women and community violence. *Women & Therapy*, 25(3–4), 29–44.

Joassart-Marcelli, P. (2014). Gender, social network geographies, and low-wage employment among recent Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles. *Urban Geography*, 35(6), 822-851.

Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (2022). *A Year in Review: 2020 Gun Deaths in the U.S.* https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/health-policy-and-management/research-and-practice/center-for-gun-violence-solutions

Kearns, R. A., & Gesler, W. M. (Eds.). (1998). *Putting health into place: Landscape, identity, & well-being.* Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Kearns, R, & Joseph, A. (1993). Space in its place: developing the link in medicinal geography. *Social Science and Medicine, 37*(6), 711–717.

Kearns, R., & Moon, G. (2002). From medical to health geography: Novelty, place and theory after a decade of change. *Progress in Human Geography*, *26*(5), 605–625.

Kelly, V. G., Merrill, G. S., Shumway, M., Alvidrez, J., & Boccellari, A. (2010). Outreach, engagement, and practical assistance: Essential aspects of ptsd care for urban victims of violent crime. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, *11*(3), 144–156.

Kirkpatrick, H. a, & Heller, G. M. (2014). Post-traumatic stress disorder: theory and treatment update. *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 47(4), 337–346.

Laurie, A., & Neimeyer, R. A. (2008). African Americans in bereavement: Grief as a function of ethnicity. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, *57*(2), 173–193.

Leonard, D. J. (2017). Illegible black death, legible white pain: Denied media, mourning, and mobilization in an era of "post-racial" gun violence. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, *17*(2), 101–109.

Lewis, R. (2014, August 14). *Ferguson reports raise questions on media criminalization of blacks* [News]. AlJazeera America. http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/8/14/ferguson-media-iftheygunnedmedown.html

Maraj, L. M. (2021). You can't do that here: Black feminist autoethnography and histories of intellectual exclusion. In R. L. Jackson & J. G. McKinney (Eds.), *Self+Culture+Writing: Autoethnography for/as Writing Studies* (pp. 175–185). University Press of Colorado.

Mason, M. J., & Mennis, J. (2010). An exploratory study of the effects of neighborhood characteristics on adolescent substance use. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 18(1), 33–50.

Mason, M., Mennis, J., Way, T., Light, J., Rusby, J., Westling, E., … McHenry, C. (2015). Young adolescents' perceived activity space risk, peer networks, and substance use. *Health and Place, 34*, 143–149.

Massey, D. (2008). A global sense of place. In *The cultural geography reader* (pp. 269-275). Routledge.

Mastrocinque, J. M., Hartwell, T., Metzger, J. W., Carapella-Johnson, R., Navratil, P. K., & Cerulli, C. (2020). Spirituality and religion after homicide and suicide: Families and friends tell their stories. *Homicide Studies*, *24*(2), 107–126.

McDevitt-Murphy, M. E., Neimeyer, R. A., Burke, L. A., Williams, J. L., & Lawson, K. (2012). The toll of traumatic loss in African Americans bereaved by homicide. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 4*(3), 303–311.

Mennis, J., & Mason, M. J. (2011). People, places, and adolescent substance use: Integrating activity space and social network data for analyzing health behavior. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 102*(2), 279.

Mennis, J., Mason, M., Light, J., Rusby, J., Westling, E., Way, T., … Flay, B. (2016). Does substance use moderate the association of neighborhood disadvantage with perceived stress and safety in the activity spaces of urban youth? *Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 165*, 288–292.

Mennis, J., Stahler, G. J., & Baron, D. A. (2012). Geographic Barriers to Community-Based Psychiatric Treatment for Drug-Dependent Patients. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 102*(5), 1093–1103.

Metzger, J., Mastrocinque, J. M., Navratil, P., & Cerulli, C. (2015). Improving Systematic Response in the Face of Homicide: Family and Friends of Homicide Victims Service Needs. *Violence and Victims*, 30(3), 522–532.

Moore, S. E., Jones-Eversley, S. D., Tolliver, W. F., Wilson, B., & Harmon, D. K. (2022). Cultural responses to loss and grief among Black Americans: Theory and practice implications for clinicians. *Death Studies*, *46*(1), 189–199.

Moss, P., & Besio, K. (2019). Auto-methods in feminist geography. *GeoHumanities*, 5(2), 313–325.

Moss, P., & Donovan, C. (Eds.). (2017). *Writing intimacy into feminist geography*. Routledge.

Mowatt, R. A. (2018). Black lives as snuff: The silent complicity in viewing black death. *Biography*, *41*(4), 777–806.

Murphy, S. A., Clark Johnson, L., & Lohan, J. (2003). Finding meaning in a child's violent death: A five-year prospective analysis of parents' personal narratives and empirical data. *Death Studies*, *27*(5), 381–404.

Neely, C. L. (2015). *You're dead---so what? Media, police, and the invisibility of black women as victims of homicide*. Michigan State University Press.

Onwuachi-Willig, A. (2016). The trauma of the routine: Lessons on cultural trauma from the Emmett Till verdict. *Sociological Theory*, *34*(4), 335–357.

Osei, K. (2019). Fashioning my garden of solace: A black feminist autoethnography. *Fashion Theory*, *23*(6), 733–746

Pain, R. (2021). Geotrauma: Violence, place and repossession. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(5), 972-989.

Priddis, H. S. (2015). Autoethnography and severe perineal trauma—An unexpected journey from disembodiment to embodiment. *BMC Women's Health*, *15*(1), 88.

Reed, M. D., Dabney, D. A., Tapp, S. N., & Ishoy, G. A. (2020). Tense relationships between homicide co-victims and detectives in the wake of murder. *Deviant Behavior*, *41*(5), 543–561

Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placelessness* (Vol. 67). London: Pion.

Sharpe, T. L. (2008). Sources of support for African American family members of homicide victims. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 17*(2), 197–216.

Sharpe, T. L. (2015). Understanding the sociocultural context of coping for African American family members of homicide victims: A conceptual model. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 16*(1), 48-59.

Sharpe, T. L., & Boyas, J. (2011). We fall down: The African American experience of coping with the homicide of a loved one. *Journal of Black Studies*, *42*(6), 855–873.

Sharpe, T. L., Joe, S., & Taylor, K. C. (2012). Suicide and Homicide Bereavement among African Americans: Implications for Survivor Research and Practice. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying, 66*(2), 153–172.

Sharpe, T. L., Osteen, P., Frey, J. J., & Michalopoulos, L. M. (2014). Coping with grief responses among African American family members of homicide victims. *Violence and victims, 29*(2), 332-347.

Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and planning A*, *38*(2), 207-226.

Sidaway, J. D., & Maddrell, A. (2016). *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance*. Farnham, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Sircar, S. (2022). Emplacing intersectionality: Autoethnographic reflections on intersectionality as geographic method. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *29*(7), 903–922.

Skorton, D. J. (2022, June 2). *At the crossroads: Addressing gun violence as a public*

health crisis. AAMC. https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/crossroads-addressing-gun-violence-public-health-crisis

Smith, M. E., Sharpe, T. L., Richardson, J., Pahwa, R., Smith, D., & DeVylder, J. (2020). The impact of exposure to gun violence fatality on mental health outcomes in four urban U.S. settings. *Social Science & Medicine*, *246*, 112587.

Stopgap, M. (2019). Traumatic dis-embodiment. In H. Payne, S. Koch, J. Tantia, & T. Fuchs (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Embodied Perspectives in Psychotherapy* (pp. 389–396). Routledge.

Talebreza-May, J. (2015). Cultural trauma in the lives of men in northern New Mexico. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, *23*(2), 119–132.

Taylor, SE (2007). Social support. In HS Friedman and RC Silver (eds), *Foundations of Health Psychology* (pp.145–171). New York: Oxford University Press.

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

Teixeira, S. (2018). Qualitative Geographic Information Systems (Gis): An untapped research approach for social work. *Qualitative Social Work*, *17*(1), 9–23.

Teixeira, S., & Gardner, R. (2017). Youth-led participatory photo mapping to understand urban environments. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *82*, 246–253.

Trigg, D. (2009). The place of trauma: Memory, hauntings, and the temporality of ruins. *Memory Studies*, *2*(1), 87–101.

Tuan, Y.-F. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience.* U of Minnesota Press.

Vega, T. (2014, August 12). Shooting spurs hashtag effort on stereotypes. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/13/us/if-they-gunned-me-down-protest-on-twitter.html

Voisin, D.R., Patel, S., Sun Hong, J., Takahashi, L., & Gaylord-Harden, N. (2016). Behavioral health correlates of exposure to community violence among African American adolescents in Chicago. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 69, 97-105.

Walling, S. M., Eriksson, C. B., Putman, K. M., & Foy, D. W. (2011). Community violence exposure, adverse childhood experiences, and posttraumatic distress among urban development workers. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 3*(1), 42.

Williams, A. M. (2009). Therapeutic landscapes as health promoting places. In T. Brown, S. McLafferty, & G. Moon (Eds.), *A Companion to Health and Medical Geography* (pp. 205–223). Wiley-Blackwell.

Wilson, K. (2003). Therapeutic landscapes and First Nations peoples: An exploration of culture, health and place. *Health and Place, 9*(2), 83–93.

Wing, N. (2017, September 19). *When the media treat white suspects and killers better than black victims*. HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/when-the-media-treats-white-suspects-and-killers-better-than-black-victims_n_59c14adbe4b0f22c4a8cf212

Wright, A.W., Austin, M., Booth, C., & Kliewer, W. (2017). Systemic Review: Exposure to Community Violence and Physical Health Outcomes in Youth. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 42(4), 364-378.