Blooming Where I'm Planted: A Phenomenological Investigation of Black Clergywomen's

Marginality and Leadership

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Jarena Lee—the first Black clergywoman in recorded history—and her contemporaries who remain hidden in the folds of the past. May your voices and experiences be uplifted through this work.

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ABSTRACT

Although a vast body of research on social identity considers marginalized individuals (e.g., women of color) as disadvantaged in the workplace, extant scholarship provides little support for ways in which their 'marginality' positively impacts their work experiences, particularly in leadership. Marginality refers to (1) a structural condition in which individuals lack resources and access to achieve status in society, (2) a psychological orientation derived from existing at the nexus of two opposing cultures or entities, and (3) a lived experience where individuals criticize social institutions and cultivate resources for survival. Given the emerging focus of positive, generative processes embedded in and among underrepresented populations (Roberts, Wooten, & Davidson, 2016), I examined how Black women extract meaning from their marginality to construct positive work identities, and used their marginality to shape institutional structures and processes. Specifically, I capturing Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their underrepresentation and marginalization as church leaders to deepen our insight for how marginality is experienced in the workplace. To address my research questions, I conducted an interpretive phenomenological analysis of Black clergywomen (n =28) practicing in Protestant churches across the United States. I critically examined their life narratives and found that Black clergywomen notice structural marginality, recognize their own psychological experiences of marginality in leadership roles, and embrace marginality through as a tool to effectively navigate their organizations. Additionally, I find that the persistence of institutional barriers position Black clergywomen as critical lovers of their institutions which they reshape through their everyday identity and institutional work. Based on my findings, I propose a conceptual model of

Black clergywomen using their marginality to extract meaning and develop behaviors that

facilitate the construction of positive work identities and organizations.

Keywords: marginality, sensemaking, intersectionality, positive identity construction, leadership

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Descriptions of a prototypical leader generally include positive attributes such as courage, humility, authenticity, and strength. We seldom describe leaders as possessing negative qualities, especially if these qualities are attached to their social identities (e.g., race, gender, social class). Instead, we tend to discuss leaders' ability to transcend or overcome barriers imposed upon them by their identities. As a consequence, organizational and management research generally posits effective leaders as individuals who reflect these positive individual attributes and who champion behaviors that generate positive work outcomes. Uncritically celebrating individuals' ability to fit societal definitions of leadership essentially ignores the reality that marginalized social identities shape individuals' leadership experience, and obscures attention to the interplay of social structures and individual agency in the experience of leadership. In this study, I explore the pathway to positive leadership identity development for a specific group of leaders who hold multiple marginalized identities: Black women in church leadership positions.

Marginality describes a condition of low social status and or existing at the periphery of social institutions (Konrad, Prasad, & Pringle, 2006). Individuals who exist at the margins of society—such as women of color—are characterized as lacking resources for upward social and economic mobility (Parks, 1928; Stonequist, 1937), and as members of social identity groups that lack positive, esteem-enhancing qualities (Roberts, 2005; H. Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Despite the hardship that marginalization imposes on ethnic minority women, women who hold these

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marginalized identities have matriculated into leadership roles in a variety of institutions. Importantly, the majority of management scholarship captures the perceptions of hypothetical women of color in leadership roles based on factors in their environment that these women may encounter (e.g., Rosette, Koval, Ma, & Livingston, 2016). Yet little scholarship examines how women of color leaders subjectively experience their marginality in leadership, and whether or how their use of marginality affects the institutions in which they lead. This qualitative study fills those gaps.

Much of the extant scholarship on women of color's marginality in the workplace considers the disadvantages and barriers to accessing leadership roles. For instance, Black women may find that entering and advancing in organizations are labyrinthine and impassable due to subtle indicators of, and or responses to their social identities (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik, & Jun, 2016; Rosette, Akinola, & Ma, 2016). To increase their social standing in the workplace, Black women may amplify the positive qualities of their identity (e.g., "Black women are strong") and or reject their marginality by assimilating to dominant group norms (Roberts, 2005) Roberts, Settles, & Jellison, 2008). In this dissertation, I explore how Black clergywomen experience marginality in leadership, how they leverage their marginality to construct a positive work identity, and how they use their marginality to effect changes in the institutions where they work as leaders (e.g., churches). Focusing on this topic is important and timely given global interest in diversifying workforces and pools of leadership across industries. Understanding how marginality affects and is affected by the social structure of leadership will be crucial for creating equitable organizations and societies.

In this work, I center attention on Black clergywomen who hold positions of leadership in churches. This particular sample, while unique, serves as an important group through which to

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investigate marginality in leadership for several reasons. First, in the U.S. almost 90% of African Americans indicate that they believe in God and approximately 75% indicate that religion is somewhat to very important to them (Pew Research Center, 2015). In this landscape, clergy is a prestigious profession and the church is a crucial institution in Black culture. Second, the church historically has been an institution whose leadership is generally dominated by men, making Black women in clergy an example of a marginalized group in a high status profession. Third, churches use the Bible as an authoritative text for guiding moral behavior and for legitimizing or denying claims to leadership. Although Biblical interpretation in Protestant denominations of Christianity does not directly condemn *all* social identities (one exception is the condemnation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender identities; see Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010), women in general, and ethnic minority women in particular, have been and continue to be extremely underrepresented in leadership roles of churches (Chaves, 1997; Lehman, 2002). Using a critical perspective of diversity in organizations (Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2009), I highlight the ways in which church traditions and denominational rules socially construct marginality through seemingly innocuous practices that normalize Whiteness (Nkomo, 1992) and maleness (R. Ely & Padavic, 2007). Fourth, Black women are among the most active churchgoers in the United States, which makes their underrepresentation in leadership an institutional puzzle (Adams, 2007; Barnes, 2006; Scott, 2005). Finally, as is the case in many organizations, Black women have begun to challenge systems of racialized patriarchy that historically have excluded them from leadership positions in churches (McKenzie, 2011; C. A. Smith, 2013). These challenges have led to an increase in the number of Black women entering the clergy (Lehman, 2002). However, Black clergywomen who hold visible positions of leadership remain rare in religious institutions, especially at the senior pastor level (Adams,

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2007). Taken together, the existence of the church as a culturally critical institution that stakes its claims to authority in systems of morality and virtue provides an ideal context to understanding marginality and the construction of positive work identities. Furthermore, the reality that Black women's social identities are steeped in representations that cast Black women as immoral and non-virtuous makes their existence as leaders in religious institutions a complex phenomenon. Black women are disproportionately represented in the pews and underrepresented in the pulpit. Thus, capturing how Black clergywomen make sense of their calling and their marginality elaborates theories of positive identity construction within organizations.

In this dissertation, I seek to gain a deeper understanding of marginality and its link to organizational leadership. Specifically, I examine how Black women in church leadership articulate and develop meaning from their marginality. Additionally, I explore the ways in which these Black clergywomen's sensemaking of marginality helps them shape positive work identities, and inform their perceived impact on their organizational structures, processes, and norms. I ground this analysis in Black women's subjective, lived experiences of marginality in leadership as opposed to perceptions of their leadership effectiveness. Further, I centralize Black clergywomen's individual *experiences* with marginality through phenomenology—a philosophical stance and methodological tool that allows researchers to investigate the reflective consciousness of an "Experience" (Tomkins & Eatough, 2013), and that can elucidate a grounded, idiographic understanding of marginality in the workplace. Theories of intersectionality in leadership (Richardson & Loubier, 2008), sensemaking to construct work identities (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), and literature on social-symbolic work (N. Phillips & Lawrence, 2012) guide this study. I use these frameworks to investigate how Black women's social location—at the nexus of two or more marginalized identities—are implicated in

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power structures embedded in religious institutions that confer privilege to some identities and oppression to others. Additionally, I examine the ways that Black clergywomen's subjective experiences of marginality and agency to shape their work identities operate within marginalizing conditions. Exploring Black clergywomen's experiences of marginality in leadership offers insight of individual sensemaking processes and organizational conditions that foster positive work outcomes for leaders from underrepresented groups.

Research Questions and Epistemological Approach

In this study, I address two research questions: 1) *How do Black clergywomen perceive and make sense of their marginality to inform their development of positive work identities*? and 2) *How does Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their marginality affect their perceived impact on the spaces in which they lead*? I take a social constructionist approach to these research questions, which assumes that reality is articulated and socially constructed through experience (Y. S. Lincoln & E. Guba, 1985) (Lincoln & Guba, 1998; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). I begin with an appreciation of the reality that individuals' perspectives are mediated historically, culturally, and linguistically (Willig, 2001) by their standpoint in society (Collins, 1990). Therefore, I intentionally center Black clergywomen's interpretations of their experiences of marginality in leadership. I draw upon interpretive phenomenological methodology (Smith et al., 2009) because I seek insider's lived experience of marginality in leadership, and extract meaning of this experience based on their individual accounts. Phenomenology makes several assumptions of data. First, phenomenology is an epistemological method of the constructivist (interpretivist) paradigm because it presumes that objectivity is but one interpretive frame of reference, and instead, truth belongs to the structure of revealing experiences with a phenomenon (Ahmed, 2007). Second, the phenomenological approach presumes that individuals are experts

and conscious interpreters of their own life experiences (Dukes, 1984), they seek meaning from their experiences, and their accounts or narratives convey this meaning (Gill, 2014). Therefore, I implemented a semi-structured, life narrative interview method in my investigation of Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their experiences with marginality as church leaders. Through phenomenology, I connect Black clergywomen's subjective, micro experiences of marginality to macro level phenomena of their underrepresentation in church leadership specifically, and organizational leadership in general. I prioritize an inductive understanding of marginality in leadership as opposed to deductive, hypothesis-driven analysis. Therefore, I uplift Black clergywomen's articulation of their lived experiences as the primary text for analysis, and implement several rapport-building techniques into my methodology so that I may capture in-depth knowledge of their lived experience.

Given my interest in Black clergywomen's meaning making of marginality in leadership, I do not capture the perspective of others who may shape Black clergywomen's experiences, including their congregants and other clergy. However, I incorporate contextual information gathered from the church records and denominational archives that give rise to the women's marginality in leadership, such as Black clergywomen who are the "first" to lead a particular church. Although focusing on the participants alone limits my data in terms of perceptions of Black clergywomen's marginality, I operate from the viewpoint that perceivers who have higher prescribed or social status than Black clergywomen (e.g., White or male congregants/ subordinates; K. W. Phillips, Rothbard, & Dumas, 2009) may have limited knowledge of marginality as a social reality for Black clergywomen. I also opt against the use of a quantitative approach to this study. Quantitative measurement of perceived congruency between leadership and social identities is extremely common for studies of underrepresented leaders (e.g., Karelaia

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& Guillén, 2014). However, these quantitative approaches presume a particular understanding of identities as discrete categories of difference, rather than subjective experiences within social systems that distribute power to particular groups (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989; Ramarajan, 2014). Rather than imagine Black women in terms of singular identities or compare Black women's experiences to others, I center their expertise as multiply marginalized persons in leadership.

In this study, experiencing marginality in leadership is examined through using a semi-structured life narrative interview protocol of Black clergywomen's lived experiences. Because of the iterative and evolving nature of qualitative research, I followed participants' narrative reflections of their own marginality in leadership experiences. Thus, my research questions were not fully formed when I initially started this data collection. I asked follow up questions to probe for more information about their experiences of marginality as a process, component of, and or mechanism for leading as Black women in church.

Study Significance

Through this study, my goal is to address three primary areas that are lacking in the literature, as well as to offer practical insight for individuals and organizations interested in leadership development. First, I use a strengths-based, positive approach to the study of leaders who are members of a marginalized social identity group (i.e., Black women). Positive organizational scholarship (POS) has not fully considered either how the sociopolitical location of one's identities (e.g., gender, race) influence individuals' construction of positive work identities, or its implications for broader institutional structures. Through this work, I add to the growing body of theoretical and empirical studies that considers differences as a strength and tool for organizing (Ramarajan & Thomas, 2010; Roberts et al., 2016). Further, I criticize the

current POS models that universalize the positive identity construction process as an identity-neutral phenomenon because it obscures the unique, dynamic interaction between oppressive social institutions (i.e., workplace), and individual resistance required for marginalized group members to construct oneself positively. This interaction becomes especially apparent as persons from marginalized groups encounter barriers to enacting leadership in organizations. Thus, I explore the experience of Black women in clergy who individually contend with marginality as a component of their lived experience of leadership in various churches.

Second, at present there is insufficient research in organizational behavior, psychology, and management that considers the intersection of race/ethnicity and other social identities on the enactment of leadership (Richardson & Loubier, 2008). Formerly invisible biases embedded within organizational structures that normalize Whiteness and maleness in leadership (R. J. Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Liu & Baker, 2014; Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008) are becoming more apparent as ethnic minority women continue to enter and "disrupt" contexts and roles that were previously denied to minorities (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). However, few studies have examined how Black women not only navigate these previously denied contexts and roles, or how they create their own pathways for leadership (P. Parker, 2005). Intersectionality accounts for the unique experiences of Black women at the intersection of multiple marginalized social identities as their encounter structures of power, such as institutional norms that challenge their legitimacy as clergy leaders. Therefore, I use intersectionality as a theoretical framework to understand how Black women in church leadership see their marginality as part of their leadership experiences, and how they navigate the racialized, gendered identity of clergy.

Third, I center Black women's perceptions or sensemaking of their "self" or "selves" within an organizational context. I do so with an eye toward the embodied, experiential, inter-

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subjective processes that constitute organizations (Merleu-Ponty, 1964; Tomkins & Eatough, 2013; Weick, 2002). Often empirical, psychologically focused organizational research posits subjective experiences as less rigorous and lacking generalizability. Further, studies of employees perceptions generally focus on cognitive, intrapsychic processes as opposed to capturing subjective experiences of what it "feels" like to be in one's body and as an object for other people (Merleu-Ponty, 1964; Tomkins & Eatough, 2013). Thus, I extend current sensemaking models to account for Black clergywomen's embodied experiences of marginality.

Construct Definitions

Although I delve into these constructs in greater depth throughout the dissertation, I offer initial definitions here to guide the scholarship moving forward. I build from both existing literature as well as my own findings in defining these constructs, where relevant.

Clergy. In this study, Black "clergywomen" refers to Black women who have completed the ordination and licensing processes per denominational guidelines within the Protestant tradition of the Christian faith. Some common titles affiliated with clergy include "pastor," "co-pastor," "assistant pastor," "associate minister," "assistant minister," "elder," or "priest." Each of these roles has different functions and expectations for a particular church and or denomination. Importantly, the work of clergy extends beyond the physical church (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006b). Clergy help to shape social relationships, civic involvement, and the political views of communities, perhaps because they represent a social institution (i.e., religion) that presumably provides moral guidance.

The underrepresentation of Black women in clergy reflects a paradox, especially in predominately Black churches (Adams, 2007). Black women make up majority of the congregation in Black churches, yet Black women are less likely to serve as senior pastors (or to

hold positions of formal, public leadership) in these institutions. This dissertation explores this paradox from the perspective of Black clergywomen working as leaders in predominately Black, predominately White, and multiracial church contexts.

Intersectionality. I define intersectionality as a framework of intersecting identities (e.g., race, gender) and social locations (e.g., privilege, oppression) that reveal the distribution and use of power in society (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991; Bowleg, 2017). In this study, I use intersectionality as an analytic framework to interpret Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their marginality in positions of authority for occupations that are predominately White and or male (P. S. Parker & ogilvie, 1996). This framework focuses both on unique individual experiences and broader social hierarchies that shape Black clergywomen's lived experiences of marginality in positions of authority (Cole, 2009).

Marginality. I draw upon multiple disciplines to investigate Black clergywomen's marginality. Structurally, marginality reflects a social condition where specific populations are socially, culturally, and politically disenfranchised and underrepresented in leadership (Parks, 1928; Stonequist, 1937). Marginality also signifies a psychological orientation where individuals perceive themselves—and therefore align their behaviors—as existing at the margins of two seemingly separate entities (Cotton, 1977; Mayo, 1982). Critical scholars posit marginality as lived experiences that can cultivate agentic responses to inequitable social arrangements including exploiting, resisting, and surviving social institutions (Hall & Fine, 2005; hooks, 1984). I study Black clergywomen's marginality in each of these domains.

Leadership. I consider leadership as a process where Black clergywomen's sensemaking occurs within the "socially and historically embedded [identity] dynamics" (Ospina & Foldy, 2009, p. 885) of religious institutions that challenges Black women's ability to construct stable,

unambiguous leader identities (Clair et al., 2012; Bartel & Dutton, 2001). Further, I conceptualize leadership as practice by investigating how Black clergywomen use their authority to enact institutional changes (Rojas, 2015).

Social-Symbolic Work. Social-symbolic work follows a social constructionist epistemology where individuals intentionally seek to shape and recreate their social (work) environment (Phillips & Lawrence, 2012). This "turn to work" refocuses attention on embedded aspects of one's work environment—including the identity of specific professions—as socially constructed, and therefore, possible to be reconstructed by organizational actors (e.g., Black clergywomen). The "work" of manipulating one's social context involves purposeful, conscious, intended effort (Hochschild, 1979) or sensemaking (Weick, et al., 2005) of social relations and symbolic expression. In this study, I focus on two aspects of social-symbolic work: identity work and institutional work. Identity work refers to forming, repairing, revising, or maintaining a coherent and distinctive personal identity while attending to the various social identities that pertain to them (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008). I investigate Black clergywomen's ability to construct positive (personal) identities within sociostructural discourses of leaders, clergy, and Black women as part of their sensemaking in Chapter 4. Institutional work refers to intentional actions aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting processes and structures that constitute authoritative rules guiding behavior and values in institutions (Lawrence, Leca, & Zilber, 2013; Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009, 2011; Scott, 2005). I examine how Black clergywomen perceive that their experiences of marginality impact their church, denominational, and religious institutions in Chapter 5.

Outline of Dissertation

  This dissertation is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, I review theory and literature that provide the foundation for my investigation of experiencing marginality in leadership among Black women in the clergy profession. I begin this chapter by introducing theoretical and conceptual models on marginality and intersectionality. This work, which describes marginality as an outcome of structural conditions, psychological orientation, or a subjective lived experience, provides the theoretical lens for examining Black clergywomen's experiences at the intersection of marginalized social identities in a privileged occupation (i.e., clergy). I next discuss the existing literature on Black women's leadership in context, highlighting the primary themes that have focused in-depth on the structural and interpersonal environment that these women face with less consideration of Black women's understanding and interpretation of their leadership as they navigate their organizational environments. I consider the significance of the context in which these women are leading by presenting the historical and contemporary knowledge of church as it relates to the lives of Black women.

  Chapter 3 details my methodology. First, I introduce interpretive phenomenological analysis, and explain why it is appropriate given my interests in Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their marginality in leadership. I also present my personal reflection as part of my ontological approach to this dissertation. Next, I describe my research setting and provide details on my participants and sampling approach. I then discuss my data collection process, in which I conducted semi-structured life narrative interviews with participants supplemented with informal observations, materials, and archival data. Finally, I describe the analytic induction process in which I extract meaning for how marginality affects construction of positive work

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identities and perceived impact on religious institutions from Black clergywomen's life narratives.

Chapter 4 focuses on findings that address my first research question: 'How do Black clergywomen perceive and make sense of their marginality to inform their development of positive work identities?' Chapter 5 focuses on findings that address my second research question: 'How does Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their marginality affect their perceived impact on the spaces in which they lead?' In Chapter 6, I present a discussion of the findings in connection to broader literature and theory. I begin the chapter with a summary and integration of the key findings from the previous two chapters. I synthesize my findings towards developing a conceptual model where Black clergywomen's identity work and institutional work in combination allows them to 'work' their marginality to enact leadership in their organizations. Then, I consider the broader contributions arising from this discussion to the domains of scholarship on marginality, intersectionality, and leadership, followed by a discussion of the study's limitations and directions for future research. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the practical implications of this work for individuals, managers, and organizations.

CHAPTER 2:

Review of the Literature

Marginality is a construct that has emerged and reemerged in social science research within the past century. However, management literature has not sufficiently addressed marginality at the nexus of two or more marginalized social identities in diversity research despite its inherent role in shaping the work experiences of those persons, including Black women in leadership roles. I aim to examine how marginality affects Black women leaders' construction of positive work identities. Using intersectionality as an analytic framework, I interrogate how marginality manifests in the lives of Black clergywomen's sensemaking about their work identities, how it informs their perceived impact on their churches, and how it operates within the broader structures of power in which these women leaders exist. These 'structures' refer to societal ideologies that normalize Whiteness and maleness to leadership roles. In this chapter, I briefly describe the components of the existing positive work identity framework and highlight how its lack of focus on the social location of Black women limits its propositions. I discuss how taking an intersectionality lens explicates how structural marginality affects Black clergywomen's construction of positive work identities. Next, I describe how churches represent a meaningful context in which to examine Black women leaders' construction of positive work identities because although they are organizations that are based in virtues, they also perpetuate marginalization through uplifting patriarchal leadership. I conclude this chapter by summarizing extant theories that conceive of leadership as a contextually based, socially

constructed identity, and highlight how accounting for marginality affects perspectives of leaders.

Constructing Positive Identities

Tajfel and Turner (1986) posit that our existential desire in life is to accurately describe and perceive ourselves positively; that is, our goal is not just to develop an identity, but to develop a positive identity. We receive content and affirmation to construct positive identities from various life domains, including our work. Dutton, Roberts, and Bednar (2010) theorize that a positive work identity is a perception of oneself as *growing*, *integrated*, *virtuous*, and *esteemed*. This four-part typology—hereafter referred to as the GIVE model (Roberts, 2014)—suggests that constructing positive work identities influence how we think, feel, and act in the workplace, and can generate cognitive and social resources to endure hardships and stressors (H. Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). Empirical examinations of these pathways suggest that they are neither exclusive nor comprehensive, such that fulfilling each of these aspects of the model are not required for individuals to perceive their work identity as positive (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Lucas, 2011). Individuals may conceive themselves positively by extracting meaning from their everyday lived experiences that would indicate they are virtuous, esteemed, and striving towards self-actualization. However, the extant scholarship of positive work identity has not considered how marginalized individuals—particularly at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities—may construct their identities and whether they may do so differently than is proposed in existing theories (for an exception, see Roberts, 2005). Therefore, in this study I endeavor to add knowledge about positive identity development by exploring how Black women leaders construct positive work identities.

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As a first step in understanding the potential contributions of this study, it is crucial to understand the four-part typology of constructing positive work identities as described by Dutton and colleagues (2010). First, the "growing" perspective conceives of our identities as evolving and progressing towards an ideal self and or adapting to better fit our work environments (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Achieving this level of "fit" may help individuals perceive themselves as actualizing their full potential or finding their purpose in their work (Kram, Wasserman, & Yip, 2012). Further, a growing identity assumes that identities are malleable and fluid, and individuals play an active role in the formation of their career identities (Ibarra, 1999). The "integrated" perspective of positive work identity construction refers to perceiving one's work and non-work identities (e.g., gender, race) as compatible, balanced, and mutually beneficial (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). Individuals who bring their whole self or identities to work experience internal feelings of cohesion and authenticity (Roberts, 2007), which enhances creativity (Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, & Lee, 2008), perceptions that one is valued at work (Roberts, et al., 2009), and may help individuals meet their needs to simultaneously feel distinct and to feel a sense of belonging (Brewer, 1991; Kreiner et al., 2006b). The "virtue" perspective refers to the notion that individuals with positive work identities possess virtuous qualities and traits, exhibit character strengths, and are inherently good (Dutton et al., 2010). Some universal virtues include wisdom, courage, humility, justice, temperance, and transcendence (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Finally, the "esteemed" perspective explicitly focuses on internal and external perceptions of one's identity. Being held in esteem includes receiving respect at work (Rogers & Ashforth, 2014) and perceiving one's work has having dignity (Lucas, 2011), which increases general feelings of self-worth. Generally speaking, individuals derive a sense of self-worth through societal perceptions of their collective social identities (H. E. Tajfel, 1978).

For Black clergywomen, developing meaning from holding positions of power in a gendered and racialized context requires that they engage in sensemaking processes that acknowledge their individual experiences as relating to external structures. However, constructing positive work identities creates unique challenges for members of socially devalued groups (e.g., Black women) who face external barriers to cultivating esteem-enhancing identities. Some of these barriers include stereotypes, bias, discrimination, and systemic marginalization. Given the barriers that they face, Black women represent a unique work group through whom to elucidate mechanisms that enable marginalized persons to flourish at work. Black clergywomen's professional role and social identities exist at the nexus of privilege and oppression. Understanding these women's process for navigating the complexities of privilege and oppression in the service of constructing positive work identities in leadership requires that we center on how they make meaning of and articulate these experiences in their narratives about their identity journeys.

The link between identity and narratives is central in this work. Narratives help us reconcile who we are and who we might become through deriving meaning from our experiences (McAdams, 2008; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006). Indeed, we come to understand who we are based on our subjective experiences and interactions with others. Individuals may articulate their own self-definitions and resist negative, externally imposed definitions that interfere with their ability to construct positive work identities (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Hall & Fine, 2005) through storytelling. Therefore, in this study I examine what Black clergywomen's narratives reveal about how they extract meaning from their marginality in leadership, and how those meanings help them to construct and deploy a positive work identity.

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Previous research on clergy provides support for the four-part typology of positive work identities, yet none of these examples conceives of Black clergywomen's positive identity development. Therefore, I present existing research and expand on how the perspectives may manifest differently for Black clergywomen. For instance, clergy generally describe their career trajectory as progressing or adapting (i.e., "growing" perspective) according to their calling by the Holy Spirit to pursue specific ministries and positions (Christopherson, 1994). Black clergywomen may also interpret their careers as dictated by a higher power, but as an underrepresented group, they may have to adapt to church environments where they often are the first woman, the first Black person, and or the first Black woman in their particular role. As such, these Black clergywomen must navigate patriarchal and or racialized norms embedded within their organizations, and they often are called upon to subvert oppressive ideologies (i.e., preferences for masculine preaching; Smith, 2013) in order to progress. Little research exists that explores the varied experiences of women "firsts" in professions (Read & Witlieb, 1992), especially among Black women pioneers (Hine, 1994). Thus, in this work I rely on Black clergywomen's firsthand accounts of their experiences to develop understanding for how Black women adapt, often as the first in their institution, to leadership in churches.

The clergy profession is unique in that the boundaries between professional and personal lives are often blurred (Shehan, Wiggins, & Cody-Rydzewski, 2007); that is, one does not stop being clergy when they exit their physical workplaces. Clergy who hold non-work identities that are incompatible with their work identity may struggle to integrate those roles (e.g., "integrated" perspective). In their study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual Episcopalian priests, Creed and colleagues (2010) find that clergy engage in different forms of identity work to justify their identity as clergy. Similar to sexual minority clergy, clergywomen may encounter opposition to

their identities based on interpretations of the Bible. Further, fear of confirming stereotypes about Black women as sexually insatiable and immoral may lead Black clergywomen to modulate their behavior. How these concerns impact on Black clergywomen's path to leadership is unclear. In this study, I draw upon Black clergywomen's narratives of their identities to further understand how they seek to integrate and balance their gender, race, sexuality, class, and professional identities.

Religious teachings are thought to be at the root for developing virtuous qualities, thus clergy are expected to espouse and model these virtues for their followers (e.g., "virtue" perspective). Women, however, are often held to a higher moral standard than men. The Cult of True Womanhood (also known as the Cult of Domesticity) was imposed upon women to maintain personal decorum, piety, sexually chaste, and bearers of morality to their families(Browne & Kennelly, 1999). Importantly, the schema of a proper lady was defined in part by the development of the image of the improper, immoral Black woman (Perkins, 1983) whose inability to develop virtuous qualities contributed to the decline of Black family (Moynihan, 1965). The church served as a space for Black women to counter these hegemonic narratives by living out their identities as respectable, civically engaged, and devoted women advocating for racial progress (Gilkes, 2001; Higginbotham, 1993). Thus, seeking to construct a respectable persona may allow Black women to cultivate virtues that enable their survival including resilience, self-determination, and acute awareness of subtle discrimination (Constantine & Sue, 2006).

Clergy is considered a prestigious profession that garners respect, therefore we expect clergy to feel that they are held in esteem (e.g., "esteemed" perspective). Black clergywomen, however, possess at least two devalued identities in society (i.e., gender and race), making their

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ability to see their identity as esteemed more complex. Typically, members of marginalized social identity groups engage in impression management and identity negotiation tactics to present themselves positively. Some of these behaviors include downplaying one's membership in socially devalued groups and emphasizing their involvement in more prestigious groups (Roberts et al., 2009). In contrast, marginalized group members may seek to establish positive distinctiveness. Positive distinctiveness reflects marginalized individuals' search for opportunities to educate others and speak out in support of their social identity groups to bolster positive reception of their identities (Roberts, 2005). Given their awareness of their devalued social identities, Black clergywomen may reject public esteem and instead form positive *private regard* by separating their personal feelings towards their social identities from public evaluations of those social identity groups (e.g., Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Although this study does not capture others' perceptions of Black clergywomen, I aim to capture how the meanings Black clergywomen extract from their devalued social identities promote a sense of esteem for their work identities.

Although the GIVE model offers a valuable tool for understanding Black women leaders' paths to positive leadership identity development, Black clergywomen's marginality may prompt them to engage in unique processes to construct positive work identities. I explore how Black clergywomen engage in sensemaking or give meaning to their experiences of marginality to construct positive work identities. Sensemaking is primarily conceptualized as a cognitive activity to frame one's workplace experiences as meaningful (Weick, 1995). Further, sensemaking requires ongoing retrospection for organizing (Weick, et al., 2005). Sensemaking in organizations has at least seven components, including helping to shape organizational identification (Pratt, 2000) and enabling individuals extract cues for what is relevant information

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at work. Sensemaking is a necessary framework for examining how Black clergywomen provide

meaning their workplace experiences because it emphasizes retrospection, labeling of one's

experience, and informs identity and action. As stated in Weick et al. (2005), the identity of

"organizational actors shapes what we enact and how we interpret" (p. 416). Thus, understanding

how Black clergywomen construct themselves positively is contingent on how they interpret

their marginalization when enacting behaviors as leaders.

In addition to the intrapsychic properties of sensemaking, constructing positive work

identities must adhere to the societal conditions that pushback against Black clergywomen's

ability to see themselves positively. Therefore, a theoretical framework that accounts for the

ways that social structures affect individual lives is necessary to understand Black

clergywomen's construction of positive work identities. I use intersectionality theory to explore

Black clergywomen's experiences of marginality influences their construction of positive work

identities.

Using Intersectionality Framework to Understand Black Women's Marginality

Black women in the U.S. are considered one of the most marginalized social identity

groups based on several indicators including economic and social status, and political power

(Collins, 1990). Black women grapple in unique ways with interlocking systems of oppression—

namely sexism, racism, and classism—that generate privilege and oppression along a matrix of

social identities and social roles (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989) including leadership. In this

dissertation, I use intersectionality as an analytic frame in which to interpret and analyze the

experience of marginality among Black clergywomen who occupy leadership positions (Parker

& ogilvie, 1996; Parker, 2001). Empirically, my intersectional approach considers the

intracategorical complexity (McCall, 2005) within a group of Black clergywomen who have a

range of diverse experiences with marginality in leadership given their clergy status, denominational traditions, and the demographics of the congregation. I consider various manifestations of marginality (e.g., structural, psychological) and explore how these forms of marginality manifests for these women, and how contextual features of their churches affect their construction of positive work identities. Further, I investigate how Black clergywomen locate themselves as change agents by holding powerful positions that may disrupt marginality. Finally, I examine the sociological (or structural), psychological, and critical approaches to marginality through the intersectional lenses of Black women.

Modern perspectives of marginality in sociology describe social conditions in which individuals lack resources for economic and social mobility, and in which individuals' experiences and voices are decentered and located 'at the margins' of societal discourse (Collins, 1990; Roberts, 2014). Marginality fits into the intersectionality framework by demonstrating how members of particular social identity groups operate within and are affected by power structures that confer privilege and oppression to individuals based on their interlocking social identities (Mattis et al., 2014). In this study, I explore the link between marginality and intersectionality by examining how Black clergywomen encounter implicit power structures that subtly reinforce male leadership, and how these women name and deconstruct the socially constructed systems that marginalize them in their efforts to exercise agency as leaders within the institutions where they work. In the effort to unpack the link between marginality and intersectionality I briefly describe various manifestations of marginality, and highlight the ways in which an intersectional approach to psychological marginality may help to deepen our efforts to study positive leadership identity development among Black clergywomen.

Structural marginality. Sociologist Robert Park (1928) first described marginality as the product of non-dominant groups entering into dominant society based on his observations of Jewish men in America. Social marginality broadly refers to the experiences of a social group and the pattern of interactions between two groups. Persons in these groups must negotiate dual worldviews, expectations, and demands to successfully navigate the social world (Mahalingam, Balan, & Haritatos, 2008). Stonequist (1935) expounded on social marginality by emphasizing the power hierarchy within society that reflects individuals' desire to achieve status and power, but also acknowledges how racial group membership may inhibit individuals from successfully navigating marginality (DuBois, 1922). For Blacks, the efforts to navigate marginality may include knowledge that the mannerisms and patterns of behavior that exist in Black spaces may be devalued in majority White spaces (Davis & Watson, 1982), which may encourage them to code-switch to fit in with the dominant group while holding on to their unique cultural behavior (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Given the physical, social, historical, and political differences between Whites and Black women, this study centers on Black women's narratives as a way to deepen our understanding of their lived experience of marginality, and our understanding of how they name these experiences of marginality.

Psychological marginality. Within psychology and management research, scholars began measuring psychological marginality as an orientation that employees may adopt (Ziller, 1973; Ziller, Stark, & Pruden, 1969) and as an element of person-job fit based on personality traits (Cotton, 1977). Studies find that feeling marginalized in organizations is associated with openness to new ideas and less dogmatic beliefs (Ziller et al., 1969). Mayo (1982) expanded this perspective by encouraging social psychologists to develop positive orientations towards marginality in their training. Specifically, she encouraged psychologists to identify their agency

within this discipline through questioning the assumptions and values of social psychology while developing competencies in the field (Mayo, 1982).

Scholars furthered Mayo's call for positive marginality by acknowledging how marginality manifests differently across time and context; for instance, being Jewish in higher education has less profound effects as it did in the 1960s (Unger, 1998). Thus, the call to perceive marginality as an orientation emphasizes an important principle of intersectionality theory: our social identities are historically and contextually situated such that the beliefs and emotions attached to them function differently across time, space, and organizations (Holvino, 2010; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; K. M. Thomas, J. Johnson-Bailey, R. Phelps, N. Tran, & L. Johnson, 2013). Given that Black clergywomen occupy at least two devalued, marginalized social identities, it is plausible that are made aware of their marginality in leadership (Smith, 1986). Therefore, my study examines how Black clergywomen extract meaning from their marginality, and how their marginality is informed by, and informs their construction of positive work identities and perceived impact on their institutions.

Positive marginality. Previous conceptualizations of marginality focus on macro-level structures and intra-individual perspectives. Critical social science approaches recognize marginality as a lived experience that is articulated through individuals' making sense of their experiences as derived from their social location and standpoint (Collins, 1990, 1998). Positive marginality considers that the margin can be a space of radical possibilities where individuals cultivate strength, vibrancy, and radical responses to inequities and injustice (Hall & Fine, 2005; Unger, 1998). Likewise, "successful marginality" (Hurtado, 1996) refers to individuals' ability to generate knowledge of their marginality to subvert social institutions that seek to further marginalize them. Hall and Fine (2005) identified four dimensions of positive marginality that

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may enable marginalized persons to subvert oppressive institutions. First, marginalized people may engage in critical watching and reframing. That is, they may develop a double consciousness so that they see themselves as worthy despite being devalued in mainstream society (Dubois, 1903). Second, marginalized persons may convert obstacles into possibilities and opportunities rather than perceiving the barriers as impenetrable. Third, marginalized persons may participate in social institutions to extract resources for survival while resisting oppressive ideologies embedded within those institutions, such as adopting an 'outsider-within' strategy (Collins, 1990). Fourth, marginalized persons may achieve positive marginality when they are able to live meaningful lives in which they grow and prosper within the boundaries set by their social identities.

Black women occupy a particular social location that defines their life experiences in ways that are non-additive, but create unique experiences of privilege and oppression at their intersection (Bowleg, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005). The unique forms of oppression targeting women of color may enable Black women to shift their consciousness to see multiple social realities of other social groups (e.g., White women, men of color) as impacting their own experiences. One's life experiences are generally shaped by societal beliefs, myths, and stereotypes about social identities (Crenshaw, 1993), which may influence one's professional careers (E. L. E. Bell & S. M. Nkomo, 2001; Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, & Harrison, 2008). Therefore, perceiving marginality as a subjective experience within socially constructed realities is necessary for understanding Black clergywomen's marginality in leadership.

I incorporate knowledge of each of the approaches to marginality (i.e., structural, psychological, positive marginality) to interrogate Black clergywomen's sensemaking about their marginality in leadership. Importantly, because intersectionality theories and theories of

leadership highlight the importance of context, I highlight below how and why the church reflects a culturally meaningful system of power that impacts Black clergywomen's leadership experiences.

Church Leadership in Context

Clergy members may work in a variety of social institutions including hospitals, schools, and charitable organizations. I center my analysis on the experiences of licensed and ordained Black clergywomen working in churches within the Protestant tradition of the Christian faith. I limit my focus to clergy in churches because I seek to interrogate the explicit and implicit rules, norms and institutional practices that gender and racialize the clergy profession and that promote the marginalization of Black women within this profession. Further, I focus on the Protestant tradition of Christianity because of its non-uniformity regarding treatment of clergywomen. Protestantism is the second largest denominational branch of Christians in the world and emerged from the reformation of Christianity. Protestantism departs from the Roman Catholic Church emphasized having a personal relationship with God, redemption of sin through Christ alone, and the shift from ritualistic behaviors common in the Catholic tradition to stirring sermons that evoked emotional reaction from listeners. Despite these radical beginnings, Protestantism is divided theologically and doctrinally. For instance, some Protestant denominations are more conservative while others are politically liberal particularly on moral issues including gay marriage, abortion, and scientific beliefs. Churches rely on clergy members to serve as vessels for religious ideologies by delivering sermons or messages to explicate the nature of God and religious beliefs. Sermons support a particular *theology* or belief about God, which dictates how humans should behave and interact with others. Denominations advance different interpretations of the Bible, which can lead to drastically different political and

ideological stances on a range of social issues including abortions, gay marriage, and use of contraceptives (Cody, 2006; Olson, Crawford, & Guth, 2000). These differentiations of beliefs can also strongly impact churches' stances on women serving in clergy.

Within most Western, Judeo-Christian religions, churches tend to regulate gender roles more than race and class. For instance, preferred styles of preaching or language used to describe individuals in relation to the clergy (e.g., "First Lady" to describe the pastor's wife) normalize male and heterosexual clergy, marking others (i.e., clergywomen, sexual minorities) as workplace deviants (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006a). The majority of Protestant denominations do not explicitly deny women the right to serve as clergy. The few denominations that do explicitly reject the idea of women clergy, primarily find support for their views through their interpretation of select Biblical text. For instance, the following verse from the New Testament is used to reject clergywomen:

> "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet" (1 Timothy 2:11-12, New International Version).

This verse suggests that women may be ineligible or unfit to lead in the church. However, these beliefs about women's roles are largely based on highly selective, (mis)readings of the Bible. Some interpret the Bible as an inerrant or timeless text, suggesting that the information within the Bible transcends space, time, and geographic location. Taking an inerrant interpretation of the *entire* Bible would present conflicting views on women's role in the church. Indeed, another verse in the New Testament states,

> "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons *and daughters* will prophesy…Even on my servants, *both men and women,* I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy," (Acts 2: 17-18, New International Version, emphasis added).

Literal and timeless interpretations of the Bible would suggest that this second verse directly contradicts the first one, granting women the right to 'prophesy' and speak the Word of God in the church. Despite these varying perspectives, churches manage to deny women positions of leadership in the clergy based on scripture, leading to the severe underrepresentation or absence of women clergy in some denominations. Some individuals who stand in opposition to women clergy attempt to bolster their arguments through stereotyping women as lacking the "superior" leadership capabilities to provide moral guidance on political, social, and economic issues (Greene & Robbins, 2015). Women's "frailty" and proximity to sin as descendants of Eve (Smith, 2013) are also used by some individuals to enforce the notion that God did not intend for women to lead (Welter, 1966).

Further efforts to delegitimize clergywomen use more secular means as opposed to religious practices. For examples, some churches reject implementing equal employment laws for hiring and ordaining clergy because they believe that clerical leadership is based on a calling, and callings cannot be regulated by secular institutions or by non-spiritual systems of laws (Chaves, 1997). Importantly, however, churches exist in and reproduce gendered, racialized, and classed hierarchies that influence the disproportionate number of male to female clergy (T. D. Lincoln, 2012), and the underrepresentation of Black clergy in non-majority Black churches (Lehman, 2002). There also are institutional norms of denominations within Protestantism that contribute to a gendered, racialized clergy identity.

Congregational notions of who a legitimate clergyperson is certainly affect their support of clergywomen. Some laity may not believe that women are capable of fulfilling some of the proposed clergy functions. Ministerial leadership may involve engaging in stereotypically masculine tasks such as decision-making, being visibly 'in charge' of church functions (e.g.,

preaching), and being "on call" for spiritual needs at all times (Kreiner et al., 2006b). Some

churchgoers and members of clergy perceive that women will be unable to complete this work

because of their gender. To exemplify this perspective, Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) quote one

clergy person who opposes women clergy. This clergyman stated,

> "The responsibility of the pastor is too strenuous for women. The pastor is on call twenty-four hours a day but there are certainly times when women are incapacitated… during pregnancy, during times of menstrual cycle…Deacons must do dirty work…How can you expect a woman to do such? She loses her femininity and it diminishes her womanhood" (C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990, p. 289-301).

Rather than address the sexist preferences for male leadership, religious traditions normalize

women's absence in the pulpit as "just how things are" (C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990;

Wiggins, 2005, p. 136).

Despite the belief that ministerial leadership solely consists of masculine functions, there

is evidence to suggest that clergy engage in stereotypically "feminine" tasks, too (Nesbitt, 1997).

Comforting those who are grieving and counseling church members are considered feminine

tasks (Robbins, Francis, Kay, & William, 2001) and are central to the clergy profession. It is

plausible that congregants perceive caring and nurturing as secondary to the overall function of

ministers, and that they believe that these nurturing activities are best suited for members of

clergy who do not serve as the senior pastor. Thus, associate or assistant ministers may be

designated to lead specific ministries in the church to fulfill presumably feminine (i.e., nurturing)

tasks such as the "Children's Ministry" and "Community Outreach Ministry." It is likely that

women clergy would be considered ideal candidates to spearhead these ministries. This

confinement of women to feminine-specific leadership roles in the church may create what

Sullins (2000) calls the *stained glass ceiling effect* where women are locked out of senior pastor

roles.

To counter the presumably sexist theology, some women clergy began to utilize a *feminist theology* in support of gender equality. Feminist theologians seek alternative and extra-biblical traditions to reject the oppression of women within the church (Grenz & Olson, 2010) by emphasizing the role of women in the Bible. For instance, sermons on Esther in the Bible may centralize how Esther's gender affected her experiences with political and marriage structures, and affected the power that she had to save her people from execution (Thorne, 2015). Feminist theologians may also derive meaning from their sexist experiences as clergy to increase awareness of institutional injustices facing all women (Cody, 2006; Ice, 1987). Further, feminist theologians may actively restructure power structures within churches by altering their form of leadership. Evidence suggests that feminist clergy exercise and value "power-with" as opposed to "power-over" their congregation (Lehman, 1993; Zikmund, Lummis, & Chang, 1998). Several studies suggest that some clergywomen value maintaining closeness with their constituents by decreasing boundaries of presumed spiritual purity of clergy (Lehman, 1993; Olson et al., 2000). One woman saw this form of leadership as exclusive to women stating, "We [women] are in a unique position to take professional ministry…off a false pedestal as if it were more worthy, more faithful, in and of itself…and bring it to ground level, rooted in the real stuff of existence, where most people live" (Schneider & Schneider, 1997, p. 259). Through a feminist theological framework, clergywomen, including Black clergywomen, may exercise a non-hierarchical form of leadership in advocacy and inclusion of women in clergy.

Historical evidence indicates that when women clergy do rise into senior pastoral positions, they are disproportionately likely to be placed in 'failing' or 'dying' churches that consists of declining membership, few staff, a paucity of resources, and aging, non-college educated, low-income members (Konieczny & Chaves, 2000; Nesbitt, 1997, p. 55). The

differential placement of women and men clergy within church leadership roles may contribute

to differences in their career trajectories. On average, men are more upwardly mobile in clerical

leadership than women; 32% of men's first job out of seminary are at the assistant or associate

pastor level compared to 58% of women (Lehman, 2002). By their third job placement, only 8%

of men hold associate and assistant minister roles compared to 40% of women. Thus, the

pipeline for senior leadership roles in churches is narrower for women in comparison to male

clergy.

Exercising leadership as clergywomen poses complex challenges to women of the cloth.

The use of Biblical interpretation to deny women the right to clergy threatens the authority of the

text to justify other facets of clergy, including feeling 'called' (Christopherson, 1994). Further,

congregational preferences and culture normalize male leadership, making it difficult for

clergywomen to expand beyond 'feminine-specific' clergy functions. Despite these demands,

feminist theologians develop tools using the Bible to advocate for clergywomen. Black

clergywomen who adopt a feminist theological stance may perceive their experiences of hardship

as preparing them to lead virtue-based institution. Most perplexing to this notion of the stained

glass ceiling effect is its prominence in majority Black churches. Black women are

overrepresented within the pews of Black churches, but Black women are less likely to rise to the

senior pastor role in historically Black denominations (Adams, 2007). Several aspects of the

Black Church may help to explicate why this effect persists.

The Black Christian Church represents a social, cultural, political, and historic entity in

the lives of Black persons in the United States. Historically, the Black Church has served as a

mediating structure between the dominant White society and Black people's constructed,

countercultural space to celebrate Black culture, religion, and worship (Barnes, 2014;

Higginbotham, 1993; C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Religious involvement and spiritual

beliefs inform Blacks collective action towards social justice from emancipation from slavery, to

Civil Rights, and contemporary social movements regarding violence in Black communities.

Similar to men using Biblical interpretations to restrict women's power in the church, Whites

also used the Bible to subjugate Blacks into second-class citizenship during slavery and post-

emancipation. Slave owners would conduct "church service" on their plantations to remind

enslaved Blacks that God justifies the ownership of slaves and commands that the slaves obey

their masters (e.g., Ephesians 6:5, New International Version). Post-emancipation, northern

Whites perceived that religion could help "civilize" Blacks by teaching them morality and self-

discipline (Higginbotham, 1993). Black women played a key role in facilitating this message of

'respectable' Blacks.

Through their church work, Black women and men began to develop a sense of self-

determination and self-dignity for the race (Gilkes, 2001; Higginbotham, 1993). This growing

social consciousness led to the formation of *Black Liberation theology* (Cone, 1997). Black

Liberationist theologians construct God as an advocate for justice and liberator from oppression

(Barnes, 2006; Cone, 1985). This theological framework proliferated in the 1960s and 70s during

the Civil Rights movement and is evident in the speeches and writings of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr. (Cone, 1997). Black liberation theology parallels Blacks' experiences in the United

States to the enslaved Israelites in Old Testament of the Bible (Cone, 1985) to remind Blacks of

their impending freedom from racial, political, social, and economical bondage. Through Black

liberation sermons, Black churchgoers may connect to God through their oppression, which may

help to cultivate a sense of hope by perceiving discrimination as aspects of their lives that bring

them closer to God. Further, Black liberation theology encourages congregants to "cast their

burdens" on a just and liberating God, enabling them to effectively cope with life stressors and forgive others for oppressing them (Hammond, Banks, & Mattis, 2006; Jacqueline S. Mattis, 2002; Jacqueline S Mattis & Jagers, 2001). As with feminist theology, Black Liberation theology also serves in support of Black clergy seeking to exercise leadership in the church. For Black clergywomen, upholding Black liberation ideologies may enable them to link their oppressive status to the cultivation of Christ-like virtues (e.g., forgiveness), helping them to navigate sexism and racism.

Presently, Black women are the most active churchgoers in the United States in historically Black denominations and non-denominational predominately Black churches (Pew Research Center, 2009). Yet, when it comes to church leadership, Black women encounter myriad challenges due to the intersecting racial and gender identities. To exemplify how Black clergywomen have interfaced with the stained glass ceiling I present two brief examples of pioneer Black women preachers and the challenges that they faced as they endeavored to take public spiritual leadership. Their lives and assertion for clergy recognition helped to foster an intersectional theology that centers Black women's experiences.

Jarena Lee is the first known Black woman to challenge the restriction of women preachers in the Black church, and the first woman authorized to preach in the United States by the African Methodist Episcopal church in 1819 (Chaves, 1997). Although she was not officially ordained, Jarena Lee would travel throughout the country in the early 19th century preaching, typically outside of church tents or pulpits because women were prevented from preaching inside of spaces reserved for male clergy. Despite physical demarcations to locate Jarena Lee as outside of clergy, she consistently used Biblical evidence to assert her place in the pulpit, asking:

"[W]hy should it be thought impossible…improper for a woman to preach? Seeing the Savior died for the woman as well as for the man. If the man may preach, because the Savior died for him, why not the woman?" (quoted in Chaves, 1997).

In this statement, Jarena Lee challenges believers by questioning the limitations that they place on Jesus Christ as the savior for all instead of only a savior for men.

Although she is most known asserting her identity as a Black woman in her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech, former slave, abolitionist, preacher, and gender rights advocate Sojourner Truth often drew upon her understanding of the Bible to proclaim her rights as a Black woman in Black society. Sojourner Truth developed their own interpretations of the Bible based on their experiences as ethnic minority women in the United States. She often challenged theologies that sought to justify unequal treatment of women and men. She once criticized a man saying,

"[That little man in black says] woman can't have as much rights as man because Christ wasn't a woman. Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman. Man has nothing to do with him."

Here, Truth reframes the story of Immaculate Conception as specially connected to women. Further, Truth marveled at Eve's power to direct the course of history, and saw women as strong enough to change the world:

"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!"

Rather than avoid aspects of the Bible that connect women to moral failure (e.g., Genesis 3, New International Version), Sojourner Truth directly addresses and indeed embraces the implications of the fall for women's moral responsibility and capability of fixing humanity.

Jarena Lee and Sojourner Truth's lives influenced many more Black clergywomen whose discontent with the social status of women, Blacks, poor and working class persons fueled their passion for social justice work through engaging religious leadership and womanist

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interpretations of the Bible. *Womanist[1] theology* acknowledges the interconnectedness of nature and people across race, sex, and class by centering Black women's experiences in interpretations of the Bible (Grant, 1989). Womanist theologians reject interpretations of the Bible that subjugate women, minorities, and the poor (Grant, 1989, 1995; Hoover, 1966; Walker, 1972). Womanist sermons articulate poor, Black women's unique relationship to the Christ by connecting to his servant nature as the "least of the people" (Grant, 1989, p. 217). Further, many Black womanist theologians relate the experiences of Black women to the story of Hagar as an ethnic minority woman who—as a result of gender, racial, and class oppression—was forced to conceive a child with her mistress' husband (Genesis 16, New International Version) and later forced into exile (Genesis 21:9-21, New International Version). Despite Hagar's plight, she received mercy and grace from the God who "sees" her (Genesis 16:13, New International Version) completely as a lower-class woman at the nexus of multiple marginalized identities. Womanist preachers in particular emphasize the interwoven complexity of identities, and develop theologies to ensure that Biblical interpretations do not oppress others.

Unfortunately, Black clergywomen's womanist theological stance does not automatically translate to their career trajectories and experiences. As stated earlier, the population of Black clergywomen is small and these leaders are more likely to serve as the senior pastor in non-denominational, majority Black churches or predominately White churches as opposed to historically Black denominations (Adams, 2007). Most of these churches in which Black clergywomen serve as the senior pastor are characterized as "failing" or dying congregations

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[1] Author and poet Alice Walker coined the term "womanist" in her work, *In Search of our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose.* She explains that the term womanist is derived from the southern folk expression "acting womanish." The womanish girl exhibits willful, courageous, and outrageous behavior that is considered to be beyond the scope of societal norms.

with limited resources (Smith, 2013). Additionally, working in non-Black churches may raise cultural, political, and social differences that challenge Black clergywomen's sense of authenticity and leadership capability (Smith, 2013). The precarious placement of clergywomen in general, and Black clergywomen in particular, could negatively affect clergywomen's ability to meet the spiritual and social needs of their constituents, and may leave clergywomen feeling unfulfilled in their profession.

Indeed, research about Black clergywomen in majority Black churches does not portray a positive experience. Preferences for masculine leadership challenges Black clergywomen's authenticity in leadership. In a survey of Baptist clergywomen, Smith (2013) found that some congregations prefer their pastors to preach using "deep bellows and groans" when delivering sermons. This vocal preaching style is present in the stirring messages that Dr. King and other Civil Rights leaders used in their speeches, and supports Lehman's (1993) research of Black clergy's preferred method of sermon delivery. Although Black women and men clergy tend to adopt a masculine orientation to preaching more than White women and men (Lehman, 1993), it is unclear whether Black clergywomen are intentionally downplaying their femininity to fit in at Black churches. Black clergywomen may use a similar approach in predominately White churches where they dilute their cultural and ethnic identities to better fit their congregation's desire for a calm, intellectual preacher as opposed to an emotionally stirring, "wild" preacher. Thus, it is possible that Black clergywomen may modulate their preaching styles to construct their clergy identity as transcending gendered and racial boundaries in order to justify their placement in the pulpit.

In addition to styles of preaching, Black clergywomen who do similar activities as Black clergymen are often given different labels to describe their work. For instance, Black

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clergywomen who deliver sermons are often described as "teachers" as opposed to "preachers", a symbolic distinction rather than an actual difference in behaviors (Chaves, 1997; De Gasquet, 2010; Gilkes, 2001; Grey, 2012). Some denominations may ordain Black clergywomen, but only allow them to lead praise and worship portions of the service rather than preach from the pulpit (Barnes, 2006; Lehman, 2002). These subtle distinctions in treatment of Black clergywomen from their White and male counterparts highlights the need to study leadership through the experiences of individuals at the intersection of multiple, marginalized identities.

An interesting conundrum that Black clergywomen encounter is the role of other Black women in the church. Most of the pushback towards Black clergywomen in predominately Black churches comes from other Black women (Adams, 2007; Lehman, 2002). In one study, Wiggins (2005) found that most of the churchwomen in her sample lacked the desire to advocate for equal representation for women as clergy in predominately Black churches. These churchwomen argue that male preachers and pastors fill the need for positive male role models in the Black community. Because of the racial and class barriers imposed on Blacks, Black men tend to monopolize leadership positions in Black cultural institutions because of the limited number of spaces for them to lead (Barnes, 2005; C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). It is possible that some Black churchwomen may empathize with Black men's status in the United States, and sacrifice their progression to preserve power in the Black community through supporting male domination (Giddings, 1984, p. 314-315). Rev Dr. Jacquelyn Grant stated that, "Black women view Black men as victims of oppression, therefore Black women don't want to be insensitive to their inequitable treatment by unseating them as leaders in the church" (quoted in C. A. Smith, 2013, p. 21). If these are the case, Black clergywomen may be seen as not supporting racial progress and face considerable backlash in Black churches.

Collectively, the church represents a culturally meaningful context that may enhance Black clergywomen's quality of life through receiving humanity affirming messages and resources to cope with life stressors (Jacqueline S. Mattis, 2002). Further, Black women have a long history of subverting social institutions that restrict their access to power by ignoring their multiple, intersecting identities as shaping their life experiences (Giddings, 1984), as exemplified by Jarena Lee and Sojourner Truth's examples. Therefore, understanding how and why Black clergywomen leaders experience marginality may shed light on the embedded identity dynamics in church leadership. I next describe research of Black women's leadership and how interfacing with structures of power impacts their ability to conceive of themselves as a positive leader.

Black Women's Leadership

Management research has increasingly focused on the socially constructed nature of leadership (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Hogg, 2001; Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Uhl-Bien, 2006), and takes a context-based approach to examining mechanisms underlying the construction of influence, including one's social identity (Hogg, 2001; Ospina & Foldy, 2009). Yet most studies in the area of management do not critically examine the "socially and historically embedded [identity] dynamics" (Ospina & Foldy, 2009, p. 885) that delineate power inequality, particularly by race and gender (Liu & Baker, 2014; Nkomo, 1992; Zanoni et al., 2010). Membership in socially devalued or marginalized groups challenges individuals' ability to perceive that they belong to particular professions and leadership roles (Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005). Thus, individuals must construct their identities in ways that support their membership in privileged groups (Roberts & Creary, 2013). By examining Black clergywomen's experiences of marginality in leadership, I aim to interrogate their attainment and enactment of power, the

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structures that limit what power is available to them, and their ability to resist institutionalized inequities that privilege Whiteness and maleness in leadership.

The limited body of scholarship that interrogates race, gender, and power in leadership contexts indicates that Black women leaders encounter complex experiences in organizational contexts that are distinct from White women (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010) and other women of color leaders (Rosette et al., 2016). Black women leaders are sanctioned more severely for demonstrating incompetence compared to White women and Black men (Rosette & Livingston, 2012). This finding supports the double jeopardy hypothesis (Beale, 1970) where Black women face accrued gender and racial discrimination for engaging in similar behaviors with those who possess at least one dominant identity (i.e., White, male). On the other hand, Black women leaders were perceived as effective when displaying dominant behaviors (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012). Although these previous findings lend credibility to Black women leaders' marginality, the majority of these studies are based on *perceptions* of Black women leaders rather than Black women's subjective experiences. That is, we know little on how Black clergywomen experience and define their marginality for themselves.

Studies that document Black women's pathway to leadership further illustrate their unique workplace experiences. First, according to the double jeopardy hypothesis, Black women are likely to experience more frequent discrimination based on their gender and racial identities separately or in combination compared to White women and Black men (Buchanan, Settles, & Woods, 2008; Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013; Forbes, 2009; King, 1988). Such discriminatory treatment complicates the labyrinthine path to leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007) by imposing concrete barriers that Black women cannot see beyond (E. L. J. E. Bell & S. M. Nkomo, 2001). Second, Black women leaders contend with invisibility and

hypervisibility simultaneously (Blake-Beard & Roberts, 2004; V. Purdie-Vaughns & R. Eibach, 2008), which may offer some protection from targeted discrimination towards either of their visible social identities (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and greater vulnerability to being overlooked for opportunities (Biernat & Sesko, 2013; Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Black women leaders may be underrepresented tokens whose behavior is constantly under surveillance and scrutiny, especially if they pose a threat to their colleagues (Collins, 1998; K. M. Thomas, J. Johnson-Bailey, R. E. Phelps, N. M. Tran, & L. Johnson, 2013). Third, historic discrimination in the hiring and promotion of women and ethnic minorities disproportionately affect Black women's career prospects (Crenshaw, 1991). The majority of Black women currently work in low paying, service occupations with little room for advancement (Berheide, 1992; Elliott & Smith, 2004) and with limited opportunities to gain managerial experience (Combs, 2003). This type of occupational segregation leads to fewer Black women in senior leadership positions. Further, Black women often do not benefit from workplace initiatives designed to diversify the leadership pipeline compared to White women and Black men because these initiatives do not seek redress for gender and race simultaneously (Catalyst, 2009; Hite, 2004).

In sum, structurally, Black women face an array of obstacles to exercise their influence and power in leadership. However, few studies consider how Black women leaders make sense of the multiple ways they are marginalized at work. Collectively, we find that Black women's leadership is fraught with paradoxical tensions (e.g., invisibility-hypervisibility, agency-incompetence) and a myriad of barriers to achieving and exercising power.

Current theoretical models of Black women's leadership identify strategies that enables Black women to advance despite these tensions. Parker and ogilvie's (1996) culturally distinct model of African American women executives identifies behaviors that enable Black women to

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navigate sexism and racism by drawing upon their socialized behavior and traits including their assertiveness and autonomy. Some of these strategies include creativity, risk-taking, and crossing gender and racial boundaries to develop relationships. Bell (1990) and E. L. E. Bell and S. M. Nkomo (2001) further identify strategies used by Black professional women who may seek to maintain their membership in Black culture by holding a bicultural orientation, but adapt to White norms for advancement. Forbes (2009) poses that Black women may accommodate or resist discourses in organizations that may challenge their legitimacy as leaders through examining discourses that sexualize Black women. In this study, I push the needle of research on Black women leaders by examining both their individual embracing of marginality, and the consequences of embracing marginality for institutional structures and processes.

Present Study

In this study, I investigate how Black clergywomen's experiences of marginality in leadership roles affect their positive identity construction and perceived impact on the institutions in which they lead. Using the four-part typology of positive identity construction, I explore how Black women's marginality affects their ability to see their identities as worthy, progressing, esteemed, and in complement. I argue that developing positive work identities requires acknowledgement for the ways in which structural power impacts marginalized persons' meaning making of their experiences. Thus, I implement an intersectionality framework to understand how marginality manifests in the lives of Black clergywomen. Finally, the church represents a unique context in which to examine Black women's ability to construct positive identities given their historic relationship to church in the Black community. As an institution grounded in moral, ethical principles, the Black Church served as a haven for Blacks, as well as a space for organizing on behalf of racial justice and progress (Barnes, 2014; Harris, 1999; C. E.

Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Taylor, Chatters, & Levin, 2003). Although Black women are the most active churchgoers in the United States, they are severely underrepresented in leadership in majority Black churches (Adams, 2007), which may reflect patriarchal interpretations of the text or congregational preferences for leadership (C. A. Smith, 2013). I add to this current body of literature by examining how Black clergywomen make sense of their marginality in church leadership, and the implications of this sensemaking for their construction of positive work identities and perceived impact on the spaces in which they lead.

CHAPTER 3:

Interpretive Phenomenological Analyses

This study seeks to understand how Black clergywomen make sense of their marginality in leadership. I investigate how they describe, extract meaning, and use their marginality to construct positive work identities, in addition to examining how the meaning of their marginality affects their perceived impact on their organizations. In this work, I implemented a phenomenological approach, more specifically, an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to address my research questions. Using a phenomenological approach enables me to interpret the linkages of Black clergywomen's micro, sensemaking processes to macro, structural experiences such as their underrepresentation in clergy leadership. Although the voices of these clergywomen are central in this study, I am critically engaged in the interpretation of the narratives that they share with me. IPA evokes a social constructionist epistemology, which acknowledges my contribution to the meaning of the research. As a derivative of Heidegger's phenomenology, IPA takes into account participants' interpretations and meaning making for their personal and social worlds (Denzin, 1995; J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Following the tenets of IPA, I briefly describe my positionality (Willig, 2001) that shapes my interpretive lens of the data. Then I present the paradigms of IPA and its significance to the theoretical design of my current study. Finally, I describe the procedure for data collection and conducting IPA to explore how Black clergywomen experience marginality as leaders.

Personal Reflection

Qualitative research in general and investigations of faith and religious beliefs in particular, tends to explore the private, personal, and sensitive aspects of individuals' lives (Ahluwalia & Mattis, 2012; Creswell, 2013). In adherence with the social constructionist epistemological approach, I engage, here, in an explicit discussion of my experiences of marginality in leadership—particularly in church contexts. I remain reflexive about how my marginalized social identities, beliefs, and religious experiences influence the questions that I ask, the questions I choose not to ask, and how the stories the participants share are shaped by the interplay of our social identities (Ahluwalia & Mattis, 2012). I developed my researcher's stance as an explicit recognition of the ways in which my social location (Bowleg, 2017) and perception of knowledge as socially constructed realities affects the data collected in this study. Thus my investigation emphasizes the inherently subjective and relational nature of qualitative and phenomenological research (Polkinghorne, 1989; Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora, & Mattis, 2007).

I am 28 years old and identify as a Black, heterosexual, non-denominational affiliated Christian woman from the Southeastern region of the United States. I am a first-generation college and graduate student, and one of two people in my extended families who live away from my home state for non-military work. As a child, I attended a small, Black Baptist church where my grandfather is the founder/pastor, and my parents serve as the head deacon and deaconess. The worship experience in this church includes extended and embodied worship described by 'shouting', and 'catching the Holy Ghost'. More women than men attend this church, and are women are represented as clergy leaders (with the exception of the senior pastor role). Throughout my childhood, I participated in and led several youth auxiliaries at this church

including the usher board, missionary groups, choir, Sunday school, and delivering the announcements during Sunday services. I still regularly attend this church when I visit my family in North Carolina, and feel that I am personally disappointing my parents if I do not attend.

When I moved to Boston, MA after graduating college, I attended a predominately White church that was one subway stop away from Harvard Square. Here, the White male pastor's sermons included an intellectually rich discussion of the Bible filled with practical examples of ways to be a Christian outside of the church. The congregation was largely silent throughout the service; the worship band played songs and melodies that were unfamiliar to me, but made me feel that shouting Halleluiah was inappropriate behavior. I can recall only one instance where I felt uneasy in the church. During a class for new members, the pastor explicitly announced that they do not *believe* in women serving as clergy. He explained how the Bible provides clear instructions for male leadership, and I slowly realized that none of the clergy I had heard thus far were women. Had the unfamiliar majority White composition of the church obscured my ability to recognize the gender of the preachers? Where did I see and interact with women in this church? After further reflection, it dawned on me that my second time attending the church I had been asked to volunteer in the children's ministry downstairs in the nursery where majority of the women led. Initially, I volunteered my services to fulfill my own desire to serve, but later wondered if I would have been asked to exercise my talents in this space if I were a man.

I felt torn about the pastor's declaration regarding women's place in the church. I appreciated the depth of knowledge that I received from his preaching style, but I did not attribute his theology to his gender. Perhaps I felt conflict with his stance because I did not yet realize the key role Black women played in maintaining majority Black churches, leading me to take women's leadership and presence in the church for granted. I carried these questions with

me to my next church in Southeast Michigan. A Korean American man leads this church. Although this new pastor has not explicitly mentioned the role of women in the church, I have not yet heard a woman preach from the pulpit. During my time in this congregation, I have volunteered in children's ministry, helped organize events for young professionals, and co-led an all-women's intensive Bible study group with two White women. Our group meets weekly to develop spiritual growth, build connections, and engage in service activities. Most of the group are young, college-educated White women, some of whom admitted that I am their first Black friend. I perceive that some of my efforts to direct our worship time to women's issues are met with criticism or apathy. For example, when I proposed reading *Jesus Feminist*, which was written by a White stay-at-home mom, several of the women expressed their dislike of (in their words), "bra-burning, men-hating feminists", and could not see how someone could be both a feminist and a Christian. I did not propose additional books to read on feminism, nor did I raise dissent to the groups' consensus for reading *The Meaning of Marriage.* In another instance, one of the associate male ministers explicitly told me and one of my co-leaders that he does not like our all women's group because we are missing a male perspective in our discussions. However, since our group began, several men's only discipleship groups have formed, which have been described by the senior pastor as an innovative model for training the next generation of church leaders.

My changing church environments and subtle to explicit interactions regarding my gender, race, and educational status influence my approach to this research study. I have occupied lay leadership roles that are adjacent to clergy work in churches that are majority Black and majority White. Experiencing my marginality in these church environments led me to adopt an inclusive, womanist theology to the Bible. I bring these perspectives into my research study,

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and elaborate on how my shared racial and gender identities with participants influenced my data collection below.

Tenets of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Phenomenology is a subset of qualitative approaches that emphasizes the lived meaning of a phenomenon; is "committed to the natural logic of language as the preferred medium to understanding human affairs" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 45); describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 76); assumes that people are the experts about their experiences; and assumes that their experience can be consciously articulated (Dukes, 1984). The purpose of phenomenological methodology is to elucidate how individuals' conscious understanding of a phenomenon shapes meaning and experience (Giorgi, 2012). In this study, I am particular interested in how Black clergywomen experience the phenomenon of marginality in leadership.

Phenomenological research methods derive from the philosophical teachings of Edmund Husserl and Margin Heidegger, who have since influenced the psychological approach to phenomenology (e.g., Churchill & Wertz, 2001). Husserl sought to capture the *essence* of a phenomenon by instructing the researcher to suspend all assumptions to present the bias free, natural standpoint of the phenomenon (Husserl, 1962). Further, Husserl believed that some components of a phenomenon were invariant to the structure of the experience (Husserl, 1962). Adopting a Husseralian phenomenological analysis in my investigation of Black clergywomen's marginality in leadership would require that I "bracket" or suspend my personal experiences with the phenomenon, and identify the immutable characteristics of marginality, such as Black clergywomen's personal experience of racism and sexism.

In this study, I follow Heidegger's tradition of phenomenology, which emphasizes the constructivist, and critical ontology of human experience through interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger describes the socially constructed nature of reality as *Dasein*, or the symbiotic union of the self and world (Heidegger, 1962). Acknowledging the mutual construction and questioning of human reality challenges the possibility for researchers to completely transcend the everyday assumptions and biases that we have towards a phenomenon of interest. Instead, Heidegger identifies an *interpretive* or *hermeneutical* approach to phenomenology as integral to revealing experiences through researchers' and participants' involvement in and construction of the social world (Garza, 2007). Heidegger champions letting the data show itself for itself, but acknowledges that the meaning of a phenomenon emerges from the questions that we as researchers pose to the data. This perspective situates me as having a crucial role as an interpreter of the participants' sensemaking process.

IPA was developed specifically for the investigation of how people make sense of their experiences (J. A. Smith, 1996, 2004). Rather than developing a single, quantifiable reality of marginality in leadership, IPA centralizes individual lived experience and my choice of this method gives primacy to Black clergywomen's idiographic account of this phenomenon. Although the experience of the interviewee is primary, IPA—in alignment with the social constructionist ontology—uses a symbolic interactionist approach (Denzin, 1995) where participants make sense of their experiences and derive meaning from them through social interaction and dialogue with the researcher. This approach requires in-depth analytic inquiry given that the researcher is co-constructing and interpreting meanings derived from Black clergywomen. I use a double hermeneutic approach by making sense of how Black clergywomen make sense of their marginality in leadership. Hermeneutics generally refers to interpretation,

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particularly religious text. In this context, double hermeneutics is concerned with how the researcher is "making sense" of how Black clergywomen make sense of their lived experience (J. A. Smith, 2004). Further, by inviting Black clergywomen to talk about their experiences, the researcher also extracts meaning from the sensemaking process occurring within the interview. The intention of IPA is not to build a generalizable account of Black clergywomen's experiences of their marginality in leadership, but to create a theoretical analysis that resonates with Black clergywomen's understanding of their own personal experiences, and provides sufficient evidence from the individual accounts to assure the credibility. Centering Black clergywomen's experiences and interpretations of marginality in leadership, and engaging these interpretations through phenomenological methods enables construction of an inductive theory about the interplay between social identity, marginality, power, and positive leadership development among Black women.

Participants

The IPA sampling strategy seeks to find relevant and varied exemplars within a seemingly homogenous group to capture different in-depth perspectives on the same phenomena and to facilitate theoretical analysis (J. A. Smith, 1996; Willig, 2001). The boundaries of my sample were defined by my research question. I recruited (1) practicing, Black clergywomen, (2) of the Protestant tradition of Christianity, (3) who are ordained, and (4) who hold an official role within an organized church. Because individuals tend to network with others who share similar social identities (Atkinson & Flint, 2001), and because this study focuses on a unique sample (McCluney & Cortina, in press) snowball methods presented a highly effective means of locating Black clergywomen for the study.

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I recruited 28 Black clergywomen using online snowball sampling methods. Although it is typical to recruit 4 to 5 people into an IPA study, I recruited 28 women to account for contextual differences that may influence how they experience marginality in leadership. Some of the contextual factors include region and geographic location, hierarchical level or status (e.g., senior pastor or assistant ministry), denominational affiliation, and the racial composition of a particular church (see details in Table 1). Participants ranged in age from 25 to 69 (average age = 45). Fourteen women self-identified as single/never married, nine were currently divorced, two women were engaged and or remarried from a previous divorce. Two women explicitly identified their sexual orientation as bisexual, and the remaining 26 identified as heterosexual. Nine participants were the "first" Black person, woman, or Black woman ordained and or working in their specific church, role (i.e., pastor), or denomination. Approximately half of the participants (n = 15) worked in Baptist churches, and seven women served as the senior pastor of their respective churches. Using a criterion sampling method (Creswell, 2013) improves my measure of internal validity for the study. That is, I ensure that my findings are credible, believable, and closely tied to the experiences of Black clergywomen by narrowing my sampling to the previously described criteria.

Procedure

The participants consented to participate in an in-person, audio-recorded, semi-structured interview (see Appendix A) at the location of their choice for approximately 1 ½ hours. The average length of the interviews was 95 minutes. The majority of the interviews occurred in the Black clergywomen's church (n = 16), followed by a school of theology (n = 5), participants' homes (n = 4), and public spaces such as a coffee shop (n=3). The decision to conduct interviews in these familiar settings was intentional so that participants feel comfortable disclosing personal

information in the literal and metaphorical spaces where they regularly enact leadership. I independently toured or was invited to tour the church facilities with the clergywomen before or after the interviews, which added rich material of their experiences.

The interview protocol for this study was designed to capture how Black clergywomen experience their marginality in leadership roles. I opened each interview by asking, "Could you tell me when you felt called to this profession, and how that led to where you are now?" This question established a baseline for the existential phenomenon (Wertz, 1983, 2005). I piloted the interview questions with two Black clergywomen informants: a recently ordained minister in a predominantly White evangelical church, and a retired pastor of a predominately Methodist tradition. Given their positions along the clergy career spectrum, I was able to develop questions that captured the content and language of why these women pursued a clergy profession and their reflections on being a Black woman in clergy. The semi-structured approach allowed participants to cover anything they felt was relevant, and to elaborate on topics that were significant to their own experiences with minimal interference from me. Using their experiential knowledge, I adapted several of my interview questions to better account for their experiences as Black clergywomen.

I balanced broad and specific probing questions to focus the interview in a way that resonates with the participants' lived experiences, yet provides insight into the phenomenon of interest. I used paraphrasing, emotive language, and pauses to deepen our discussion of marginality as church leaders. These techniques deepened our rapport and produced richer material for analysis. We mutually decided to end the interview when we agreed that they fully explained how they perceive the role of their social identities in leadership. To acknowledge the socially constructed nature of this investigation, I used a journaling technique before and after

each interview. Specifically, I recorded my perceptions, emotions, beliefs, and behavior as I traveled to and arrived at each interview location. These additional notes enhance my reflexivity in the research process (Giorgi, 1975; Wertz, 1983) and provided additional information of the intersubjective space that the Black clergywomen and I experienced during the interview.

Analysis

I conducted IPA on full verbatim transcripts of the 28 Black clergywomen. I solicited a transcription service company to transcribe the interviews, increasing the external validity of the data (Creswell, 2013). Once I received the verbatim transcriptions, I recruited two Black women research assistants to conduct quality assurance by checking for errors in the transcripts and by correcting discrepancies between the audio recording and the transcribed file. Most of the corrections included idiomatic phrases that are relevant to Black women's talk and dialogue (Few, Stephens, & Rouse-Arnett, 2003; Houston, 2000).

I provide more details and sample selection for my specific research questions in the subsequent chapters. To investigate how Black clergywomen experience marginality in leadership, each transcript was analyzed independently, could standalone as a sensemaking investigation, and was not dependent on other cases to understand marginality in leadership (J. A. Smith et al., 2009; J. A. Smith, Harré, & van Langenhove, 1995). To begin, I selected one primary transcript to develop the initial list of meaning for each research question. I selected Rev. Dr. 'Ariel' as the first case to investigate how Black clergywomen extract meaning of their marginality to inform their construction of positive work identities, and Pastor 'Steph' as the first case to investigate how Black clergywomen's meaning making of their marginality affects their perceived impact on their institutions. Following my analysis, I then selected six additional cases for each research question that represented the experiences of other clergywomen in the sample.

My detailed analysis of each case included an in-depth reading and noting important aspects that are relevant to marginality in leadership. Using an analytic induction process (Johnson, 2004), I documented provisional meanings derived from the first case. Potential meanings of marginality were identified using key words grounded in the participants' language such as "blooming where I am planted. I explored whether these meanings were present in the subsequent cases until I create a provisional list of features evident within each case. In this process, I also noted counter-narratives that depart from the provisional list (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Attending to both shared and unique experiences of marginality in leadership, I integrated meanings within and across cases into a coherent, thematically organized narrative as articulated by Miles and Huberman (1994). This technique simultaneously distills and represents all cases without diluting their idiographic roots. I organized the meanings into superordinate themes that are increasingly more abstract and construct-like to develop theoretical contributions grounded in empirical data (J. A. Smith, 2004).

Following the IPA, I sought to increase the credibility of the data through several techniques proposed in (Creswell, 2013). Although it is common in most qualitative studies (Y. S. Lincoln & E. G. Guba, 1985), I did not use member checking in adherence to the interpretivist paradigm and phenomenological approach. Specifically, the participants' interpretations—and my interpretation of their sensemaking—may alter across context, making the selection of the "right" interpretation limited to a positivist, verifiable answer as opposed to relating their lived experience (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). Instead, I shared the meanings that emerged with qualitative scholars unfamiliar to my study design and research questions. In the instance that "another researcher can assume the perspective of the present investigator, review the original protocol data, and see that proposed insights meaningfully illuminate the

phenomenon under study" (Churchill & Wertz, 2001) (Churchill & Wertz, 2001, p. 259), I may

claim that my study has external validity. Further, I incorporated my personal reflection (which I

shared at the beginning of this chapter) into the development of meaning for the participants,

anchoring the findings of the participants' lived experience within the social constructionist

framework. I connect how my personal reflexivity influenced my interpretation of these

women's sensemaking in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4:

Noticing, Locating, and Embracing Marginality in Leadership

In this chapter, I examine Black clergywomen's subjective lived experience of marginality in leadership. Specifically, I focus on Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their marginality within church leadership to understand their construction of positive work identities. I explore the following question: *How do Black clergywomen perceive and make sense of their marginality to inform their development of positive work identities*

To address these research questions, I conducted IPA on a sub-sample of participants (n = 7). In keeping with recommendations from Gill (2014) and Smith et al. (2008), I intentionally selected representative cases who resemble at least one or more experiences of the remaining women in the sample. It is common in phenomenological studies to select a smaller sample (usually 4-6) to better understand complex phenomenon (Gill, 2014; Smith et al., 2008). In order to best represent the spectrum of experiences of the participants, I selected typical and atypical cases to understand the sensemaking process of marginality in leadership. See Table 4.1 for information on the sub sample.

Based on my analysis, three master themes emerged as key components for how Black clergywomen experienced marginality in leadership: 1) noticing structural marginality in religious institutions; 2) locating their personal experiences within that structure; and 3) embracing their marginality as part of their identity. In the sections that follow, I closely follow the idiographic experiences of a focal case ("Rev. Dr. Ariel", Executive Minister) with

corroborating or counter narratives from the other representative cases to examine (1) how marginality manifests in leadership; (2) sensemaking processes that elucidate their marginality; (3) meanings that Black clergywomen extract from their marginality; and (4) use of these meanings to formulate positive work identities.

Noticing Structural Marginality

All of the women in this subsample had been active churchgoers before becoming clergy. Upon entering this profession, these women became consciously aware of structures and processes embedded within the church that create marginality for Black clergywomen. Noticing marginality took several forms including becoming aware of their internalized beliefs, noticing their own and other women's atypical professional experiences, and explicit denouncing of their marginal status. I investigate these components of noticing marginality in the following sections.

Becoming aware of internalized beliefs. Reverend Dr. Ariel is an Executive Minister within a large urban city who, in her words, "grew up in ministry" as the daughter of a pastor. Several of the women in this sample were children of clergy, and it profoundly shaped their views of ministry. Rev. Dr. Ariel engaged in typical clergy behaviors throughout her life including leading Bible study, singing in gospel choirs, and sharing her faith with others. Yet she believed that she was not—and in essence, could not—become a minister. She describes her perceptions of a minister as follows:

> "I had this image of preacher, and it was man or masculine. So women were either, they sounded like man; they look like them as a man! That's not me! That's not me."

Rev. Dr. Ariel had unconsciously formed an idea of ministers as men, possibly by associating clergy with her father. Further probing during the interview revealed that she rarely encountered women performing leadership functions within religious institutions until she attended a

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Pentecostal church in college. Interacting with these women caused her internalized assumptions of clergywomen to surface:

> "So, that was my first time seeing more women that I felt I connected with operating in ministry. And I wrestled. I wrestled in my own, you know, "Is this valid? Is this authentic?"

Questioning the legitimacy of women in ministry became part of Rev. Dr. Ariel's sensemaking for feeling called to become clergy. Other women in this sample also described personal relationships with clergywomen—or relationships forged through following the work of prominent women in ministry—as influencing their own identities as ministers. In these examples, Rev. Dr. Ariel reveals how women may feel both "connected" to and skeptical of women working in professions that are dominated by men. She reflected on her beliefs regarding clergywomen's legitimacy in her book encouraging women to pursue their call to ministry. In one part, Rev. Dr. Ariel describes that majority of aspiring clergywomen, like herself, attend seminary to justify their call, but their male counterparts invest most of their energy in networking and skill-building.

Rev. Dr. Ariel was not alone in her internalized beliefs about the image of authentic ministers. Minister Brittney is a newly ordained clergywoman of a predominately Black mega church in an urban city. When asked about her becoming clergy, Minister Brittney criticized her own appearance and mannerisms as not fitting what she perceived was a "typical" minister. She states:

> "I don't want to do this [clergy]. I am 22 years old and I'm loud, and I don't like wearing proper clothes, and I want to get a nose-ring next week, and I go to a Baptist church who will have a fit if I walk in with any more piercings. I swear, and I drink, and I party, and I don't have a problem with any of that shit!" I was just like "I don't want to be anybody's minister!"

In judging herself, Minister Brittney inadvertently proscribes clergy as older, quieter, "properly dressed" with minimum piercings who do not engage in activities that are immoral. Her internalized beliefs on what it means to be clergy might explain why the majority of the women in the study originally denied their calling to ministry; that is, they did not fit the proscribed clergy identity. Minister Brittney did not elaborate on how she developed these ideas for clergy, but later described how interacting with other clergywomen, some of whom had piercings, tattoos, and adorned modern clothes, broadened her original beliefs.

Rev. Dr. Patricia, a senior pastor and the first Black woman to pastor a prominent Black church, presents a counter-narrative compared to most of the other women in the study. It was firmly planted in her mind that she would become a preacher from a young age. She asserts:

> "I have always known I was a preacher, like as a toddler…I played church. I was always the preacher. Um- I do have a discrete specific season of my life…when I sensed a call… a more specific call to ministry. Um, which manifested more as a kind of call to preparation for this life for ministry which I already knew that I was gonna be doing. … [I]t's a little different when you're looking back on it…it seems much more clear. Um, but I never thought I wasn't a preacher."

From childhood, Rev. Dr. Patricia could imagine herself in the role of a preacher. Holding on to this image enabled her to interpret her call to the profession as a natural next step in the process. Although Rev. Dr. Patricia has clear convictions of her calling, she does state that the notion of herself as a preacher is clearer in retrospect.

Internalizing patriarchal beliefs for who ministers are and what ministers look like appears to have affected the extent to which the majority of these Black women saw themselves as fitting (or not fitting) the clergy ideal. Internalizing the idea of clergy as men led some women to wrestle with the authenticity of such claims, or use these perceptions to justify their rejection of the calling. Holding these beliefs may not only marginalize other clergywomen, but place

limitations on who the women in the sample believe they may become. On the other hand, holding relatively stable perceptions of themselves as clergy led some women like Pastor Patricia to feel prepared for church leadership. Collectively, internalized beliefs regarding who is and who may become clergy differently affects Black clergywomen's experiences in ministry. In the following sections, I describe how some of these women's atypical career experiences—particularly in comparison to other clergy—deepened their awareness of their marginality in clergy.

Atypical professional experiences. Another way that marginality within the church became conscious to these women is through reflecting on their atypical experiences as clergywomen. Specifically, these women readily noticed that opportunities advance were rare for clergywomen. As a high-ranking woman in the Baptist denomination, Rev. Dr. Ariel was keenly aware of her unusual career trajectory. She was promoted four times in fewer than 10 years to serve in various leadership capacities in a large predominately-Black church. She states:

> "It's rare in churches as organizations can be so large that you can have so many steps. Um- but it's also rare to see, um- promotions happen within churches for women in particular."

Rev. Dr. Ariel is the only ordained woman on a staff of 12 clergy, the majority of whom are men. Most of the women in this sample worked with mostly other clergywomen under a male senior pastor. Rev. Dr. Ariel noted that women rarely hold powerful positions in stable and thriving churches, which was certainly true for the women in my sample. Further, it is uncommon for women to receive a promotion that corresponded with their roles and responsibilities in the church.

In addition to Rev. Dr. Ariel being aware of her unusual career journey as a clergywoman, other women were made aware through others' reactions to them as Black women

in ministry. Assistant Priest Jazmine completed her internship and seminary training in

prominent, mostly White and male institutions. Having this unique experience makes her stand

out to others. She reflects:

> "But, when people see my kind of like Episcopal pedigree they don't bat an eye…They're like, "oh you went to [Jamestown][2]?" And I did my second internship at Christ Church [Plymouth]. The church of [Lincoln and West]. You know, like…once I was on an interview and someone said "folks at that church must have changed to have you come down there."… [I]t's just like I don't have the career that my other sisters have."

Assistant Priest Jazmine attended institutions where typical Episcopalian priests (i.e., White

men) are usually trained. These institutions presumably carry a reputation as spaces that "must

have changed" in order to allow a Black woman to complete her training for priesthood. As she

notes, she has a unique career path in comparison to other Black women in the Episcopal

Church. Thus, Assistant Priest Jazmine's prestigious background tends to generate surprise from

others.

Organizational norms regarding the placement of women also create unique work

experiences for Black clergywomen. Associate Pastor Sherry works at a predominately Black

Baptist Church and is the only ordained woman on a staff of eight clergy. She was surprised

when she became the first woman who interned with and was later hired by her church. She

explains:

> "I was told that... two other woman I guess have tried to intern here. And they both told me, "have a backup because [the pastor]'s not gonna -- number one you're a member here, so he's not gonna let you stay. Number two he never lets a woman stay. The interns are always men.""

Associate Pastor Sherry was not expecting to be hired by the church given the previous

experience of other women who attempted to enter through an internship. Once it was clear that

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[2] The names and locations of the training experiences are pseudonyms to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

she would stay on and eventually advance into the associate pastor position, several rumors

surfaced to explain how she was able to achieve this status. She states:

> "I do get accused of being in love with various men on staff. Or [of] sleeping my way to
> the top, or, you know. Like this…transition to ministry was very rough here."

Unfortunately, for Associate Pastor Sherry, having an atypical career path at this particular

church negatively affected her reputation. Further, the rumors regarding her sexual behavior

increased her awareness of her marginalized status (e.g., gender) among the other church leaders.

Emphasizing sexuality and sexual behavior was common among the Black clergywomen in this

sample, possibly due to their underrepresented in church leadership. Associate Pastor Sherry's

example illustrates how structural marginality (e.g., underrepresentation) can impact women's

advancement and placement in organizations.

Unlike majority of the women in the sample, some of these clergywomen's atypical

career experiences were positive. Minister Angela was recently ordained at a small

predominately Black Baptist Church. She perceives that her unique professional experiences

were a result of working under a Black woman senior pastor. Reflecting on her experience,

Angela shared:

> "I had been very blessed because I have found in talking with other associates [ministers]
> that my experience is unique because I'm doing stuff that pastors do, and it's because of
> who Pastor [Steph] is. She is the type of pastor where people have fed into her life as a
> minister and she wants to do the same thing for those that are under her. So she's kind of
> taken me under her wing and…like if she couldn't make a meeting, she would send me.
> So, she is that type of a pastor where she has entrusted a lot of responsibility."

It appears that Minister Angela received mentoring to grow as a clergywoman from her senior

pastor, who was also a woman. Comparing her experience to other ministers at her level reveals

that she is engaged in activities that are more common for pastors. Interestingly, all of the senior

pastors in this study (n = 7) have lead churches with all women clergy on their staff. It is possible

that the shared racial and gender identities increases feelings of trust, as evidenced in Minister

Angela's example, that facilitates different leadership opportunities compared to clergy in other

environments. Further, having a Black woman as the senior pastor signals a lack of prejudice or

questioning of women in clergy.

Black clergywomen's atypical typical career experiences may increase their awareness of

their marginal status in the clergy profession. As the solo Black clergywomen in their churches,

some of these Black clergywomen are forging new paths and encountering unforeseen obstacles,

including gossip regarding their sexuality. On the contrary, working and establishing

relationships with other Black clergywomen may provide access to leadership opportunities and

enable Black clergywomen to successfully navigate rarely charted career trajectories.

Encountering barriers. Noticing marginality as clergywomen ranged from subtle to

explicit. Some of the women in the sample faced overt rules or preferences that denied women's

ordination to clergy. Rev. Dr. Ariel first encountered institutional rules prohibiting women from

being recognized as clergy when she traveled abroad to a Baptist Church in South Africa. She

recalls one such instance:

> "All of the pastors were men. It was me and one other woman, Lindsay- a young White
> woman…. But, in this church, umm- the pastor told us, first day, we do not believe in
> woman preachers, but you're American. And so, you're allowed."

It was here that Rev. Dr. Ariel observed the power associated with one aspect of her social

location (e.g., nationality) as superseding her gender. It was purely her American status that led

the pastors of the church in South Africa to invite her to preach. Further, she was allowed to

preach in front of a mixed gender audience, which was denied on Biblical grounds to the South

African women in the church. Once given this opportunity, Rev. Dr. Ariel was able to

demonstrate her expertise in delivering sermons. She was well received by the congregation, so much so that the men invited her to continue leading the Bible study for a summer. She states:

> "And [the male pastor] was like "you know, we don't believe in woman preachers but you Americans, you preach really well." So, for South Africa, for that particular experience there was an exception made because of culture, not because of gender."

Explicitly privileging Rev. Dr. Ariel's nationality over her gender allowed the pastor of this church to keep his patriarchal interpretation of the Bible as denying women to clergy intact. He credited Rev. Dr. Ariel's preaching ability to her nationality as opposed to seeing her holistic self as contributing to her skills. This experience ultimately shaped Rev. Dr. Ariel's worldview regarding women in ministry. Furthermore, she began to recognize the ways in which clergywomen are marginalized in some churches that deny women the opportunity to preach in the U.S.

Navigating barriers imposed on women varied across the participants. Most of the women in the sample encountered explicit rules against women ministers in some Protestant denominations, which led them to switch into different ones to fulfill their calling to clergy. Rev. Dr. Ariel was granted the right to preach because of her higher status American identity. However, some women hold multiple marginalized identities that make their encounters with barriers more onerous. Although some denominations do not explicitly deny women the right to preach or hold positions of leadership in churches, some have clear policies denouncing the ordination of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans identified clergy. Rev. Keisha, who identifies as a bisexual Black woman and is currently the senior pastor of an open and affirming gay church,

described the complexities of holding identities that are explicitly rejected by religious institutions. Additionally, she is a self-described "sex positive"[3] clergy. She states:

> "Sex within traditional Baptist settings is not most welcome. So, that means that I'm automatically excluded in certain circles. I'm not getting invited to preach revivals. I'm not getting invited to preach woman's day. I'm not getting invited to preach period because to invite me to preach would be an unintentional endorsement of my ministry."

Pastor Keisha perceives that the barriers she encounters in the Black Baptist church are based on pre-established denominational views of sexuality. As the senior pastor, Keisha is able to exercise leadership and openly discuss these topics within her church. Externally, however, she faces more opposition from churches that are concerned that they will be perceived as endorsing her ministry and views on sexuality if they invite her to preach. Other women in the sample find that discussing topics labeled as "women's issues", including sexual behavior and sexual violence, is generally reserved for special events or programs targeted at women rather than a core part of their churches' identity.

Barriers facing Black clergywomen can be explicitly stated or implicit and perceived based on other behaviors (e.g., not being invited to preach). Figuring out ways to circumvent these barriers requires that Black clergywomen identify their marginality. It was clear to Rev. Dr. Ariel that her gender was problematic for performing clergy work. In contrast, Pastor Keisha discerned that her sexuality was the primary barrier she encountered as a clergywoman. Although these women noted only one facet of their identity as a barrier, it is likely that their intersecting identities could make barriers more or less impenetrable.

These Black clergywomen developed their understanding of marginality by noticing where this marginality manifests. Some Black clergywomen developed internal images of clergy

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[3] Sex positive in this context refers to affirming one's sexual identity, preferences, and behavior from a morally just (i.e., clergy) position.

that departed from their own identities, which questioned the legitimacy of their own calling. Observing how one's career trajectory was distinct from other clergy enabled some of the women in the sample to notice how women are marginalized in church leadership. Finally, encountering barriers that explicitly denied women clergy impacted how and where these women were able to do clergy work. In the following sections I explore how these Black clergywomen extract meaning from experiencing structural marginality by locating their experiences within a marginal context.

Locating Self in Marginality

It is possible that some participants did not perceive barriers that impact women as directly affecting their professional experiences, or that they found ways to navigate around the barriers as with Rev. Dr. Ariel in South Africa. Locating the self in marginality refers to the Black clergywomen seeing themselves as marginal in their churches, and how they understand or explain the significance of being marginalized. Two sub-themes emerged that reveal how Black clergywomen in this study locate themselves as marginalized: acknowledging what happens "in the room", and wrestling with the reality of their marginality.

What happens "in the room." As the Executive Minister of her church, Rev. Dr. Ariel often finds herself as the only ordained woman in senior level clergy meetings. Importantly, her executive status does not shield her from messages that signal her lower prescribed [gender] status compared to men. She recalls several encounters where her male colleagues would make subtle to explicit sexual comments in her presence, which she believed was because of her gender. In one instance, a male clergy asserted that Rev. Dr. Ariel was "in the room" and therefore should expect to be exposed to unfiltered conversation. She explains:

"[My colleagues and I] were talking about preaching. And, it was a bunch of men and me, and he says… "You know preaching, preaching is like orgasmic! "Forgive me, forgive me... I'm sorry [Ariel] but you're in the room. You're in the room. So, it's like, you know you get this climax. And then you can rest!"

Rev. Dr. Ariel interpreted this experience as her male colleague's inability to see her as more than a sexualized woman. Further, her male colleague felt that an apology towards her was obligated, but did not feel compelled to apologize to the other clergy, which suggests that discussing sex was normative in their social group. Rev. Dr. Ariel felt objectified at work when her colleagues made comments about her appearance and whether her husband liked her appearance. Experiencing sexual objectification led her to feel that her professional power was less visible than her femininity, and that "the room" or space for church leaders was not designed for clergywomen.

Unlike the other clergywomen in the sample who identify as heterosexual, Pastor Keisha and Minister Brittney expect to be marginalized in church contexts because of their sexuality. Pastor Keisha describes her identity within religious institutions as follows:

"I've wrestled within systems that I felt called to be what I now articulate as… I'm either going to be the sexual in a spiritual place or I'm going to be spiritual in a sexual place. Because through all of this, through all of my ministry journey I always knew I was going to talk about sex… all through my seminary journey, all of my papers, everything. All I focused on was at the intersection of sexuality and faith. Sexuality and spirituality… So, it, it, it was not a surprise to me, that the systems that I was a part of, the traditional Black church, didn't necessarily work for me."

Pastor Keisha resolves that her identities will always be misaligned, given that she refers to the "spiritual" and the "sexual" as separate "places." She has a strong commitment to integrating sexuality and spirituality, yet committing to both of these aspects of self has consequences for her. Specifically, she perceives that she does not belong in the "room" that is the traditional Black Church because of her sexuality.

Minister Brittney resolved to find a space where being in the room, or in a church leadership space as a bisexual Black woman is possible. She finds it difficult to locate herself in spaces that are accepting of her sexuality because individual churches do not follow the views set forth by the denomination in the same way. She explains:

> "You got some Baptist congregations over here that are cool [with her sexuality]… and you'd have to find a congregation that was okay with it because…being a part of a larger denomination that had an official perspective on [sexuality], that was open and affirming [of LGBTQ identities], that doesn't necessarily require all these congregations to be... And I'm bisexual and so being at that church in Bay Harbor, having to be closeted…

As someone who was closeted with respect to her sexuality, Minister Brittney listened to sermons and conversations within churches that disparaged same-sex marriage and non-heterosexual identities and relationships without being able to openly address the relevance of these sermons to her own life. This ultimately led to her exit the Baptist denomination and her particular church, she stated, "I left the sanctuary. I just couldn't do it." Instead, she sought another denomination where she felt that she could fully exist in the room of clergy as a bisexual woman. Regarding her current denomination, she asserts:

> "You know the [United Church of Christ] has a lot of issues with race but they at least talk about it." I said that I don't know if I can pursue ordination in the denomination... I have to find a congregation that would ordain me. With a denomination that has no problem with ordaining a tattooed, loud, swearing, drinking, bisexual woman. Like, no problem, that doesn't make me any less called in this denomination."

Although she has found a church that is affirming of her sexuality, she still perceives that it lacks intentional focus on her other identities, namely race. Given the multiple marginalized identities that Minister Brittney and Pastor Keisha hold, both women expect that working in any church setting will cause one or more aspects of their marginality to emerge.

Based on these narratives, we find that being in the "room" is a difficult space for Black clergywomen to exist. This metaphor refers to the multiple spaces where these Black

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clergywomen locate themselves—in a community of clergy, their church, and the broader

denomination. In each of these spaces, Black clergywomen's gender, sexuality, and race are

consistently challenged. Further, achieving higher status in their churches does not prohibit these

women from being marginalized from their colleagues or leaders of other churches. Confronting

and pushing back against marginality can be challenging for these women. Indeed, Pastor Keisha

states that she "wrestles" within the rooms that emphasize her marginality. I next explore how

wrestling occurs within these women as they locate themselves as marginalized.

      Wrestling with marginality. The notion of wrestling is a common behavioral expression

of struggling with spiritual phenomena in the Christian faith.[4] Wrestling is prevalent throughout

Black clergywomen's life narratives, and refers to the intrapsychic processes that occur as they

contend with marginality. The most common aspect of marginality that these women wrestled

with was adhering to prescribed gender norms. Rev. Dr. Ariel found it difficult to admit that she

wrestled with balancing her career, marriage, and parenting, especially because members of her

congregation would ask when she spends time with her kids. She explains:

> "So there's- there's, umm- there's a lot of pressure with me as a woman because I feel
> that [inability to juggle] too at that time. Not that I shouldn't. But, I- I want to be with my
> kids too! I mean it's not that I'm out here preaching because I don't want to be with
> them. I've chosen to follow God and to trust the care of my children to Him, but do
> believe as soon as I exit this pulpit, I'm going to hug my babies. I'm going to spend time
> with them. I'm going to make dinner."

Rev. Dr. Ariel both acknowledges that it is a challenge to balance her personal and professional

lives, but that she believes it is possible to do with the help of God. Interestingly, she notes that

being a woman increases the pressure for her to balance her career with her personal life,

implying that married clergymen with children may not feel the same pressure. Reconciling

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[4] See Genesis 32: 22-32 for a description of Jacob wrestling with an angel.

competing feelings to fulfill professional, marital, and motherly duties was shared among the other married clergywomen with children in the sample.

Among the single women, awareness of marginality primarily came from not living up to the standards of a "typical woman;" namely, to be married and have children. These women expressed different ways of wrestling with the notion of being single clergywomen. Assistant Priest Jazmine describes wrestling with societal expectations regarding her relationship status as follows:

> "The things that affect my sense of identity as a Black women are more like I don't have kids…I mean I remember like at this point where I moved to Big Town, U.S.A. and all my friends were still single and they're also all in their own non-profit worlds. We would joke; we would be like we're the ones who are marrying the cause."

Part of Assistant Priest Jazmine's wrestling was the perception that by not being a mother she was failing to fulfill her identity as a Black woman. However, she also presents external factors that affect her status as a single, childfree woman. Living in a large urban city and working in the non-profit space consumed her personal life to the point where she perceived that she was "married" to social justice causes.

On the other hand, Rev. Dr. Patricia feels that she was born to be a clergywoman, and therefore she acknowledges that she could not meet societal expectations for women. She asserts:

> "I certainly think education and kind of like the circles I am in are a part of why I'm single. If you asked me now, do I want to be married? I- I would say, 'yeah, I guess'… But, if you asked me when I was 25 I would have said, 'absolutely!' And… I think these decisions that I made, not just ministry but certainly ministry, and the PhD, faith- and doing it at Ivy University, foreclosed, you know, like, where do you meet dudes…. But, on the other hand, um, I love what I do, and…I'm a happy person…I know lots of married people are unhappy and… this is what I was born for."

In this narrative, Rev. Dr. Patricia finds that her life decisions regarding her career and educational experience predestined her to singleness. She still expresses a desire to be married,

but seems to understand her status as a natural outcome of her professional career, especially as an educated Black clergywoman. Because she believes that she "was born for" life as clergy, her wrestling is a bit tempered compared to the other clergywomen.

These clergywomen's narratives suggest that wrestling with the self emerges from considering how prescribed norms for women to desire and value motherhood and marriage affect their calling to clergy. Other women in the sample also expressed wrestling with additional expectations to maintain a virtuous persona as clergy while dating or ending a marriage. In sum, wrestling with marginality captures how Black clergywomen struggle to obtain or choose to dismiss expectations imposed on them as women.

Locating one's experience as marginalized included observing external conditions that foster marginality, and internal reconciliation for fitting (or not fitting) societal expectations. Certain organizational contexts—including women's underrepresentation in leadership roles and institutional norms that disparage some social identities—could reinforce Black clergywomen's marginality. Awareness of societal expectations for women could generate conflicting messages for the values that Black clergywomen should uphold. As illustrated in Pastor Patricia's counter-narrative, grappling with these tensions may be resolved through Black clergywomen seeing the aspects of their calling as natural and not taking away from their ability to be wives and mothers. I next explore how the meanings these Black clergywomen extract from experiencing and wrestling with their marginality inform their ability to perceive their work identities positively.

Embracing Marginality

Making sense of how their experiences of marginality encouraged these Black clergywomen to begin embracing this aspect of their status as part of their experiences in leadership. Three aspects of embracing marginality were described: "opening the box" (i.e.,

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using agency to remove barriers); "blooming where they are "planted" (i.e., flourishing even in challenging spaces); and embodying marginality (i.e., living within the margins). I elaborate on each of these themes below.

Opening the Box. Rev. Dr. Ariel's ministry journey was an unfolding of her identity by taking her previously held conceptions of God and Black clergywomen "out of the box." Previous experiences with other clergywomen, and her own work as a minister led Rev. Dr. Ariel to discover her agency within the social structural realities of clergy or "the box." She explains:

> "I'm taking God out of the box in terms of women, because now I'm being mentored by women. I'm taking God out of the box in terms of my own leadership. Now I'm studying the Word and I actually think I can do a Bible study. And also, God is coming out of the box with American church versus church globally."

From her description, we can perceive explicit and implicit limitations imposed on clergywomen as a box that Rev. Dr. Ariel may unpack through her own agency. First, she considers her personal connection with other clergywomen as legitimizing her own calling, which removes her previous internalized beliefs that clergy are only men. Second, she reflects on her capacity to carry out leadership functions in the church (i.e., studying the Word and doing Bible study) as further validating her clergy identity, thereby removing barriers that she imposed on herself. Third, her experiences abroad exposed her to the harsh realities facing Christians in other countries who persecute leaders of her faith, which subsequently enabled her to develop a theology of God as bigger than patriarchal interpretations of the Bible. She further elaborates on the Christian leaders who are persecuted abroad, stating:

> "This is beyond should women preach. This is a woman who says, "My husband was killed for the gospel and I'm going to stand up and make sure we keep going!" So they're crying out for support and resources and training and umm- here we are [in some denominations] wrestling with whether or not women are preaching and I'm like, "Why are we asking these questions when the kingdom of God is at hand?""

Rubbing against the margins helped Rev. Dr. Ariel to see "the box" as both structural and as a socially constructed reality that she has agency to affect.

Rev. Dr. Patricia uses her interpretation of the Bible and her life experiences to challenge and unbox representations of Black women generally and Black clergywomen by extension. She asserts:

> "I don't believe in male-headship. I don't care what Paul said… And, more specifically, I don't believe in female submission. I don't believe that there is some sort of ideal womanhood and ideal manhood, and I think that part of why I don't believe it is that the ways in which Black woman in particular often get caught in the crossfire of trying to perform these intersections right? And- and Black women are never feminine enough. We're never- we're never dainty enough. We're never in enough need of protection. We're never quiet enough…"

Rev. Dr. Patricia enacts agency in the interpretation of Biblical text to break open the box that attempts to quell Black clergywomen's ability to exist authentically at the intersections of their racial, gender, and professional identities. Drawing upon Black women's experiences enables Pastor Patricia to challenge Biblical teachings (i.e., her "box") regarding the functions of men and women in the church. By centering Black women—who have been erased from discourses of femininity—she asserts that the notion of male headship and female submission is a non-viable ideology. Further, her observation that Black women "get caught in the crossfire of trying to perform these intersections," suggests that their inability to perform feminine vulnerability (e.g., daintiness, silence) increases their vulnerability to violence in society and in the church. This violence often manifests through sexist treatment in predominately Black congregations, racism in predominately White churches, and consistent questioning of Black women's sexuality due to their work in a predominately male profession. Challenging the Bible is a powerful stance for a clergywoman whose professional identity and legitimacy is bound within its pages. Interestingly, Rev. Dr. Patricia and other women in the study—particularly

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senior level clergywomen—do not reject their faith, but directly challenge gendered hierarchies that questions the authority of clergywomen based on patriarchal interpretations of select verses in the Bible.

Opening the box metaphorically represents Black clergywomen's awareness of the boundaries that marginalize them as clergy. Through noticing how the box is being used, Black clergywomen identify ways that they may break out of the box for themselves and their ministry. Rev. Dr. Ariel noted how her preconceived ideas of clergy as men limited her view clergywomen, but that her experiences doing ministry enabled her to "unbox" women as clergy. Likewise, Pastor Patricia reflected on Black women's inability to perform ideal womanhood to criticize interpretations of the Bible regarding women's role in the church. By subverting marginalization regarding women in genera and Black women in particular, these Black clergywomen were able to discover and implement their agency to expand ideas of clergy.

Blooming where I'm planted. Pastor Keisha uses the metaphor "blooming where I'm planted" to describe how she embraces her marginality. The proverbial gardens represent the systems that challenge Black clergywomen's race, gender, sexuality, and class. Returning to our focal participant, I find evidence through Rev. Dr. Ariel's narrative of the ways that she flourishes in challenging spaces. When she first entered ministry Rev. Dr. Ariel organized a mission trip to New Orleans, Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina, which she now considers failed due to her lack of experience. One of the volunteers later became one of Dr. Ariel's mentees, and affirmed that Dr. Ariel was able to positively influence her life. Dr. Ariel reflects on her last encounter with the mentee:

> "The last day, she was like, "You know, I don't think I could be where I am if you had not been where you are." And, it just touched my heart because of all the places along the way where I doubted and questioned and wondered. And, here's the young girl on the trip

that I questioned the most, that came out of that, was watching me even when I didn't know her. And now [she] says, "I am serving God on missions because you were in the right place.""

Despite Dr. Ariel's own feeling of being inadequately prepared and unfit to lead the mission trip, her mentee was able to envision herself doing this work by watching a Black woman in a leadership role. This example illustrates how the "garden" in which most Black clergywomen work is uncertain and how being situated in those uncertain spaces creates opportunities for some women to break new ground. Importantly, it is possible for them to affect the lives of others by simply being present, visible, and engaged in those spaces.

Some clergywomen indicate that blooming requires deliberate action. Pastor Keisha challenges racist, sexist, and heterosexist systems to accept her identities through setting an intersectional agenda for her church. She exclaims:

> "I just don't believe that I'm called to pastor in a church that exclusively says, "We're just gay." And so, my wrestle now, I guess, in leadership and as a woman of color that, as a pastor of a multicultural church that also is open and affirming, I live at the intersection of so many different identities that are not always readily accepted…. As Audre Lorde would say, "We don't live single issue lives," right? So, I can't be a single-issue church. I can't just be gay. I can't just be Black. I can't just be you know Baptist or whatever. We have to bring this all together."

As the pastor of her church, Pastor Keisha seeks to cultivate her garden as a space where her lived experiences at the intersection of multiple identities is central to the identity and the work of her church. She acknowledges that as a bisexual woman of color leader, it is important for her to create an inclusive space that readily accepts all of her communities, and that works for justice for people of all identities.

Similar to the other clergywomen in the sample who are entering this profession, Minister Brittney is actively seeking gardens where she might thrive as a holistic, authentic clergywoman.

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Her current placement in an open and affirming denomination deepens her knowledge of what she needs in order to flourish at a particular church. She exclaims:

> "This was like the first time in years I felt I could breathe in a pew… And, it's not a perfect place. I mean there are a lot of things that really irked me… This was like, "You really can do better with this whole race thing," or "We can do better with… we're a little pompous, we need to come down a little bit." And, so I fell in love with it, and… it just happened to be UCC, and the more I learned about the denomination, the more I realized my beliefs and my perspective in the world and the ministry were much more in line with UCC polity of theology."

The idea that Minister Brittney felt that this space was viable for her as a young bisexual Black clergywomen helped her imagine how she might grow in this space. Her growth includes being able to challenge the church for how they do or do not tackle issues of race and class through their theology.

"Blooming where I am planted," reflects an optimistic view that Black clergywomen may thrive in all soils, even seemingly toxic ones. Furthermore, the notion of "being planted" implies that these women may not be in control of where they land, but rely on God to nurture them wherever they are. The focus on an ability to thrive may also indicate that Black clergywomen believe that they possess psychological resources and spiritual gifts to succeed regardless of their immediate context. Disentangling the knowledge of one's organization as toxic from one's sense of being able to flourish in these spaces may enable Black women to navigate work environments that consistently challenge their legitimacy. Importantly, analysis of Black clergywomen's narratives dispels the notion that if one is thriving then that means that the space cannot be toxic. Indeed, these women suggest the complex reality that individual thriving and organizational toxicity can coexist, particularly for those at the margins. Pastor Keisha repeatedly indicated her desire to be welcome into spaces that her ministry and focus on multiply marginalized communities were oppressed, such as the traditional Black Church. In order to

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sustain this perspective of thriving, Pastor Keisha and the other clergywomen in the sample identify ways to live, grow, and remain positive within the margins, such as setting forth an intersectional agenda for their churches. I next examine how embodying marginality enables Black clergywomen to construct positive work identities.

Embodying marginality. When asked about her purpose in this profession, Rev. Dr. Ariel exclaimed that she was striving to "break away from performance ministry and really embrace lived ministry." The concept of "lived ministry" emerged for her when she experienced pregnancy, which increased her awareness of her body as a focal point for the congregation, particularly in the pulpit. Pregnant clergywomen evoke peoples' awareness of their existence as sexual beings within a sacred profession. This initially caused Dr. Ariel discomfort. Reflecting on her beliefs, she realized that women are "indoctrinated to believe that our bodies cause people to sin" and should therefore remain hidden. Pregnancy inhibits women's ability to hide the parts of themselves that presumably detract from piety and morality embedded within the clergy identity. Dr. Ariel began to rethink her pregnancy and its intimate connection to her clergy work after traveling to the birthplace of Christ. She shares:

> "And, all around the cave are pictures of Mary nursing Jesus. I was shocked. I'd never seen anything like it. Having nursed two children, I came into that cave and wept. I was like, "Oh my God." Jesus was a nursing baby, there was no formula…Umm- but it just reminded me again, this importance of not just the body, but that woman's body. That that's honorable. That that's pleasing to God. Not sexually, but just as it is! So powerful!"

Dr. Ariel's reactions to the pictures suggest that Christianity tends to obscure women's natural body to uplift spirituality, which negatively affects perceptions of women's bodies in the modern church. Interestingly, the portrayal of Mary nursing Jesus—though mundane—is a powerful representation of an intimate act that continues to be contentious and shrouded in shame for women, especially those working in organizations that demoralize their bodies. By connecting

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with Mary nursing Jesus, Dr. Ariel perceived her own body, breasts, and pregnancy as honorable instead of out of place in the pulpit or overly sexualized. Further, this space reminds Dr. Ariel of the importance of Mary's relationship with Jesus as intimate and natural, deepening her own sense of power as clergy.

As stated by Rev. Dr. Ariel, religious institutions socialize women to perceive that their bodies are sinful (and inspire sin) and should be covered. Associate Pastor Sherry challenges these socialized perceptions by refusing to wear a lap cloth to cover her bare legs in the pulpit. She believes that the notion of Black women's bodies as "stumbling blocks[5]" that cause men to sin points to a deeper, spiritual problem within the church. She exclaims:

> "[The congregation's] so captivated by my appearance and…we take out of context this text that says you don't want to be a stumbling block to someone trying to enter the kingdom. That's not appropriate scripture to apply here. There is a level of personal accountability that must be taught and supported. There's a difference between being stark naked in the pulpit…and being comfortable with oneself and glorifying God. Now, if all you can look at is my legs that says more about you than it does my legs."

Associate Pastor Sherry declares that her body is for her comfort and glorifies God, which contradicts religious discourse of morality as only tied to modesty. Additionally, she uses her own body and the congregation's captivation with it to highlight the moral rupture of the system that inappropriately uses scripture to condemn Black women. Furthermore, she points to the lack of personal accountability as the church failing to teach individuals how to assess their own preoccupation with women's bodies. Associate Pastor Sherry demonstrates how women may make sense of their own bodies, and use them as tools to develop particular skills for denouncing the marginalization that proliferate within the institutions in which they work.

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[5] "Stumbling block" appears in 1 Corinthians 8: 9, 12 and Romans 14:13-23, and is commonly associated with Christians engaging in actions that may cause another person to sin.

Finally, for Rev. Dr. Patricia the embodying of marginality is an intentional decision to embrace her Black woman identity, specifically in church contexts. For her, embracing Black womanhood automatically means embracing a non-traditional clergywoman identity. She states:

> "I made the decision that I was going to be a Black woman… I was going to live out that in a way that was audacious and bold. Um, I love being a woman, I think it's challenging. Um- sexism is real. Misogyny is real. The Black church is terrible… But I love being a woman. Um- but I'm not a traditional one. I think people find that hard to take sometimes. And is- it's woman as much as Black. Uh- especially in this setting."

The notion that she made a decision to be a Black woman is an interesting assertion. It implies that Rev. Dr. Patricia could choose to perform another identity, possibly a more acceptable one that is less challenging. Dr. Patricia does not downplay the challenges she faces as a Black woman, but loves being one in a way that is "audacious" and "bold." Describing her life in this way reveals how living at these intersections of identity and pursuing a career in a sexist, misogynist system requires courage, adventure, risks, intentionality and strength.

Embracing encapsulates the many ways that Black clergywomen may see their marginality as a strength. Physically, embracing one's body as sacred and as a space in which to denounce systemic marginalization enables Black clergywomen to reject religious ideologies that further oppresses them. As Black women, they may also feel pressure to downplay aspects of their identity to more easily exist in their organizations. Some of the women in the sample believe that their calling to clergy transcends their gender, racial, and class identities, and did not indicate that being a Black woman would interfere with that calling. Yet, some of the clergywomen like Rev. Dr. Patricia proclaim that living at the intersections of multiple marginality cultivates strength, a sense of purpose, and a direction in which to lead their churches. Ultimately, these women demonstrate that embracing their marginal status as part of their identity may cultivate the tools they need to thrive at work.

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Discussion

In this chapter, I explored how Black clergywomen name and describe their experiences of marginality in leadership, the meanings that they extract from these experiences, and how this knowledge informs their development of positive work identities. Existing models of positive work identity development focus on cognitive processes without fully addressing the structural and embodied realities that affect and are affected by how one extracts meaning from their experiences. I found that experiencing marginality takes shape by first noticing that marginality exists. Noticing occurs at intrapsychic, interpersonal, and structural levels, and Black clergywomen are able to look across these various levels to identify themselves and their role within oppressive systems. Locating themselves in this system involved several sensemaking processes. Being "in the room" of their church and denominational norms challenges Black clergywomen's ability to exist wholly and authentically. Grappling with their placement within the context of their respective institutions and within the church as a whole led these women to wrestle internally with their own desires and social reality.

To conceive themselves and their work identities positively, Black clergywomen may embrace their marginal status. Identifying how marginality is used within their churches enabled some of the women to use their agency towards expanding the possibilities for Black clergywomen beyond their "box." Additionally, understanding that clergywomen operate within prescribed systems of meanings and behaviors derived from the Bible allowed the women in the sample to challenge and reject interpretations that would further marginalize them. Moving from surviving to thriving in religious institutions required these Black clergywomen to recognize their ability to "bloom" despite being "planted" in inequitable environments by being visible in leadership roles and creating inclusive spaces to account for multiple marginalized communities.

Finally, embodying their marginality allowed Black clergywomen to see their bodies as a site of contestation of systems that perpetuate patriarchy and violence towards Black women. Connecting the naturalness of women's bodies to the divine helps formulate the notion of Black women as virtuous. Further, associating the moral failings of the church with the sexualization of Black women's bodies justified these Black clergywomen's moral and theological stance. Collectively, embodiment extends the notion of constructing positive work identities as more than an intrapsychic process, but a physical manifestation that these women may use to convey their experience of marginality in leadership.

CHAPTER 5:

Shaping Institutions Through Marginality

The present study seeks to understand how experiencing marginality affects Black clergywomen's interpretations of the ways they affect their organizations. While the previous chapter examined how Black clergywomen articulate and develop meaning from their marginality, this chapter details the ways their meaning making affects perceptions of their impact on their organizations. I consider both Black clergywomen's immediate church context and broader denomination as institutions where they may believe they have influence as a function of their marginality. Thus, this chapter addresses the research question: *How does Black clergywomen's meaning making of their marginality shape their perceived impact on the spaces in which they lead?*

As in the previous chapter, and consistent with the tenets of IPA, I intentionally selected representative cases who resemble at least one or more experiences of the remaining women in the sample to address my research questions. See Table 5.1 for information about the subsample. In the sections that follow, I closely examine the idiographic experiences of a focal case ("Steph", Senior Pastor) with corroborating or counter narratives from the other representative cases to examine how Black clergywomen's marginality shapes their perceived impact on their organizations. Pastor Steph is an ideal case to examine these processes given the length of her career, and the varied spaces in which she has exercised leadership. Through these cases, I identify three macro themes that capture how Black clergywomen's reflections of their

marginality influence their institutions, including: (1) recognizing the persistence of institutional barriers, (2) positioning themselves as 'critical lovers' of their social institution, and (3) redefining themselves as an avenue to reshape the institution. I discuss each of these findings and sub-themes below.

Persistence of Institutional Barriers

Close examination of the participants' interpretations of life experiences suggests that the persistence of institutional barriers affects how they as Black clergywomen are able to lead. Participants' awareness of these barriers took two forms: perceptions of inequity and the awareness of the prevalence of bias. It is important to note the distinctions between inequity and bias in this study. Primarily, inequity implies differential treatment of Black clergywomen compared to other groups, whereas bias, in this instance, describes negative treatment towards a specific group that does not necessarily compare with other groups. I present examples of perceived inequity and bias from the narratives of my participants.

Inequity. Pastor Steph perceived differential treatment of women in ministry from a young age. She shared her belief that her mother may have wrestled with a calling to preach, but that calling could not be fulfilled as a member of the Catholic Church they do not ordain women. Pastor Steph realized from her own experiences that barriers could emerge in Protestant churches as well. When Pastor Steph was not selected for pastoral positions after taking on preaching duties for three different churches, she reconciled that some opportunities would always remain closed to her because of her marginality. She stated:

> "No matter how educated… anointed…skilled, you are as a woman of color, particularly African American woman, frequently, doors of opportunities still remain closed."

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When she did find opportunities to lead, Pastor Steph noticed that they were mostly in "dying"

churches. Dying or failing churches are characterized by declining membership and few social

and financial resources. After she was selected to serve a failing, majority White church, Pastor

Steph became keenly aware of inequity in churches. She states:

> "Frequently, those [dying] churches have gotten to a place in the life of their ministry
> where no man, Black or White, will look at them. They don't have the resources, uh, both
> monetarily or people…and the only person who will accept is a woman. And so
> frequently, also because women of color are rejected by our own people…we end up
> going to churches that are totally different from our own culture, that are broken and
> dysfunctional, and that are dying."

From Pastor Steph's reflection we are presented with the idea of clergywomen as some churches'

last resort as a leader. She notes that women are selected once these organizations reach this

particular "place in the life of their ministry" when they are "broken and dysfunctional, and…

dying." This statement further implies that moments of thriving in a church's life cycle are likely

times when they are being led by men. Pastor Steph interprets that given their relatively limited

choices, clergywomen are also more willing than clergymen to work in spaces that lack

resources and, for women of color, in churches where the culture often differs drastically from

their own. In calling attention to the contexts in which Black women often operate and the

challenges that they face in establishing their effectiveness as a leader, she described her position

as "starting way back here" in terms of her ability to revive, resurrect, and nurture dying

organizations in comparison to her White and male counterparts who are leading in presumably

thriving and stable churches.

Even as they exercise leadership, Black women's labor is often perceived differently

from others. Reverend Carla, an associate minister in a predominately Black church, recalled

being compared to an "altar boy" when she assisted male ministers in the pulpit for a funeral.

Alter boys tend to be male children who perform routine tasks in support of the clergy. Some of the confusion on her role may have originated from observers' lack of clarity around the role and function of clergy. She states:

> "I was just assisting a male colleague of mine and so as assisting you actually do more work than the, the assisting pastor does everything except for the eulogy. So, afterwards this Bishop said, "you did a wonderful job. In my denomination you would be fine, you'd be a great, um," and he used a word that I hadn't heard, but it was the equivalent of an altar boy… I felt like that was because I was a woman that he could not see me as anything more than an assistant."

Reverend Carla perceived that her work was considered less prestigious or less essential to executing the funeral because of her gender. Through her reflection, she interpreted that delivering the eulogy bestows higher status in comparison to the many other tasks. Further, she perceived the Bishop's praise for her work as pedantic because she interpreted that his inability to "see [her] as anything more than an assistant," was solely due to her gender. It is plausible that although their gender is hypervisible in leadership, clergywomen's work is not associated with a typical leader because the actual labor involved in their leaderships is not visible, is recast by others as ancillary rather than as central, or is so onerous that it offers limited possibilities for women to be seen as successful leaders.

Narratives from Pastor Steph and Reverend Carla suggest that Black clergywomen may perceive barriers as they attempt to access or exercise leadership in churches. Their meaning making poses interesting questions regarding the context in which women are allowed to lead in religious institutions, and how their leadership is perceived once they are in positions of power. These themes are evident in Pastor Steph's awareness of bias throughout her professional career in clergy.

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Bias. Pastor Steph shared numerous examples of biases that she experienced towards her gender and racial identities during her career. In one instance, she experienced backlash from her predominantly Black church for applying to the senior pastor position when she was an associate minister. This backlash surprised Steph because of how beloved she felt as an associate minister in that congregation. The church's response made Steph feel that she had stepped out of boundaries that were meant to contain women in predominantly Black churches. She described her experiences:

> "I heard... comments like, "A woman can't do anything for this church." "Ain't nobody going to have her as our pastor." These were the same people who before…as long as I stay down here, I was the best thing since sliced bread. But, if I dared to be considered... And that, I think, more than anything regarding this issue, impacted me because I saw upfront and personal what happens to us, even from people we love and who love us. That dynamic kicks in. You need to stay in your place."

Pastor Steph paints a vivid image of prescribed gender roles for women. By "stay[ing] down here…in [her] place," she was in alignment with the congregation's preferred place for women. Although Pastor Steph aspired and felt called to a pastor role, the she did not feel that her followers saw her as fitting that call based on their disparaging comments. Most compelling about Pastor Steph's interpretation is her acknowledgement that these people love and care for her, yet default to the "[gender] dynamic" in their preferences for male leaders once she stepped out of her place. This interpretation challenges previous research that suggests developing a sense of connection to and respect for individuals will reduce the likelihood of engaging in discriminatory behavior against them. It is noteworthy that the majority of the congregation was other Black women. Pastor Steph reminds us that love, respect, and even shared marginality cannot prevent people from reinforcing biased, male-centric models for leadership that reinforce the status quo.

In another example, Reverend Dya, an associate minister who works at both a predominately Black Baptist church and a predominately White Presbyterian church perceives bias in the inability of institutions to "define" the role of a Black clergywomen. Specifically, Reverend Dya perceives Black women as deviating from the image of and expectations established for a typical woman and a typical Black person. Given their atypical status for gender and race—Black women deviate from the peoples' expectations of who should occupy positions as professionals in the clergy. Therefore, it is difficult to identify a "place" for Black clergywomen. She states:

> "[There's a] kind of discrimination against women who don't perform ladyhood. And, and that's the other way that we "queer" women and especially women of color who are clergy. Because we don't perform ladyhood, the same way that the deaconesses [and first ladies] do."

Reverend Dya perceives that women who do not performing traditional feminine behaviors are subject to mistreatment, particularly in professional roles. Unlike deaconesses and First Ladies, Rev. Dya and several other clergywomen in the sample indicate that they are "queered" because they deviate from gender norms in the church. Specifically, being clergy allows these women to hold leadership positions without a male counterpart in the church (i.e., First Lady as the Pastor's wife), coupled with their inability to perform femininity leads to questioning Black clergywomen's sexuality or "queering" them. Their interpretation of the treatment of clergywomen compared to other visible women in the church points to respectability politics within the Black Church where members historically have sought to recreate gender roles that demonstrate women and men as complements and models of moral, upstanding citizens. Clergywomen disrupt that norm by advancing in church leadership independently from a male companion. However, upholding non-clergywomen as the ideal role for women in the church

further genders the clergy as male and delegitimizes clergywomen's right to occupy in or exercise their power from the pulpit.

Perceptions of bias present in Pastor Steph's and Reverend Dya's experiences suggest that Black clergywomen may attempt to shield themselves from discriminatory treatment by staying at a particular level or attaching themselves to a male leader in the church. This presents a conundrum for Black clergywomen who seek advancement in churches. Acquiescing to gender roles reinforces certain vulnerabilities that may challenge their authority as leaders in the church. Navigating these biases calls for a strong sense of self, such as Pastor Steph holding on to her calling for pastoring a church despite receiving negative reactions from the congregation.

Taken together, the persistence of institutional barriers imposes restrictions on Black clergywomen's ability to lead effectively. Pastor Steph and the other women in the study described and explained how their marginality was linked to these barriers. Importantly, these Black clergywomen encounter limitations on their leadership in denominations that do not explicitly deny women the opportunity to serve as clergy. Equally important is the fact that these women persisted despite confronting institutionalized sexism and racism. These women's continued engagement in these institutions compels us to ask: How do experience with barriers affect the ways that Black clergywomen navigate leadership in religious institutions? In the following sections of this study I describe how Black clergywomen position themselves as critical participants and critical leaders in their institutions.

Critical Lover of the Institution

Although the Black clergywomen in this study recognize the inequities embedded in their organizations, they still participate in these institutions. Reverend Dya described this complex relationship in terms of being "a critical lover of the institution." Evidence of this critical but

loving stance manifested among the Black clergywomen in three distinct processes. Specifically, Black clergywomen (1) hold on to and speak their truths as women who are marginalized by the same institutions that validate their authority; (2) identify ways to transform the polity by effecting change within the system; and (3) hold themselves and their congregation accountable to inclusive and justice-centered work. I illustrate these themes through the narratives of several women in the sample.

Speaking her Truth. Pastor Steph has had the longest tenure in clergy of any of the women in my sample. Throughout her career, she recognized that the structure of religious institutions served to normalize the oppression of Black women in clergy by linking women's oppression to theology. She actively rejects the habitual nature of churches to normalize and theologize Black clergywomen's subordinate position by acknowledging and naming the problem of marginalization within institutions. She stated:

> "I want to disabuse this notion that it is God's will that we all be in the plight that we're in. I think that is so important. I think unfortunately, some of our women have accepted that, and have even begun to preach and teach that, you know. I just don't believe that. I believe that God blesses us in spite of, but I don't believe that it's God's will that these be the only venues where we can serve... [there's a] difference between being called and relegated."

The "plight" to which Pastor Steph refers is the perpetual low status of Black clergywomen who are serving in mostly dying churches, restricted from advancing in professional roles, and chastised for deviating from ideal womanhood. The narrative and presumption of Black women's struggle is so strong that other clergy have, in Pastor Steph's words, "begun to preach and teach that." She draws upon her own position as one called by God to fulfill her life purpose as a senior pastor to challenge the status quo of church leadership, which she describes as being "relegated" to dying churches. She contrasts "relegated," which reflects structural discrimination

towards Black women in clergy, with "calling," which has divine, existential connotations that transcend societal expectations for women and legitimizing marginalization of Black women. By speaking her truth, Pastor Steph highlights a view of God's will as one that desires for Black clergywomen to serve in thriving churches as well.

Reverend Carla articulated her truth through realizing that 'powerlessness' is a recurring theme inher sermons. She developed meaning around powerlessness by reflecting on how it manifests in her life as a clergywoman. Reverend Carla notes:

> "I remember preaching the sermon called 'Choosing Powerlessness'... I did this whole exegesis of and increasing my understanding of what the word power meant, the ability to do an act. And I remember it very distinctly. Um, and what I found was interesting was after [Jesus] was tempted… The next line said, "then Jesus, full of power..." and that just always resonated. And so, I just remember for me that was, um, I think it was very significant for me. One, because I was a woman, and I think sometimes in ministry, women…we feel very powerless."

Reverend Carla uses Biblical interpretation and her education to better understand her truths around accessing and using power. Centering Jesus' decision to not use his power during his temptation in the desert[6] complicates traditional views of power as "the ability to do an act," and instead posits power as a choice. As a woman in ministry, Reverend Carla possibly interprets her feelings of powerlessness as reflecting the landscape of leadership when one is marginalized. Indeed, majority of the women in the sample describe how their power is undermined from colleagues and members of the church through sexism, racism, heterosexism, and classism. Thus, it seems that women in positions of power may sometimes perceive that they lack agency due to gendered experiences of disempowerment.

Uncovering subjective truth led some clergywomen to establish themselves as critical participants in their organization. For Pastor Charity, a senior pastor of a predominately Black

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[6] see The Gospel according to Matthew 4:1-11

Episcopalian church, standing in her truth ultimately led to her departure as an associate minister from a large, mostly White corporate church in the Southeastern United States. She reflects on one encounter that allowed her truth to surface:

> "So, there were 8 priests on campus; 7 White men and me. So, just me being in the room with the other priests, completely changed the dynamic. I think about what they would have said, the sort of jokes they would have told, and the questions that I ask were just really different. And I think ultimately that was why I left, because I was asking a lot of questions that my boss and the other priests were…about things that weren't really ready to deal with yet. Having to deal with race and gender and class."

As the sole Black woman in her church context, Pastor Charity found that her truth departed from the group norms, and even shifted the dynamics between her colleagues. She perceived that her colleagues were unwilling or incapable of dealing with her questions about diversifying their church. Rather than ignoring her desires to examine inequities across those identity groups, Pastor Charity chose to leave this organization. Holding on to her truth had professional consequences for Pastor Charity; she left a stable and thriving church to lead a vastly different congregation that lacked material resources. Her experience sheds light on why some people may decide against speaking their truth in their organizations. "Truth telling" can be met with hostility, indifference, or signal a lack of belonging to a group, as in the case with Pastor Charity. However, Pastor Charity found a different avenue to continue speaking her truth within the denomination—by leading a predominately Black Episcopal Church in an urban context.

Speaking truth presents unique challenges for Black clergywomen who desire to participate in these religious institutions. In order to reach this level of understanding, the participants had to identify the ways in which their institutions marginalize Black women in clergy through theology, presumed equitable use of power, and through creating token status. Also, these women realized that they are empowered through these institutions to construct their

truth by developing their own theology of God, exploring power as a choice, and carving out space to continue posing questions of race, gender, and class.

Transforming from Within. Maintaining a critical loving stance toward their religious institutions encouraged some clergywomen to evoke subtle changes in their institution. Pastor Steph took it upon herself to create a network of women in ministry through an initiative from her denomination. She describes the opportunity as:

> "Women Together in Ministry…WTIM, which is what we call it, is an outgrowth of a beautiful initiative that the American Baptist Churches, USA Ministers Council launched…to develop, um, clergy care groups, support groups…You could do whatever you felt would help the clergy…to be cared for, to be, um, nurtured because clergy people experience a lot of burnout, a lot of fatigue, a lot of depression for a variety of reasons."

Although this grant was designed to support all clergy, Pastor Steph utilized these resources to support women specifically. She describes her vision for this group:

> "I contacted several clergy women and I asked would they be interested in, um, participating with a -- not a group but a network. I didn't envision a group because with my schedule and a lot of clergy people's schedule, it was not nurturing and refreshing for me to have one more meeting that I had to go to on my calendar, you know… So, what I envisioned was a network of, uh, of women in ministry, giving women in ministry an opportunity to, uh, share their prayer request, to share their joy, to share their concerns, to share what, uh, they were doing in ministry…Um, we wanted to develop a database, which we have, um, of clergy women so that if somebody needed to get in touch with a woman or somebody for a speaking engagement or workshop or whatever, we had this online database that people could go to."

Pastor Steph used the resources from her denomination to directly address issues that she perceives women encounter as clergy. These include not having a space to "share their prayer requests…joy…concerns," or really a way to promote themselves. Under the clergy care group model, Pastor Steph acquired a platform to stay in regular communication with other clergywomen, launched a blog, and published a book that highlights the experiences of

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clergywomen in the Baptist denomination. By working within the denomination, Pastor Steph

helped to transform the church as a space where clergywomen may acquire tools to thrive.

Reverend Dya wholeheartedly believed in working within the church to change the

culture of the predominately Black Baptist church in ways that continued to honor the traditions

of "The Black Church." In reference to styles of worship and preaching, she notes:

> "How do we…build on tradition without disrespecting the tradition. Without throwing
> the tradition away, without completely disregarding it."

She perceives that the value of cultural styles of worship should remain intact as long as other

aspects of the church that perpetuate harm discontinue. Reverend Dya personally experienced

how some traditions were harmful and potentially re-traumatizing Black women who've

experienced "church hurt." As a trained sexual violence counselor, Reverend Dya is keenly

aware of the ways in which the church exacerbates traumatic experiences. She states:

> "I was just coming to church...I was trying to hold it together every time I was here
> because honestly… [I observed among the deacons in the church] typical abusive
> behavior. Silencing, shunning, you know, um, and so what I did was… I would tell [the
> senior pastor that] I need to take a couple of Sunday's off just to be away. I don't know
> how many other women have shared this with you, but a lot of us were survivors of
> childhood sexual assaults, right. So I'm a survivor... So that shapes a lot of how I interact
> with Black men in positions of power. And, so all of that, actually that - all of that sent
> me right back to therapy. Um, so when you're - so when you're in this position of being a
> leader, a visible leader, right… So I'm up there on Sundays. Knowing the hell I'm
> catching from this group of men and one woman [the deacons], um, internalized sexism.
> The little girls in this church have only seen one woman minister… me."

Reverend Dya interpreted the deacons' behavior as directed towards regulating her appearance as

parallel to her experience of sexual abuse. Indeed, she avoids rather than interacts with men in

power at the church whom she credits for sending her "right back to therapy." One aspects of

institutional life that Reverend Dya believes creates these conditions is her hypervisibility as the

only woman minister of her church. Further, her mention of the deaconesses' "internalized

sexism" reflects the notion of other women imposing sexist ideologies and practices on clergywomen in the Baptist denomination. Thus, Reverend Dya's reflections indicate that the lack of women ministers allows some aspects of the tradition, namely the continued abuse of Black women, to continue within the church even in a church populated mainly by women.

Pastor Alyssa used her status as the first Black woman senior pastor of a predominately White church to implement changes to her institution. She described her perceptions of the church as one that:

> "Prides itself on its past and present diversity, on it's, sort of, forward thinking, social justice, um, thrust…So, their mission statement says, "We are an intentionally diverse Christian Community of faith." So it's a big part of their identity and it's something that they don't want to lose."

Given that she is the first Black woman senior pastor of this congregation, Pastor Alyssa realized that she could build on this church's mission of an "intentionally diverse community" to implement changes. One area in which she evoked such changes is in the styles of worship. As a former dancer and graduate of an arts and theology seminary program, Pastor Alyssa is "very much connected to embodiment… the movement of the body, what's going on with the body, how it informs our mind and our spirit." Typically, predominantly White congregations are characterized as disliking embodied, emotion-filled worship. Pastor Alyssa critically examined aspects of her institution that inhibit movement in worship. She reflects:

> "But, my experience is most people are looking for permission and a container to help them do uh- what their body needs... But, they have no idea how to do. [Congregants say] 'I would love to be able to add my gesture to the dance that the dancers are doing, but I'm not a dancer! Oh, but I can move my arms. I- I can lift my arms, I can make prayer position, I can bow my head.' And, if I say, 'That is a dance! Look at this. Look around this church, we're all lifting our hands and bowing our heads. That's a dance!'"

Pastor Alyssa positions herself as transformational leader or a "container" who gives her followers permission to change and who affirms their behavior (e.g., "That's a dance!"). By

criticizing the notion of White congregations as rejecting embodied worship, she perceives that her church may lack the knowledge for *how* to bring in different worship traditions. The church, though intentionally diverse, may normalize White cultural norms that Pastor Alyssa perceives as a changeable aspect of institutional life through her expertise in embodied worship. Further, Pastor Alyssa creates a space in her church for followers to uncover that they already possess the tools and skills to engage in embodied worship, which ultimately transforms their institution internally.

Black clergywomen bring in their strengths and perspectives to make institutional transformations. Capitalizing on initiatives currently in place, bringing in professional expertise, and reflecting on painful experiences enabled these women to critically examine and transform their institutions. It is noteworthy that these women sought to implement changes internally, which likely helps followers maintain their sense of identification with their organization. Given that few Black women are represented in clergy leadership, it may be necessary for these women to introduce changes within the ideological frame of their church to increase perceptions that they belong.

Transforming one's institution may include acting in ways that are aligned with the mission already set in place, as in the case with Pastor Alyssa. This process of implementing changes directly was most common among the senior pastors in the sample, possibly due to their level of power in the church. Other transformations consisted of more subtle actions such as delivering sermons related to topics of marginality and gender oppression. In the next section, I examine how Black clergywomen hold their institutions accountable for their stated missions and goals.

Accountability and Intentionality. On way of critically loving one's institution involves holding the congregation and or denomination to the standards that it has put forth. These standards may include the mission of the organization and or the reasons churches gave for selecting a Black clergywomen to lead them. Pastor Steph realized that her selection to pastor a predominantly White church was rooted in "good intentions," but the church lacked intentionality around welcoming more non-White members in general. As a Black clergywoman, Pastor Steph could understand how her appointment may have signaled equality from an outsiders' perspective. Yet the congregation's reaction to the influx of non-White members demonstrated that the church had not intended to embrace what Pastor Steph interpreted as true multi-culturalism. Instead, as stated earlier, Pastor Steph's appointment to the senior pastor role reflected the desperation of a dying church that sought leadership from women of color at a certain point in their life cycle. She expounds on the costs of unintentional multiculturalism in describing what happened to her church:

> "Within the first year [of her as the senior pastor, the membership] went up to almost over a hundred. We had very few people from the community that joined, but we had an influx of …people from the surrounding community. But the influx didn't look like the people who there. The influx were African American people. And, for a variety of reasons, I imagine it was overwhelming. I had people in leadership to tell me the church was becoming too Black…. We had people who were very hostile and angry because frankly, they were racist. As long as there were just two or three Black families, they were fine. I had one member tell me to my face, he said, "[Pastor Steph]," he said, "I must tell you --" and then he named a few of the Black families and he said, "When, it was just them. I never thought about how they must have felt. But now that there's more Black, I can imagine.""

The dynamics of the church shifted drastically, which Pastor Steph believes happened because the congregation was unintentional about wanting to diversify their congregation. According to Pastor Steph, lack of intentionality led some of the White people to outwardly express their hostility and anger once the church became "too Black." It is interesting that one congregant

connected his new feelings of underrepresentation with the few Black families that had been in

the church when it was predominately White. This experience led Pastor Steph to perceive

diversity as ineffective if it lacks intention. She reflected on this point during the interview:

> "Inter-culturalism, multi-culturalism, if it's going to be successful, must be intentional, must be intentional, and not a last resort. In my case, it was a last resort…I believe that there were so many major differences culturally, racially, spiritually, the way we did things, the way we process things..."

This experience enabled Pastor Steph to become critically aware of when others leverage her

gender and race to showcase diversity without clear intentions of integrating groups across

cultural differences.

Reverend Nicole, an assistant minister at a large church with a Black woman senior

pastor, furthers this notion of intentionality in the church. She purposefully preaches from a

womanist perspective in her sermons, which causes some commentary from members of the

congregation. Her example illustrates the reality that a woman-led church does not automatically

mean that everyone intentionally adopts an inclusive, justice-oriented stance on the Bible. She

reflects on a recent sermon experience:

> "I preached a sermon during seven last words[7] one year during Lent and I 'had the nerve' to preach from a perspective that considered Mary [Jesus' mother]. And talked about it from what I later was told was a 'womanist' perspective….even though the shepherd of this church is a woman, many still expect to hear from a patriarchal ear… If you lead from a female-empowered perspective… it's heard differently… People assume that because we have a female-led perspective, people are used to hearing from a feminist or a womanist perspective, and that everyone is comfortable with that… But…the Bible was written in a patriarchal system as well."

The reaction to her sermon helped Reverend Nicole remove any assumptions she held about how

people hear the sermon in a woman-led church. Reverend Nicole realized that patriarchy

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[7] The Seven Last Words refers to seven biblical expressions or saying attributed to Christ Jesus on the cross. These sayings are gathered through reading the four canonical gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

pervades all of religious spaces, whether the senior pastor of a church is a woman or not, because of the system in which the Bible was written. Traditional interpretations of the Bible center patriarchy, and do not readily lend themselves to new interpretations, which may cause people discomfort when hearing the text from a woman's perspective. She believes that preaching from "a female-empowered perspective" must be intentional because the default approach is male-centered. By ensuring that she is intentional in her exegesis, Reverend Nicole helps highlight the processes that challenge women of color's leadership in the church.

In addition to requiring that institutions are intentional with the actions around diversity and inclusion, Black clergywomen also find that their churches may take advantage of them. Pastor Charity encountered this as the leader of a small congregation. Because of their limited resources, her church is responsible for raising money to cover the building expenses and her salary. Usually lay leaders in the church organize and run a stewardship campaign to raise the money. When no one stepped up to run the stewardship campaign, Pastor Charity completed it on her own during her first year. It is quite common for churches to not offer the same benefits and perks to clergywomen that they offer to clergymen. To avoid taking on more work, Pastor Charity set boundaries around her responsibilities by firmly declining to run the campaign as a way of holding her church accountable to their role as followers under her leadership. She stated:

> "I actually had to let it fall apart and that was a real wake up call for them. I think they realized that I really had some different boundaries. And I will say that most people have responded very well to my boundaries. There are a few people who have not and I just have to say it's on them. They like me to step in and rescue and do everything, even if it kills me."

For Pastor Charity, it was more important to risk her own salary than to fail to hold her church accountable to their contractual responsibilities to her. Her decision to let the stewardship campaign fall apart helped to establish her leadership and her congregants have, in her opinion,

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"responded very well to [her] boundaries." It is important that Pastor Charity acknowledged that she could do everything, but the consequences would "kill" her physically and mentally. Thus, she empowered her followers to see stewardship as their responsibility. Further, by being held accountable, the congregants are also ensuring that she is able to fulfill her role as the senior pastor by focusing on what she is tasked to do.

The metaphor of the "critical lover" adequately describes Black clergywomen's relationship to their institution as consciously aware of the ways in which it is marginalizing, yet committed to owning their truth, transforming aspects of the entity from within, and upholding accountability and intentionality as the standard for leading in these spaces. Through engaging in these actions, Black clergywomen are not only sensemaking about their own experiences, but also sense-giving by shaping how their congregants see themselves as agents of the institution and therefore empowered to change it. In the sections of the study that follow, I examine how Black clergywomen take this critical stance to redefine their institution by redefining themselves.

Redefining the Self and the Institution

Black clergywomen appear to see their own identities and the marginality of those identities as avenues to reshape their institutions. Data from the interviews suggest that for Black clergywomen the pathway to institutional change develops primarily through (1) behaving authentically, (2) developing a theological stance for Black women as a collective, and (3) seeking to the meet their own needs that their current institutions do not meet. I explore these three pathways to institutional change by unpacking Black clergywomen's narrative experiences.

Behaving Authentically. In this context, authenticity refers to Black clergywomen's external behavior aligning with their internal values and beliefs, and with the notion of "bringing your whole self" to work. Expressing oneself authentically is challenging for Black

clergywomen because behaving in ways that may reflect their internal values and beliefs may evoke controlling, stereotypic images. For example, Pastor Steph recognized that behaving assertively or dominantly could conjure stereotypes of the Strong or Angry Black Woman. Yet, Pastor Steph cultivates the knowledge that she needs to successfully reshape her institution, even it is paints her as an "Angry Black Woman." In describing what others may see in her, Pastor Steph states:

> "[S]trong men are considered bold and, um, taking charge and taking command. Strong women are B-I-T-C-H-E-S, are haughty… You're just trying to do something for yourself... I've experienced some of that, um, but you have to be strong. My God, how could you make it if you're not strong? How can you press your way if you're a wilting flower? And, by strong, I don't mean being obnoxious. I don't mean being a bull in a China cabinet. I mean lifting your voice, I mean calling out things that are wrong, I mean, um, doing what you can to create greater opportunity."

Pastor Steph does not see an alternative to navigating her social context without being strong, despite knowing that women's strength, particularly Black women's strength, has consequences for their health and well-being. According to Pastor Steph, strength is required for Black clergywomen to voice their concerns and to create "greater opportunity," or a more inclusive space for followers. She is careful to distinguish strength from "being obnoxious," but rather notes that being strong as necessary for Black women in clergy. Interestingly, her mention of the "wilting flower" suggests that Black women cannot afford to be weak in clergy. It is possible that Pastor Steph's metaphor of a wilting flower describes how other [White] women may be allowed to behave as church leaders because they are perceived as weak, vulnerable or in need of protection. Pastor Steph resolves this tension by conceptualizing the need to be strong as doing something for herself by being herself (i.e., she conceives of authenticity as strength).

Other participants noted that at times the effort to fit into the clergy persona may inhibit Black clergywomen from being their authentic self. For example, Reverend Dr. Diane, an

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executive minister of a large predominately Black church was unclear whether or how she should

disclose her divorce to her congregation. Some religious traditions view divorce negatively, thus

Reverend Dr. Diane likely felt uneasy sharing that aspect of her personal life at work. However,

she saw an opportunity where her otherwise marginalizing marital history may be useful in her

work role. One of her first professional appointments was to pastor a church that resulted from a

recent merger of two independent congregations. The result of this unintentional merger was, in

her words, a "train wreck." Rev. Dr. Diane was able to see the parallels between what that

church needed by reflecting on how she navigated her own divorce and blended family. She

states:

> "I parallel the experience of merging of two churches to the blended family concept
> because I'm a product of blended family concept. We have a blended family now with
> my son and, you know, having a stepdad and him having stepsisters and stepmom and all
> that. Um, so it was the parallel. How do you maneuver through two completely different
> entities into a unit coming together? And so, I kind of likened it to God being the parent
> and setting the standard… [Y]ou may have different experiences. Completely different
> identities. But, what was the commonality and what you can pull from those differences
> to create a new identity?"

Rev. Dr. Diane developed insight to understand the needs of her church by posing the questions

she personally grappled with to the church. Coming from a non-traditional family model, and

having a non-traditional family of her own, enabled Rev. Dr. Diane to bring a new perspective to

her church and its efforts to figure out how they could create a new identity that draws on the

commonalities and differences of each the two church congregation that were being blended into

one. Thus being authentic about her own experiences enabled Rev. Dr. Diane to generate

knowledge for helping the church merge successfully.

The stories offered by participants reveal the ways that contextual norms affects whether

Black clergywomen believe that is appropriate or possible to bring their whole selves to their

organization. As evidenced by the previously mentioned experiences, navigating stereotypes and stigmatizing aspects of their identity can come at a cost, but they also equip Black clergywomen with the knowledge and resources for leading their churches successfully.

Theologizing the Collective Experience. Another avenue that enables Black clergywomen to redefine the institution is through incorporating personal experiences into their theology. Pastor Steph, for example, perceived denominational rules and congregational preferences as hindering God's plan to use women for ministry. She crafted and articulated a theological frame that accounts for and explicitly challenges these institutional practices. She asserts:

> "God has called and equipped women, and we are missing out on the blessings and the benefits that God has placed within women. It's His prerogative to choose women just as He chooses men. Um, and we, as His hands and feet on this Earth, have a responsibility to help break down barriers, to help create opportunity, to help advocate. And, I just feel strongly that that's one of the callings on my life."

With this stance, Pastor Steph is equipped to change institutional norms of God through the authority of Biblical doctrine. By asserting that God chooses women to preach, she not only perceives her calling as God ordained, but she also condemns His followers for imposing limitations on clergywomen. Pastor Steph further indicates that churches are missing out on the blessings and benefits of having "called and equipped women," which parallels with other organizations who miss out on the talent pool of women of color and other marginalized groups. Using this theological approach enables Pastor Steph to direct her followers to "break down barriers… create opportunity…[and] help advocate" for Black clergywomen, and legitimizes and lends authority to her institutional efforts (e.g., WTIM) to support clergywomen as a divine calling on her life.

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In addition to using theology to advocate for Black clergywomen, participants' reflection on personal experiences helps her better understand ways to operate within the clergy profession. Rev. Carla stated that the opportunity to process her emotions in the interview gave her new insight into the reality that emotions are often silenced in her clergy work. She reflects:

> "This [interview] has helped me process some of the emotions that I think are really involved in being a Black woman in ministry, you know. Um, and I think that, um, emotions are a very complicated aspect of being a Black woman in ministry. One because I think … Black woman are… potentially more, um, emotive and display our emotions in a variety of ways you know, from the angry Black woman, um, image, into the passive… I just think that that's just an interesting part. And, in leadership… emotions are not looked upon, um - in fact, I remember my ex-husband saying to me, "don't nobody care about your emotions or how you feel." I think that in ministry that is actually, probably more of the, especially serving in leadership, no one really cares about the emotions, but that is such a valuable aspect, especially cause you're ministering to so many more woman, that, um, if you don't deal with that— So I don't know, that's just, just the emotional side of a woman in ministry. I can't compare it to a male, but I think there are probably more woman than not that say, "boy I need a good cry after... you know almost every day."

Rev. Carla finds that clergy leadership does not value emotions, particularly Black women's emotional displays. Yet, she acknowledges that processing her emotions may enable her to be a more effective leader in this space, especially in preaching to mostly women. Rev. Carla does find that Black women's use of emotion is complex, likely because it invokes stereotypes. However, ministering draws upon the clergy's ability to connect emotionally with their followers, which she feels especially qualified to do.

Developing a theology about the collective experiences of Black women in general, and Black clergywomen in particular, appears to enable these women leaders to use Biblical knowledge to shape institutional norms about who can and should contribute to the work of the institution. As demonstrated in Rev. Carla's example, it is essential that Black clergywomen recognize and design their institutions to promote actions that enable them to be more

effective—such as having an opportunity to fully engage and honor their emotions as a part of the worship experience as well as in their lives as leaders of the institution.

Meeting the Needs. Finally, through seeking to redefine the institution through one's authenticity and through a theology of the collective, Black clergywomen may reshape their institutions through intentionally or unintentionally meeting the needs of their followers. As stated earlier, Pastor Steph sought to support women in ministry given that her individual truth and theology are aligned with the need to eradicate barriers that marginalize women. In her efforts to meet the needs of women in the church, she developed a network of women in ministry to increase their visibility and connect women to each other. Pastor Steph transformed religious institutions that oppress clergywomen through isolation by creating a networks that can increase visibility of women in church leadership and support them in their professional development.

Other clergywomen drew upon their personal experiences and non-religious vocational training to meet the needs of women in her church. Reflecting on a sermon that she delivered on sexual assault and violence, Rev. Dya noted:

> "The Black Lives Matter sermons I think go over really well. The sermons about sexual violence committed by men don't go over really well. The women in the congregation, a whole bunch of women came up to me and were like, 'thank you so much,' cause there are women survivors in the congregation and they need to know that they're being heard. But, I didn't hear it from any of my men."

Rev. Dya perceives that preaching on sexual assault and violence to the predominantly Black congregation was not well received by the men. On the other hand, she received expressions of gratitude from women survivors. It is interesting to consider how the needs of Black women in the church, particularly those related to sexual violence, may go unnoticed in predominately Black churches. She also perceives that the church is receptive to messages related to racial justice, perhaps because sexual violence could implicate persons in the church. Although these

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sermons may not be welcome by the men in the church, she is redefining the institution as a space where delivering sermons on a range of issues is normative and as a space where all of the constituents may be "heard."

Rev. Dr. Diane's personal needs to heal from her divorce and the death of a close family member led her to introduce a transformative new mode of ministry (i.e., the Stephen's Ministry) to her church. The Stephen's Ministry (named after one of the early founders of the Christian Church) uses a discipleship model where trained members of the church ministry are dispatched to train others in the church to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-Centered care to people who are hurting. In describing her development of the Stephen's ministry, she states:

> "Another thing we did some of the members here had a desire to start what was called an um…a Stephen ministry here. Have you heard of the Stephen ministry? [me: "No"]. Okay, I'll tell you about that… Um they are basically a ministry of presence…I was bit instrumental with that. The Stephen ministry you do not find too much in Black churches. [If you] went through the loss of loved one or it could be a divorce…and you're having a hard time, you know, kind of getting past the grief or the trauma. You have a Stephen minister. That person will meet with you and walk with you in the ministry of presence, a kind of spiritual presence. It can be um, a weekly get together. And, um, walk with you for a year through your grieving process. Um, so we have that ministry here."

Training "Stephen's Ministers" helped Rev. Dr. Diane expand opportunities for members of the congregation to heal from their own experiences of hurt. Rev. Dr. Diane cited the creation of this ministry as one of the ways that she has been effective as an executive minister, namely by executing the vision of her senior pastor. Furthermore, she drew upon her own needs as a divorcee to implement a divorce ministry, demonstrating the creativity that may emerge from otherwise marginalizing conditions. Through these actions she helped to create a more compassionate institution—one that met the needs of her congregation.

Meeting their own needs as well as the needs of the members of their worship communities reshaped how their organizations operate. The needs that these clergywomen tend

to address include a range of issues plaguing underrepresented groups including sexual violence and divorce. Through their actions, these clergywomen created paths for leading effectively as marginal persons, and opportunities to support others within their organizations. In sum, these women used their positions as marginalized persons to cultivate their own and other peoples' awareness of particular needs, and to redesign religious organizations as spaces to meet unmet needs. By acknowledging the ways in which they may or not be allowed to express their whole selves, Black clergywomen may identify unmet needs in the institution. As leaders of this space, these women may use their current tools (e.g., theology) or develop new structures (e.g., Stephen's Ministry) that enable them to be more effective at work and to better serve their constituents. Through drawing on their marginality, these Black clergywomen also use their power in their sermons, ministries, and personal calling to create stronger links between and more opportunities for Black women in ministry.

Discussion

In this chapter, I investigated how Black clergywomen's meaning making about their marginality shape their perceived impact on the spaces in which they lead. Through this in-depth examination of the narratives of a sub-sample of clergywomen, I found that understanding their marginality alerts Black clergywomen to the persistence of institutional barriers within their churches. As illustrated in Pastor Steph's examples, these barriers include normalizing male leadership and imposing a gender hierarchy on clergywomen who seek advancement. Despite encountering obstacles, these Black clergywomen perceived themselves as critical lovers of religious institutions. Articulating how religious institutions routinely marginalize them empowered these Black clergywomen in the sample to implement changes that uphold the values of their churches. Further, as the Black clergywomen in the sample eradicate barriers imposed on

them, they also implement changes in the institution. These changes may include disclosing stigmatizing information to their followers in order to position justice-work as part of God's mission.

In this study, I find that Black clergywomen develop the capacity to effect change by perceiving their institutions as marginalizing, and using their marginality to transform their organizations. Transformation indicates that these Black clergywomen are not seeking to move out of the margins to the center of the current hetero-patriarchal religious institution that they work, but create new institutional logics to guide the knowledge, identity, and practice of their churches. Some of these new actions include advocating for inclusion of women in clergy, engaging in justice-work, and changing cultural practices that normalize particular identity groups. Collectively, this study demonstrates how multiply marginalized leaders make sense of their marginality towards revising and disrupting religious institutions.

CHAPTER 6:

Discussion

This study aimed to understand how Black clergywomen make meaning of their

marginality, how the meanings that that make of marginality affect both their construction of

positive work identities and the perceived impact of their marginality on their organizations (e.g.,

church).

Extant research on identity construction begins with the argument that individuals desire

to know who they are and why they exist. Humanist scholars suggest that individuals fulfill their

existential desires by perceiving their identity and purpose positively (Giddens, 1991). Thus,

identity theories broadly examine how individuals construct, evaluate, and depend on their social

identities and roles to cultivate positive outcomes (Alvesson et al., 2008; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel &

Turner, 1987). One domain in which people may conceive themselves positively and develop a

sense of purpose is through their work. Organizations provide means to achieve one's basic

needs (e.g., earning an income). Organizations also provide contexts in which people can

cultivate identities that are imbued with worth and dignity (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Hodson,

2001). Based on the premise that organizations provide space for individuals to construct

positive identities, Dutton and colleagues (2010) conceptualize a four-part typology to identify

the facets of a positive work identity as a mechanism for generating social resources.

Specifically, individuals may imbue their work identity with virtuous qualities that coincide with

generative workplace behaviors (i.e., I am 'compassionate', therefore I demonstrate concern

towards my colleagues; Frost, Dutton, Worline, & Wilson, 2000). Persons may also perceive that

their work, personal, and social identities enhance feelings of self-worth (Gecas, 1982; Hogg &

Terry, 2000) and are progressing towards a more ideal self that aligns with internal and external

demands (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt, 2000). Finally, individuals may perceive that their multiple

identities are organized in a way that promotes feelings of distinctiveness, belongingness, and

complementarity (Kreiner et al., 2006). This typology provides a foundation in which to study

individual sensemaking processes for constructing positive work identities.

  One limitation of the positive work identity framework is the lack of focus on the

sociopolitical location of individual employees and the ways in which sociopolitical positioning

may impact their access to a) positive identity content, and b) the legitimacy of their claims to

positive work identities. Of particular concern in this study is a focus on the question of how

persons who exist at the intersection of multiple identities that are marginalized in society come

to construct positive work identities. Given this focus, I incorporate intersectionality as a

theoretical and analytic approach to better understand the positive work identity construction

process among Black women in leadership positions. Focusing on Black women's work

experiences helped Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) formulate intersectionality theory to explicate

how power embedded within institutions—as opposed to solely residing within the individual—

lead to profoundly different experiences at the intersection of social identities (Holvino, 2010).

Intersectionality theory recognizes that sexism and racism interact in ways that uniquely

marginalize Black women, which I find limits their access to and enactment of positive identity

attributes in the workplace. Marginality is conceptualized as (1) a structural condition in which

Black women lack access to economic and social resources for upward mobility (Collins, 1990);

(2) a psychological orientation in which Black women may perceive that they exist at the

margins of two or more cultures (Bell, 1990); and (3) a way of life in which Black women exploit social institutions to live meaningful lives (Hall & Fine, 2005). Intersectionality offers a useful framework for understanding how marginality affects Black clergywomen's ability to construct positive work identities. For example, Black women are overrepresented in devalued, low wage jobs as a result of gender and racial occupational segregation (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Yap & Konrad, 2009). Because of the overrepresentation of Black women in these low-wage, low stats positions, the relatively few Black women in powerful high status positions are likely to be misidentified and stereotyped as holding lower status positions (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). Working under these conditions may impact Black women's ability to accrue esteem-enhancing qualities from their jobs. However, Crenshaw (1991) asserts that Black women's marginality not only elucidates oppressive social structures, but could also serve as a "source of social empowerment and reconstruction" (p. 1242). This same perspective is advanced in the positive marginality framework (Hall & Fine, 2005). Following from this positive marginality perspective this study examines Black women's subjective experiences of their marginality, explores how their understandings of their marginality affects their construction of positive work identities, and explores the extent to which and ways in which their meaning making of marginality informs their perceptions of their impact on their organizations.

In order to study marginality in leadership and its subsequent effects on individuals' positive work identity construction and perceived impact on their organizations, I examine the experiences of Black clergywomen. Churches are a significant aspect of Black women's cultural milieu. Churches serve as a space in which Black women can cultivate virtuous qualities (Gilkes, 2001; Higginbotham, 1993), develop and enact organizing skills (Gilkes, 2001), and cope with life stressors (Jacqueline S. Mattis, 2002). Despite these life enhancing attributes of church, it is

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also a space in which Black women's formal leadership identities are challenged, devalued, and marginalized (Collins, 1998; Wiggins, 2005). Black clergywomen are slowly breaking through stained glass ceilings in Protestant churches (Adams, 2007; Chaves, 1997) encountering sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism along the way (McKenzie, 2011; Smith, 2013).

In this chapter, I summarize the findings of the study, and demonstrate how these findings challenge and elaborate theories of positive work identity construction, marginality, intersectionality, sensemaking, and leadership. I integrate the findings to generate an inductive theory of how marginalized employees use their marginality to engage in identity work and institutional work to construct positive identities and institutions. I discuss the limitations of this study, as well as the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications for investigating leadership among marginalized employees. I conclude this chapter by sharing future directions of this work.

Summary of Findings in Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, I explored the question, "How do Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their marginality inform their development of positive work identities?" I drew from Black clergywomen's sensemaking processes to understand how they experience marginality at work, and how they move from making sense of their marginality to constructing a positive leadership identity. The thematic findings of the study are presented in Table 5.2. Through the IPA, I uncovered that Black clergywomen articulate their marginality by first noticing the ways in which their gender and racial identities are marginalized in this profession. Making sense of this reality encouraged these Black clergywomen to reflect on their internal beliefs, atypical career experiences, and moments where women were explicitly denounced as clergy. Second, Black clergywomen considered aspects of clergy that positioned them as marginal to the mainstream.

Being "in the room" as one or one of a few Black clergywomen served a reminder of their low status. Further, Black clergywomen's marginal positions led to internal conflicts regarding their inability to fulfill their own and societal expectations of their gender, race, and profession simultaneously. In order to construct themselves positively at work, Black clergywomen identified ways to embrace their marginality as allowing them to enact their agency to open the structural and socially constructed "box" that limits opportunities for Black clergywomen. Further, embracing their marginality increased the notion that Black clergywomen may "bloom" or thrive in oppressive contexts, and consider the embodiment of their physical bodies and marginalized identities (e.g., "Black woman") as spaces to defy institutional norms that marginalize women leaders.

These findings make several contributions to the literature on constructing positive work identities. First, progress toward a positive work identity is inhibited by Black clergywomen's schematic representations of clergy. Internalized beliefs regarding who clergy are and how they behave (i.e., "masculine," "quiet") are powerful schemas that lead these women to question the legitimacy and authenticity of their own and other women's calling to the clergy. It is plausible that the idea of Black clergywomen—particularly in visible leadership roles—may be such an anomaly that some Black clergywomen perceive these roles as unattainable (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016), leading them to question the validity of the calling. In order for Black clergywomen to perceive their calling as part of their identity (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997), they must "wrestle" with their schematic representations of clergy to make room for themselves. Thus, for Black clergywomen, constructing a positive work identity must account for internal "sensebreaking" (Pratt, 2000) of previously held ideas of clergy.

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In addition to marginality affecting perceptions of their identity as growing, wrestling internally with marginality impacts Black clergywomen's ability to balance and organize their social identities as complementary with their professional identity. This study departs from previous research of professional identity construction among underrepresented people (Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2009) in that it attends to how Black women grapple with their own competing desires rather than managing others' impressions of them. These women describe the ongoing action of "wrestling" with demands that they place on themselves, such as being a mother and a professional. This manifests within their narratives where these women express desires to wholly participate in both public (e.g., clergy) and private (e.g., motherhood, home) spheres. Rather than perceiving these roles as mutually exclusive, these women allow the tension to exist simultaneously.

In addition to these elaborations of positive identity construction research, these findings also demonstrate the usefulness of intersectionality theory in organizational behavior research. Black clergywomen in the study noticed and labeled their marginality, and described their experiences of privilege and oppression at the intersections of their various social identities. For instance, Rev. Dr. Ariel avoided barriers against clergywomen in South Africa through her nationality as an American. Although she benefited from the church privileging of her nationality over gender, her experience illustrates how separating social identities can keep oppressive ideologies intact through perpetuating representational regimes about the abilities of particular identity groups over others. In this instance, the notion that women are incapable of preaching, but Americans can, attaches ideological beliefs of presumed abilities that increase opportunities to develop skills and advance for those in higher status social identity groups.

Importantly, the findings of this study complicate intersectionality theory in management scholarship by demonstrating how individuals' social identities may be used to disrupt institutions and organizations. Rev. Dr. Patricia uses her own experiences and positioning as a Black woman to challenge Biblical interpretations regarding ideal womanhood and manhood. Doing so challenges the foundational teachings of the Bible and disrupts the patriarchal authority established by existing readings of this sacred text. This challenge is risky because in challenging this foundational reading and text she challenges the core structures and ideologies of the organizational system in which she participates as a clergywoman. However, this challenge is what allows her to "boldly" exist as a Black woman. Thus, my findings suggest that in order to assert their own power Black women leaders may be forced to make the invisible processes and norms that marginalize Black women visible. In doing so they risk exposing and dismantling the pillars of the systems of social hierarchy that are central to the organizations in which they work.

Rev. Dr. Ariel's example of her treatment "in the room" highlights the reality that identities are contextually situated and the ability of any individual to exercise power or to enact a positive identity in work spaces depends on the composition of the groups in these spaces and on the ways that power is used by others to reinforce oppression and privilege (Yuval-Davis, 2006). As the only ordained Black clergywoman on her staff, Rev. Dr. Ariel was exposed to sexual harassment in casual conversation with the other Black male clergy. The man who compared preaching to sex saw Rev. Dr. Ariel's gender as both worthy of apology for his comments and—based on Ariel's interpretation—as intimately tied to her sexuality. Dr. Ariel's experience reiterates the point that even in a space occupied by Black men, Black women are not viewed as deserving of protection and modesty conferred to White women, but are stereotyped

as sexualized which increases their exposure to unwanted and uncivil sexual attention (Buchanan et al., 2008).

The actions taken by Black clergywomen to negotiate the challenges associated with their marginality contribute to both positive identity construction and intersectionality theories. "Opening the box" reflects Black clergywomen's agentic efforts to dismantle the socio-structural conditions that marginalize them as women and as leaders. This box consists of their internal beliefs about who can be clergy and their analysis of the treatment they receive from external forces when they attempt to present themselves as clergy. In order for these women to actively deconstruct norms and ideologies of professional identity legitimacy (i.e., ideas about who can be clergy), they must recognize that their identities are neither exclusive nor discrete (Crenshaw, 1989), and must embrace their presence in the profession as "lived ministry" as opposed to "performance ministry." Taking up their work as "lived ministry" requires that these women develop a critical consciousness (Freire, 1987) with respect to how their organization oppresses Black women. Being equipped with this critical consciousness enables them to embrace the aspects of their identity that are devalued as clergy, and allows them to use marginality as sites for critiquing and challenging their institutions. Women who were able to embrace who they are described themselves as seeing their marginality (e.g., their pregnancy, being a Black woman) as consistent with being worthy, loved, and valued; virtuous content that they may attach to their work identity.

Importantly, these women's efforts to deconstruct and make meaning of their marginality is deeply contextual. The theme of "blooming where I am planted" implicates context. In particular, this theme implicates social systems as positioning Black women in organizations that challenge and undermine them through normalizing racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism

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within organizational culture. These contextual realities seem beyond these women's control. However, the notion of "blooming" suggests that Black clergywomen possess optimism and resolve to flourish despite working in oppressive contexts. Optimism/hope (i.e., the expectation that because of God, things will work out well in the future) is a key theme in African American religiosity (Jacqueline S. Mattis, Fontenot, Hatcher-Kay, Grayman, & Beale, 2004), and this belief enables people of faith to cultivate personal resilience. An optimistic perspective may decrease a sense of focus on the need for favorable external conditions, and may increase attention to the power of the divine to actualize one's purpose in any context.

Although the spaces (e.g., churches, work groups) in which women work are important contexts through which they try to achieve change, their bodies also represent an important context through which they experience sensemaking about their marginality and through which they enact change. Embodying marginality through their physical bodies and social identities presents a unique way for Black clergywomen to cultivate and enact their power. Black clergywomen associate themselves and their experiences with Mary, the mother of Jesus, which gives them resources from an authoritative text (i.e., the Bible) to define women's bodies in general, and their bodies in particular, as sacred and natural as opposed to shameful and sexualized. Further, embracing their intersecting social identities and refuting limiting Biblical interpretations of womanhood equips Black clergywomen to challenge and reject unattainable standards of femininity and masculinity.

According to socially constructed leader identity models, leader identity claims are validated when individuals come to fit a prototypical leader identity schema (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Hogg, 2001). For Black clergywomen the prototypical clergy leader identity (e.g., White, male, heterosexual) is reinforced through their internal cognitive schemas and through

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interfacing with external barriers that remind them that they do not conform to the image of clergy. I argue that Black clergywomen use their experiences of marginality to make sense of and enact leadership from the margins. Centering on their unique experiences problematizes a prototypical leader identity for clergy by demonstrating that existing leader identities are racialized, gendered, classed, and heterosexual. Thus positioning marginality as an interpretive lens embedded within Black clergywomen leaders' sensemaking processes helps make visible the hegemonic power embedded in organizations that oppress those who are not White males.

Findings from this study demonstrate that Black clergywomen leaders employ efforts to shape their work environment by engaging in *identity work* through revising, redefining, and maintaining a sense of self that is worthy and favorably regarded (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008). Identity work is an example of social-symbolic work in that it is a purposeful effort to manipulate symbolic aspects (e.g., language) of one's social context or one's social identities. In this study, Black clergywomen exert agency to manipulate their marginality in order to flourish in oppressive environments.

Chapter 4 explored how Black clergywomen make sense of their marginality to construct positive work identities. As church leaders, I sought understanding for how their sensemaking of marginality may affect their perceived impact on their institutions and churches. I explored this question in Chapter 5.

Summary of Findings in Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, I investigated the question: "How does Black clergywomen's sensemaking of their marginality shape their perceived impact on the spaces in which they lead?" Using IPA, I find that Black clergywomen perceive that their marginality intentionally and unintentionally shapes their institutions through highlighting the persistence of institutional structures and

processes that serve as barriers affecting their lives. These women encountered inequity and were subject to biases, especially when they "stepped out" of the boundaries around women's place in the leadership hierarchy of the church. Making the decision to continue work in these institutions encouraged Black clergywomen to position themselves as "critical lovers" of their churches. This stance describes Black clergywomen's complex relationship to their institution as consciously aware of the ways in which the institutions serve as marginalizing forces, yet committed to effecting change by explicitly owning their truth, seeking opportunities to transform their organizations from within, and holding themselves and their organizations accountable for intentionally engaging in diversity and justice work. Using this critical stance enabled Black clergywomen to reshape their organizations by authentically expressing their values and concerns, developing a theology that supports their claims for authenticity as Black clergywomen, and meeting their own needs and the needs of those in their church through drawing attention to issues that affect marginalized groups. Collectively, Black clergywomen's meaning making of their own marginality creates pathways for them to effect change in their organizations.

The findings from this study contributes to extant theories of intersectionality and positive work identity construction. I expound on three contributions in the following sections. First, Black clergywomen perceive that their marginality impacts their structural context through the inequities they encounter. Pastor Steph perceives that women of color are routinely selected to lead a "dying" church because organizations are desperate. Failing companies tend to select outside leaders during a decline (Schwartz & Menon, 1985), and recent studies suggests that women and racial/ethnic minorities are most often appointed as leaders in these situations. This dynamic is known as the "glass cliff" phenomenon (Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Haslam,

2005). Empirical studies indicate that women and ethnic minorities' leadership styles are

presumed to be best suited for crises (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010). Importantly, while

studies have highlighted the realities of the glass cliff phenomenon, none have attended to the

ways that Black women leaders make meaning of being placed in failing institutions. The present

study elaborates on this phenomenon by incorporating Black women leaders' subjective meaning

making about finding themselves in failing institutions. According to Pastor Steph, Black

clergywomen may feel that they have no other options via which to fulfill their calling to pastor a

church. Indeed, she states that the glass cliff is so familiar that some women are beginning to

normalize their "plight" as part of God's will. However, Pastor Steph explicitly names the

phenomenon of placing Black clergywomen in struggling congregations as not happenstance, but

a function of their intersecting social identities. She indicates that in her experience Black

churches push back against Black women senior pastors because of their gender and failing

White churches will reach out to women of color leaders as a "last resort". This phenomenon is

apparent across other industries that appoint women and ethnic minorities as they company

experiences hardship. Thus, the glass cliff seems to be inevitable and primarily part of the

racialized and gendered hierarchies embedded in religious institutions.

I link these structural inequalities to Black clergywomen's construction of their work

identities as growing or progressing towards an "ideal" self. Feeling called to pastor a church

reflects Black clergywomen's desired self, yet structural barriers may affect their ability to fulfill

that identity. In order for Black clergywomen to perceive themselves as growing, they must first

consider the social structures of churches and religious organizations that affect their internal

sensemaking process. Doing so may unearth unique perspectives to explain how to navigate their

current landscape. For Pastor Steph, this involved developing a theology that supports the idea of

women ministers as "called and equipped by God." She further questions whether Christians identify with their organization as God's "hands and feet" to carry out his mission to "help break down barriers, to help create opportunity, to help advocate" for clergywomen. Thus, Black clergywomen must consider how their religious institutions affects and offers them tools (e.g., theology) to perceive themselves as progressing towards an ideal self.

The second contribution of this research is what happens when Black clergywomen step out of their "place" or boundaries." Participants reported experiencing backlash after seeking a higher position. Although research on backlash facing women in leadership positions is well supported (Phelan, Moss-Racusin, & Rudman, 2008), few studies capture the subjective sensemaking of women who are *put back into place* after vying for a senior leadership position. This experience did not deter Pastor Steph from seeking to advance, but she did not stay within that church, possibly to avoid further mistreatment from the congregation. According to Pastor Steph's narrative, Black women in the church primarily expressed disdain at her efforts to seek the pastoral position of the church. The Black women members' actions suggest that patriarchal beliefs about leadership are so embedded into the fabric of religious institutions that even women come to uncritically acts as gatekeepers of these patriarchal traditions. Further, evidence of within group backlash illustrates the reality that efforts to eradicate inequality by developing empathy and increasing similarities between groups may be ineffective (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner, Shnabel, Saguy, & Johnson, 2009). Such efforts are often grounded in the presumption that backlash is being delivered by out-group members.

Considering the relationships between the Black clergywomen and the persons that reinforce institutional inequity (mostly other Black women) also contributes a new perspective within intersectionality theory. It is presumed that those engaged in acts of oppression are

members of a more powerful outgroup. However, these Black clergywomen's experiences push us to consider how internalized racism, sexism, classism and heterosexism may shape individuals' use of power against those who exist at the same intersections, and who are therefore affected by the same oppressive sociopolitical conditions these Black clergywomen face. Indeed, as Rev. Nicole notes, even in congregations with Black women senior pastors and clergy, congregations may push back against the adoption of an inclusive theological approach. In addition, Pastor Steph illustrated how members of her former church, comprised of mostly Black women, reacted negatively to her seeking advancement and instead defaulted to the gender dynamics in place. These findings highlight the point that eradicating systemic inequality requires structural changes as opposed to merely altering interpersonal interactions. Proposed structural changes move beyond intersectional analyses that frame dynamics exclusively in terms of in-group/out-group interactions, and instead grapple with the ways that historically situated group dynamics shape the ways in which members of those groups may deploy power in ways that work against their own interests and their own well-being.

Within the positive identity construction framework, Black clergywomen who seek advancement may receive less favorable evaluations from others, especially because ambitious women are perceived as lacking warmth and kindness (Phelan et al., 2008). Being mindful of moments along Black clergywomen's career trajectory that engender differential treatment from the congregation will me an important mechanism for constructing esteemed work identities.

A third contribution of my findings centers on the concept of authenticity and its relevance for women's ability to effect change in their institutions. Positive organizational scholarship promotes authenticity as a key mechanism for cultivating high quality connections and engagement at interpersonal and individual levels (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). These findings

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extend this perspective by indicating that although the process of behaving authentically is sometimes potentially marginalizing, Black clergywomen assert that their authentic behavior facilitates institutional changes. For example, Rev. Dr. Diane demonstrated that knowledge she gleaned from her divorce allowed her to creatively merge two congregations. Similarly, Rev. Dya used her own reflections on her personal experience of sexual assault to reimagine the church as a space that could and should affirm the experiences of other women in her church by explicitly discussing and condemning such behavior through sermons. Being authentic incurs some risk, such as potentially conforming to stereotypes, but taking those risks appear to be a requirement for successfully using one's marginality to transform one's context.

One mechanism linking authenticity to institutional transformation may be present in the utility of one's social identities. Recent scholarship on social identity resourcing suggests that Black clergywomen may perceive their racial and gender identities as "generative mechanisms… to create new resources" (Creary, 2016, p. 25) at work. Some of these resources include creativity, inclusive perspectives of the Bible and theology, and holding themselves and their church accountable to intentional diversity and justice work. Further, choosing to perform their identity as authentic Black women in clergy may alter institutional norms by challenging the schematic representations of clergy that normalize male leadership. This includes how they choose to dress, style their hair, and the topics they focus on in their sermons. Furthermore, being authentic as Black women increases the salience of their gender and racial identities in leadership, and raises social and political questions regarding interpretation of the Bible and God's will for how women should exercise their talents in the church. Therefore, Black clergywomen may inadvertently position themselves as institutional change agents within churches and denominations (Creed, et al., 2010).

Findings from this study suggest that Black clergywomen may use their marginality to develop meaning for how they may affect their institutions. Engaging in this practice aligns with what Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) define as institutional work, or "the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions" (p. 215). Black clergywomen's sensemaking about marginality and their construction of positive work identities reflect the "micro-processes" or everyday behaviors that they engage in to effect change in their institutions (Powell & Colyvas, 2008). For instance, presenting their authentic self in environments that devalue traits associated with Black women disrupts organizational norms regarding who clergy are (Acker, 1990). These acts of institutional disruption may demonstrate how gendered and racialized religious institutions are.

This study contributes empirical evidence for how leaders with multiply marginalized identities utilize their power to resist oppressive ideologies and transform their organizations. Overlaying Black clergywomen's marginality due to their social location with their ability to construct positive work identities demonstrates the dual effects of structural inequality and sensemaking in the lives of Black women leaders. Based on my findings, it appears that Black clergywomen's sensemaking about their marginality is necessary for them to construct positive work identities, and to shape their institutions as spaces where they might present their authentic selves. Taken together, the findings from this study compel us to consider marginality as integral to Black clergywomen's construction of positive work identities. Further, the findings point to the foundations for a new, inductive theory of marginality "work".

Toward an Inductive Theory of Working the Margins

Centering Black clergywomen's experiences and interpretations of marginality in leadership, and engaging these interpretations through phenomenological methods, enables the

construction of an inductive theory that captures the interplay between intersectionality, sensemaking, and positive work identity construction among Black women. Using the findings from this study as a launching point, I propose a process model for how individuals may see their work identity as positive through working the margins (see Figure 1).

Based on these findings, I conceptualize marginality as a mechanism by which multiple marginalized leaders may: (1) engage in identity work to experience liberation from marginality and construct positive work identities; and (2) conduct institutional work to dismantle institutional practices that are marginalizing. This proposed framework emphasizes how persons from multiple marginalized groups may subvert structural oppression and use marginality to achieve positive outcomes. Specifically, this framework emphasizes marginalized persons' agency within the social-symbolic structures that both constrain individuals and present opportunities for change.

This process model suggests that using their marginalized status as a critical lens through which to make sense of the world equips Black women with cognitive, moral, emotional and social tools to construct positive work identities and transform the organizations in which they work. The model begins making sense and extracting meaning for how one is marginalized. Noticing one's intersectional marginality involves awareness of structural inequality from one's own career experiences, and examining internalized schemas that legitimizes particular types of leaders in one's field, such as seeing a typical clergy leader as White and male. Perceiving how marginality manifests at the intersection of two or more of one's social identities may lead individuals to develop critical consciousness that their organizations are crucibles of systemic oppression including racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism. This level of consciousness

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increases awareness of inequality in the social structural environment, reinforcing this cycle of intersectional marginality.

The key mechanism that enables marginalized persons to perceive their work identities as positive lies in the agency of "work". Actors use identity work to revise, redefine and better align their social identities and their professional identities. Previous research suggests that members of marginalized identity groups may construct positive identities to compensate for the devaluation of their social identities (Roberts et al., 2009). However, identity work does not enable these persons to construct positive work identities. Instead, Black clergywomen would be limited to performing behaviors that are aligned with the positive aspects of their identity (e.g., clergy) instead of perceiving their marginal identities as positive. Further, identity work focuses on the individual and does not restructure the social context to be more inclusive of their social identities. Essentially, identity work is limited to fulfilling intrapsychic needs and does not fully consider how acknowledging one's social location at the margins shapes their construction of positive work identities (Holvino, 2010).

For leaders with marginalized identities, the on-going development of critical consciousness may foster engagement in institutional work where they as marginalized persons seek to disrupt aspects of their institutions that perpetuate structural inequity. Such actions may transform institutions into spaces where leaders may use their subjective experiences to foster inclusion (Nilsson, 2015). Understanding the movement from critical consciousness to transformative institutional work requires that we understand how leaders access and implement the resources necessary to create, maintain and disrupt the institutions in which they work. Further, understanding this process requires that we consider how agency manifests for different

workplace actors, who have different kinds of formal leadership positions and varying levels of power.

The findings of this study suggest that in order for marginalized leaders to construct themselves positively, they must "work" their marginality to develop tools that enable them to conceive themselves positively and transform their institutions into spaces that is inclusive of their identities. Importantly, working one's marginality is not conceptualized as centering their identities or institutions, but creating new identity and institutional logics. The Black clergywomen in this study demonstrated their embodiment of marginality as a new way to cultivate positive work identities. Additionally, they draw upon their experiences of marginality to restructure their organizations as spaces that may critique and challenge oppressive ideologies embedded in their institutions.

Upon analyzing the narratives of these Black clergywomen, I identified four components of ways in which leaders with multiple marginalized identities may experience liberation and transform their institutions towards constructing positive work identities. First, individuals cognitively deauthorize oppressive ideologies that further marginalizes them. These ideologies may exist within individuals' schematic representations and societal discourse, and are pervasive enough so that they and other marginalized persons may unconsciously reinforce these views. Individuals must first begin to unlearn these beliefs. To transform the institutional structure in which one works, they also must challenge and delegitimize aspects of their social structural institution that produces oppressive beliefs.

The second component of working one's marginality focuses on conducting moral work or upholding justice, fairness, and equality. Moral work includes challenging authoritative practices, texts, and other routines of organizations due to their role in creating inequality. These

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authoritative practices may legitimize an individuals' power, such as the Bible granting clergy stewardship over churches. However, these same practices could operate to restrict marginalized persons from accessing and enacting various types of power. Moral work requires marginalized persons to hold their organizations accountable to justice, especially in regards to its role in marginalizing others. In this study, Black clergywomen were moved to refute interpretations of the Bible that required their submission to men. This position disrupted institutional mores regarding the interpretation of the text. The challenges that these women posed made the unjust and immoral practices of the institution visible. Members of the institution did not always respond favorably to these challenges--a fact that created new areas of conflict and new opportunities for leadership for these Black women leaders.

The third component of working one's marginality to achieve positive outcomes focuses on relational work. Marginalized persons must be mindful for how their critical consciousness impacts their relationship with other persons. As Pastor Steph articulated, it is the role of marginalized persons to advocate on behalf of the marginalized. On the other hand, some relationships with other marginalized actors may be contentious; indeed, the women in this study were the recipients of mistreatment primarily from other women and from other members of the African American community. Relational work involves awareness that members of one's own social identity groups may be facilitators of oppression. Marginalized leaders must also be mindful of how they may oppress other members of their social identity group. Collins (1990) warns that it is especially possible for marginalized persons to become the oppressor by ignoring how intersections of class, sexuality, and other less visible identities within their own groups creates profoundly different life experiences. Thus, marginality work requires that marginalized

leaders consider how their own identity construction and institutional transformations affect their relationships with others.

The final component of working one's marginality to construct positive work identities is emotional work. Unlike emotional labor (Grandey & Melloy, 2017), which involves commodification of individuals' emotions for profit (e.g., "service with a smile"), this emotional work focuses primarily on individuals' ability to speak their truth, regardless of how painful that process might be. Speaking one's truth increases one's vulnerability. However, such a stance can also unlock a sense of power for individuals to develop genuine and meaningful connections through developing companionate love and support with colleagues (O'Neill & Rothbard, 2017) and through unlocking one's own ability to love as well as criticize their institution (Brown, 2012). Few management studies consider the emotional aspects of work culture (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014). However, there is evidence that although work is a context that is very emotionally evocative (e.g., it is a space that generates such emotions as pride, frustration, and anger) marginalized employees are socialized to suppress their emotions at work (Wingfield, 2010). Acknowledging and incorporating emotion into this model of marginality work thus has to potential to explore how marginalized individuals liberate themselves to authentically express their emotions at work, and how emotions work to facilitate or undermine efforts to transform institutions.

Limitations

Although this study deepens our knowledge of marginality in leadership, it is not without limitations. First, qualitative research in general tends to rely on participants' retrospection, which raises questions about the accuracy of the data. Certainly, interviews are a common method for studying individual identity in organization studies (Alvesson et al., 2008) because

making sense of past experiences is generally integral to understanding experiences. This sensemaking approach coincided with my research focus, as I investigated how Black clergywomen interpret their experiences of marginality, and how marginality operates as a mechanism for constructing positive work identities and impacting their organizations. Therefore, despite its limitations, interviews were the ideal method for addressing the research questions that guided this work.

A second limitation of this study is the generalizability of findings across other populations. Qualitative research, in general, and IPA in particular, are not intended to build a generalizable account of marginality in leadership, but to produce an account that resonates with the participants' interpretations and is sufficiently supported with evidence for external readers to assess its credibility (Creswell, 2013; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that idiographic findings may generalize to theory or may transfer across contexts for a specific population. It is therefore possible that my proposed inductive model of marginality work which derives from Black clergywomen's construction of positive work identities is relevant across other professions and organizations (Collins, 1990; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). However, the extent to which the process model proposed in Figure 1 actually generalizes to the experience of positive leadership identity development among other African American women leaders, and among marginalized individuals who hold positions of leadership in religious and secular contexts should be explored empirically.

Third, the sampling frame for this study is a potential limitation. Selecting Black women church leaders could paint an overwhelmingly positive, agentic perspective of marginality given that clergy is considered a moral, virtues-based profession. Further, given the nature of their work, Black clergywomen are likely to be critically reflective, highly educated, and highly

articulate people, which could enable them to derive meaning from marginality to construct positive work identities. Black women working in professions where they are not regularly engaged critical sensemaking may find articulating their experiences of marginality difficult. Additionally, social justice is central in the work of the Black Church and in its constructions of what clergy should do. Therefore, Black clergywomen may be aware of structural marginality impacting the ways in which they may enact leadership. Making such structures and processes transparent in organizations with less explicit focus on social justice may require additional sensemaking on behalf of Black women in leadership positions. Finally, central to being called to clergy is feeling accountable to and led by a higher authority, which may help legitimize Black clergywomen's leadership in churches. Most professionals do not have access to a higher, morally based authority to rely on for legitimacy, making their ability to formulate positive identities that impact their institutions more challenging than Black clergywomen.

A fourth limitation includes how I framed my research questions. By taking a positive approach, I conceptualized Black clergywomen's sensemaking of marginality as an intentional process used construct positive work identities and positively impact religious institutions. On the one hand, this study departs from deficit models of persons from multiple marginalized social identity groups by taking a positive organizational scholarship lens. On the other hand, such a perspective limits the role of marginality within the sensemaking process as working towards moving Black clergywomen to the center as opposed to elucidating the structures that marginalize them. My analysis consisted of how Black clergywomen's marginality enabled them to flourish and thrive as opposed to viewing marginality as the space they occupy as leaders from underrepresented groups.

Despite these limitations, focusing on Black women's formal leadership in a culturally meaningful yet oppressive context (i.e., the church) offers an 'extreme context' in which to examine marginality and construction of positive identity construction. Scholars assert that theory building is best done in extreme contexts because the dynamics being studied are more visible in such contexts (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Centering Black clergywomen's leadership experiences demonstrates how the clergy identity is gendered, racialized, classed, and heterosexist. Further, capturing Black clergywomen's challenges in and perceived impact on their institutions supports the notions that institutions confer power and privilege to some social identity groups over others. Examining the extent to which the processes evident among Black women leaders in this extreme context also apply to leaders of other social identities who are underrepresented in a myriad of professions and organizations.

Implications

This study has multiple implications for theory, methodology, and practice related to workplace experiences. I explicate these implications below.

Theoretical. The majority of empirical, idiographic research about Black women's leadership appears in higher education journals rather than in journals in psychology (McCluney & Cortina, 2017) and management (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). The absence of focus on Black women in organizational theories renders their leadership experiences, and the structural conditions that they have to navigate in their efforts to foster positive work experiences, relatively invisible (V. Purdie-Vaughns & R. P. Eibach, 2008). The few empirical studies of Black women's leadership that do exist, rely heavily on theoretical models that tend to emphasize their deviance from the normative White male centered ideal leader (e.g., stereotype-content model; Rosette et al., 2016; Rosette et al., 2012; Livingston et al., 2010) rather than

accounting for the unique leadership styles and experiences of Black women. These previous studies tend to compare Black women's experiences to other social identity groups (e.g., White men) treating identity categories as equal (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009) rather than existing across a matrix of power and privilege (Bowleg, 2017; Collins, 1990).

These findings contribute to bodies of literature that center Black women's experiences to interrogate leadership in organizations. In this study, Black clergywomen work their marginal status to identify pathways for constructing positive work experiences. I find that Black clergywomen not only depend on how they are socialized to be "strong" to navigate their environments (Parker & ogilvie, 1996), but they justify their critiques of institutional norms as someone who is marginalized through adopting a moral stance. Additionally, some of the Black clergywomen in this sample perceived their calling to clergy as encompassing their multiple selves as opposed to separate cultures (E. L. E. Bell & S. M. Nkomo, 2001), and use their experiences at the intersection of these identities to transform their institutions. Further, these Black clergywomen identified practices within their institutions that challenged their legitimacy as clergy by emphasizing gendered norms and stereotypes of Black women. Rather than accommodating or resisting this discourse (Forbes, 2009), the women in this sample subverted these narratives to construct theological and moral arguments asserting themselves as powerful and virtuous women. These findings extend the majority cognitive frameworks for constructing positive identities by presenting the ways in which Black women embody marginality as a facet of seeing themselves positively.

This study nuanced marginality as both a condition of oppressive structures, and as tool for marginalized groups to construct themselves positively and shape their institutions. The positive aspects of living at the margins are fairly understudied in organizational contexts

(Streets, 2016) although the notion of Black women leaders leveraging their marginality for positive outcomes was conceptualized more than 30 years ago (A. Smith, 1986). I situate my investigation within the positive organizational scholarship literature (POS), which lacks explicit focus on the experiences of ethnic minority women at work (Rao & Donaldson, 2015). By explicating how marginality yields positive outcomes, I nuance the 'positive' in POS to reconsider assumptions regarding what is positive and instead consider for 'whom' and 'when' are the attributes we propose (e.g., thriving) positive.

The findings of this study also point to the usefulness of intersectionality theory in organizational theory. Examining Black clergywomen's subjective work experiences led to the development of a process model of marginality work that seeks to capture how multiply marginalized actors may construct positive work and leadership identities. Interestingly unlike previous investigations of LGB clergy in management leadership Black clergywomen's gender and racial identities supposedly do *not* inspire religious doctrinal sanctions against holding positions of leadership in the church (e.g., Creed et al., 2010). However, these women did experience marginality and oppressive work conditions due to their interlocking identities. Importantly, unlike studies that focus on singular social identities (e.g., sexuality), in keeping with the tenets of intersectionality theories I did not parse out Black clergywomen's social identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual identity) from their professional (e.g., clergy) identities in order to demonstrate how their access and enactment of power is steeped in power inequality. Instead, I root this work in the assumption that organizational norms function in complex ways across identity locations (P. S. Parker, Jiang, McCluney, & Rabelo, 2017).

This study highlights the role of embodiment in sensemaking and identity construction. Societal discourse of Black women's bodies as oversexualized, immoral, and a "problem"

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manifests within patriarchal institutions, including in the Black Church (Turman, 2013). This is evident in some interpretations relating women's bodies as causing others to stumble or being proximal to sin as descendants of Eve (McKenzie, 2011). These Black clergywomen's narratives highlight bodily issues that affect Black women in leadership across organizations including pregnancy, size, skin tone, and sexuality. Some of the Black clergywomen in the sample see their bodies as a space to challenge religious institutions seeking to control the appearance and performance of Black woman-ness in church leadership. Historically, Black women's bodies have represented immorality, hypersexuality, unusual strength, and deviance from 'true' womanhood (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope, & Belgrave, 2014; Baker, Buchanan, Mingo, Roker, & Brown, 2015; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Perkins, 1983; Welter, 1966), making them incapable of achieving standards of beauty, gentility, and fragility that would grant them some interpersonal and organizational protections. Black women in clergy encounter these historical regimes particularly because of their leadership in institutions based in virtues and morality. These women are aware that their bodies are sites for contemplation of deep moral issues embedded in religious institutions, especially in the Black church that was founded on principles of justice, but reinforces subjugation of women (Turman, 2013). In this study, Black clergywomen effectually transform their institutions by embodying marginalizing discourse that challenges their legitimacy and authenticity to be in their bodies as spiritual leaders. Further, given that churches consist of majority women, Black clergywomen exercise their authority to speak against violations to Black women's bodies and the hypervisibility of their bodies in leadership. Embodiment is generally an understudied phenomenon in organizational leadership. Attending to this topic may deepen our knowledge of leaders from multiple marginalized social

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identities who occupy positions of power in institutions that normalize particular bodies (e.g., White and male) as leaders.

This study also extends the propositions of the positive work identity construction framework by accounting for social structural influences on individual sensemaking processes. Centering on the experiences of marginalized leaders illustrates how hegemonic ideals challenge individuals' ability to access positive identity content and perceive that their work identities are esteem-enhancing. Although it is possible to cultivate meaningful lives and identities at the margins (Hall & Fine, 2005), this study demonstrates radical possibilities for members of marginalized groups in spaces that they create. Specifically, I found that the Black clergywomen in this study did not seek to move towards the center of their institutions by constructing positive identities that decentralize their low status identities. Instead, they embrace their marginality to guide their transformation and creation of an ongoing, evolving institution that does not centralize one particular identity. Thus, working the margins is a multilevel approach that considers individual understanding of their structural environment as impacting their construction of positive work identities.

Methodological. Broadly, this study takes a unique approach to investigating leadership in organizations. I prioritized an existentialist approach to the study of leadership in order to ground the questions within the experiences of marginalized employees. A significant part of understanding leadership involves interrogating the subjective experiences from the standpoint of the leader. Thus, in this study, I construct a frame for understanding the leadership experiences of Black women by centering their sensemaking about marginality as a key component for constructing positive work identities and shaping institutions. Taking this epistemological

approach provides a frame for understanding and theorizing Black women's leadership that is grounded in their lived experience rather than the experiences of White men.

IPA was a particularly useful framework to address my research question because it uplifts individual meaning making and interpretations of a phenomenon. These Black clergywomen have a discursive understanding of marginality in leadership that may apply across professional contexts. Through IPA, I co-constructed knowledge of marginality in leadership by reflecting on my previous leadership experiences in churches, and inviting this lens in my interpretation of the participants' stories. Similar to the Black clergywomen in this study, I have experienced marginality in churches, yet we maintained my involvement in religious institutions. This realization shaped my interpretation that persons with multiple marginalized identities may advance in organizations despite encountering inequities and biases. Specifically, being leaders of their respective churches did not shield these Black women from personally experiencing mistreatment nor from rubbing against institutional norms that challenge their legitimacy as clergy. Thus, I interpreted their sensemaking of marginality as discovering how they may exist in and possibly transform their organizations. It is plausible that my personal experiences obscured other ways that these Black clergywomen may make sense of their marginality, including the women who did not think of themselves as marginalized.

Given the potential of these findings to effect change in organizations, I encourage the use of phenomenological analysis in future investigations of identity and diversity in organizations to demonstrate how subjective work experiences implicate material, structural, and socio-psychological aspects of organizations as racialized, gendered, classed, and sexualized in ways that further marginalize Black women and other underrepresented groups. Future studies might implement a within person longitudinal design using experience sampling methodology

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(i.e., daily diary) to capture the nature and the frequency of leaders' experiences with marginality in the workplace. Focusing on how Black clergywomen describe and negotiate marginality in the moment as they engage in the everyday practice of leadership may reveal additional mechanisms that link their understanding of marginality in leadership beyond the current study.

Practical. I describe the implications of these findings for understanding positive leadership development outside of the church context. As articulated in Chapter 4, reflecting on one's work experiences may enable employees from underrepresented groups to identify the ways in which they are marginalized and ways in which they may cultivate positivity in these contexts. Sensemaking of one's own experiences, emotions, and internal beliefs may be quite powerful for leaders from marginalized groups to identify their needs from their institutions in order to work best. Being deliberate about this meaning making may encourage leaders to identify ways that they could also enact changes in themselves and in their organizations. As stated in the limitations section, Black women working in professions and organizations that do not routinely engage in critical reflection may find that engaging in sensemaking of marginality is difficult and not valued. In light of these findings, leadership development programs for individuals from underrepresented groups may not only work on molding employees for leadership positions, but seek these employees' insight on ways in which their organizations contribute to their marginal status.

At a structural level, it is imperative for organizations to identify how the mission and values of the organization, the personalities assigned to leaders, the cultural norms that may privilege members of specific identity groups, and their practices embedded into the fabric of the work may marginalize underrepresented leaders from underrepresented groups. Certainly, promoting underrepresented persons into positions of power does not change the oppressive

context without structural changes implemented from senior leadership. Therefore, organizations must be cognizant of the barriers that marginalized leaders face (e.g., being tasked with leading dying organizations), and must appreciate the various forms of labor in which underrepresented leaders must engage as part of their efforts to construct a positive leadership identity. Organizations that are serious about supporting the success of leaders who hold multiply marginalized identities must be intentional about exploring ways of facilitating structural changes, and ways of deploying resources to support the positive leadership development of these individuals.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I focus on how Black clergywomen's marginality influences their enactment of leadership, particularly to resist and transform the institutionalized power that privileges men and Whiteness in church leadership. This study deepens our understanding of marginality in leadership and provides a foundation of future research using intersectionality theory to interrogate power in organizations. Significant to this study is the distinction between being" marginalized as a structural condition from "living" at the margins, which may be psychological buffer that allows Black women to cultivate the tools they need for survival and enact power from where they are "planted." It is my hope that this work encourages more systematic investigation of how Black women navigate organizations, and how their marginality may enable to develop strength for resisting oppression.

TABLES

Table 3.1 Participant demographics

	Min.	Max.	Mean
Age	26	69	45 (approx.)
Tenure (current church) in years	2 months	15 years	5 years

Rank	Percentage	Frequency
Assistant Minister	36%	10
Associate Minister	32%	9
Executive Minister	7%	2
Senior Pastor	25%	7

Level of Education	Percentage	Frequency
Bachelor's (non-ministry)	14%	4
Master's degree (non-ministry)	3%	1
Master's of Divinity	50%	14
Doctorate (non-ministry)	3%	1
Doctorate of Ministry	18%	5
Other	11%	3

Racial composition of church	Percentage	Frequency	Geographic Location	Percentage	Frequency
Predominately Black	78%	22	Urban	57%	16
Predominately White	11%	3	Rural	25%	7
Multiracial	11%	3	Suburban	18%	5

Table 4.1 Sub-sample of participants

Name	Title	Denomination	Racial Composition of Church	Marginal Status
Ariel[*]	Executive Minister	Baptist	Predominately Black	Highest ranked woman
Keisha	Senior Pastor	Other [**]	Multiracial	First bisexual Black woman pastor
Brittney	Assistant Minister	United Church of Christ	Predominately Black	Bisexual, youngest minister
Sherry	Associate Minister	Baptist	Predominately Black	Solo Black woman minister
Jazmine	Assistant Minister	Episcopalian	Predominately White	First and solo Black woman minister
Patricia	Senior Pastor	Baptist	Predominately Black	First woman pastor
Angela	Assistant Minister	Baptist	Predominately Black	Second career, mental illness

[*]Focal participant; [**]Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) is a small, gay affirming denomination

Table 4.2 Summary table of Sensemaking of Marginality in Leadership

Theme	Sub-Theme and Core Elements	Representative Quotes
Noticing Marginality	*Internalized Beliefs* • Awareness of previous experiences, thoughts, or attitudes about clergy that marginalizes Black women	"What I remember is um I …was mentored in understanding what call is by my rector, like in the early 2000's. However um I also know that, because my mother hands me my journals from like junior high school that I would often write about how I wished I could be…I never realized I knew these words, "a minister," but those are men. Um and something, I would say I want to do something like this um… but I didn't know what to call it because I was probably convinced that ministers are men." (Reverend Jazmine)
	Atypical Career Experiences • Cues that they did not belong to the clergy profession • Underrepresentation of other Black clergywomen at particular levels	"I served as a single minister…being told that I couldn't go certain places with certain leaders because of what it would look like. While other male ministers got to go… to out of town revivals and that kind of thing. Um…having to ask for some security support because I was stalked by a person who's a member at that time. So I've seen all of that as a single minister and that vulnerability, and the… it takes so much work as a single woman in ministry because you can't be "steel-face" all the time. You have to be vulnerable with someone. Umm- so that process of discerning safe-spaces as a single person was really hard. I mean if not impossible, but it was hard." (Reverend Dr. Ariel)
	Encountering Barriers • Witnessing actions that limit women's access to clergy • Interpretation of institutional policies and stance towards particular groups (e.g., women, LGBT) affect opportunities for Black clergywomen	"I have also seen ageism with respect to women. I didn't answer my call until I was in my late 40s. And in [our city] we've had a big turnover of pastors of large churches who have retired, um, a couple who are deceased. And so who were they replaced with? Young Black males, some of whom have pastored maybe a small church for a few years. Some have been youth pastors. Some have been associates or whatever and you have got all of the female clergy here educated, been serving as associates for years, uh, who were never even considered. And with my own ears, I heard one of the senior pastors in the city, well respected and a major advocate for women in ministry. He talked about the criteria that he looked for or that he told the search committee to look for: "five years of pastoral experience, under 40 [years old], etc." But what stuck with was…the average woman is not accepting her call into the ministry until she is in her 40s or older. How were you to get five years of

		pastoral experience if you can't even get ordained because there are still churches that will not ordain women?" (Minister Angela)
Locating Self within Marginality	*Being "in the room"* • Being positioned as lower status and devalued in particular contexts • Surroundings signal lack of belonging to the profession	"At that point [the church in which she served as the interim pastor] reopened the search and this time I applied. And I didn't make their short list. Uh- which was insulting and painful. But… I think…I feel real affection for Hilary Clinton. Um- and I think some of it is cause of the story that I'm telling you. This way that you do…that as a woman. And for me this was not racial over there [because] this was a Black church. But you can actually be doing the work… and people can tell you, you ain't qualified for the job. And that's what they were saying, that I wasn't qualified for a job I was already doing." (Reverend Dr. Patricia)
	Wrestling with their self • Grappling with upholding standards for Black women and clergy • Internal dialogue to reconcile competing needs • Allowing seemingly paradoxical entities to exist simultaneously	"Um when you go through seminary…you come up against your traditions and things that you've just lived with. You come up against um, like "what do you really believe?" You come up against, like you're always battling with God, you're always, battling with the Divine. And then you add to that mix, you're battling with public perceptions of who you are. You're struggling to fit in. You want to get invited [to preach] because the only way to get better at preaching is to preach. And the only way to get invitations is to navigate the gatekeepers…often I feel like, I feel like I reflect on it a lot. And I have been most recently reflecting on it a lot. Because I feel like that invitation is a form of affirmation and I need to tease that out a little bit more in my own mind, but what does it mean to not be affirmed in a community that I would be critiquing anyway?" (Pastor Keisha)
Embracing Marginality	*Opening the "Box"* • Realizing one's agency, and actively using it to remove barriers imposed on Black clergywomen • Developing skill to recognize and dismantle the "box"	"I took a course [in seminary]. And um in our class [our instructor] talked about the lap cloth and that traditionally…they put lap cloths over the laps of the ladies so as to not entice the White overseers who were present for the worship service because Black women's sexuality was a threat to the White family…And I refuse to be condemned by...and called a threat to someone's family structure because I am a [Black] woman. That says to me that we have some training, some educating to do in church. And church is a microcosm of society. And so in much of the same way that integration happened and they just used to put Black people in white spaces and say we're integrated, all it did

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		was place Black people in hostile environments where they were not welcome and called it integration.…Likewise it's the same with the church. You can't just stick a woman in the pulpit and say that we are an inclusive congregation if you haven't spoken to the very real differences between having a woman in leadership and having men sit alongside her." (Reverend Sherry)
	"Blooming" where I am Planted • Optimistic for possibility to flourish in oppressive contexts • Perceiving one's location as beyond their control	"Things that I learned as a poor Black woman I was able to use in a struggling church because…since I joined, we've been struggling financially. Mass exodus of the White people, uh, who said — literally said that the church was becoming too Black… And as those people left, they took their money with them. So now you are left with seven and a half acres of land with a building…and our congregation could not sustain that type of upkeep plus pay a pastor. We had to lay off our administrative assistant. We had a paid minister of music. We had to lay her off and we have not been able to recover from that. So years later, we find our self here blessed because we were able to sell our property…What I was able to do…is you have to be able to look at, uh, $1,500 gas bill and you got like maybe $150 in your account and not drop to your feet and pass out, you know. I can handle that because that's not what I grew up with but I grew up with worrying from month to month, are we going to make ends meet? Are we going to be able to do this? Are we going to be able to do that? And so it didn't faze me like some of the other people who worked in finance." (Minister Angela)
	Embodying • Intentionally living within the margins of clergy profession • Perceiving that one's marginality is useful, necessary, and worthwhile	"[One of her friends] was helping organizing the African-American Women in Ministry conference that's under the UCC and she hit me up…me and 2 other women, we're all friends and we're all clergy and she was like "We need people to lead these workshops, would you guys be interested?" I'm doing one on the ways that… Black women are portrayed in various parts of culture and how that affects our racial, gender and spiritual identity… I used to be very bad at saying yes to things I shouldn't and being afraid to say yes to things I should and so people would take advantage of like how willing I was to do things. So now my rule is…I have a list of things that I care about…so I don't care if you're just doing something for women. If it does not benefit Black women, I'm not coming anywhere near it." (Minister Brittney)

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Table 5.1 Sub-sample of participants

Name	Title	Denomination	Racial Composition of Church	Perceived Impact of Marginality on Institution
Steph[*]	Senior Pastor	Baptist	Predominately Black	Shift in racial and class demographics
Carla	Associate Minister	United Church of Christ	Predominately Black	Redefining power as a choice
Dya	Associate Minister	Baptist	Predominately Black	Discuss sexual assault in pulpit
Alyssa	Senior Pastor	Presbyterian[**]	Predominately White	Style and focus of worship
Charity	Senior Pastor	Episcopalian	Predominately Black	Transform language and role for rector
Diane	Executive Pastor	Baptist	Predominately Black	Divorce and blended family to merge churches
Nicole	Assistant Minister	Other[**]	Predominately Black	Explicit womanist preaching

[*]Focal participant; [**]Predominately White denomination

Table 5.2 Summary table of Perceptions of Marginality Impacting Institutions

| Theme	Sub-Theme and Core Elements	Representative Quotes
Persistence of Institutional Barriers	*Perceived Inequity* • Increased vigilance to differential treatment as Black clergywomen compared to other clergy.	"I had spent a lot of time in meetings…talking about why would I need to be concerned about people liking me…they would say things to me like, "[Rev. Diane], you know, people saying you're not warm and fuzzy." So my first question to them was, "if I was the previous pastor," who was a man," did you asked him that? Because I have to stand firm and follow God's lead and make a decisions that needs to be made. Why is a requirement to be warm and fuzzy? I'm not here to be warm and fuzzy…I'm here to help you grow…I mean, it is very unfortunate as women in leadership roles, there are boundaries that we have to be more conscious about and strategic. Because there are some things that men in leadership don't have to entertain. Like it doesn't even enter their mind. But for women… who sometimes people see as weaker…you have to really stand up straight and say, "My job is the leader of this church and to be firm. Stand firm and we going to be okay, but you cannot place unfair expectations on me…that you would not place on a man." (Reverend Dr. Diane)
	Experiencing Bias • Mindful of mistreatment	"People assume that [the church and clergy] are in some special bubble cause we are led by an African-American, predominant female, [but] it doesn't keep us safe from a patriarchal society and all that patriarchal society has brought in terms of sex, sexuality…class issues…all of those things still come into play. It's just that who has the last say is a woman who, like me, is trying to navigate in a patriarchal society." (Reverend Nicole)
Critical Lover of the Institution	*Speaking Her Truth* • Expression of their experiences, although it may portray their institutions and communities negatively	"I think the concept of power. Just um, and just being empowered...sort of restoration of integrity. I saw God ... empowering me I guess... um to do a sermon on sexual assault... Um I'm a sexual assault survivor and um I can say for sure that when I wrote the choosing powerlessness sermon um, I didn't realize that many of the reasons I felt powerless was because of ...the power that was taken away from me when I was a teenager and experienced that. I had not even named it, I didn't name it until my 30s.

	• Using one's truth to implicate social institutions (e.g., church) as perpetuating inequality	Because at the time it would have been called statutory rape. And so, and I think in the African American community, and in fact a psychologist said this to my ex-husband, we were in counseling as we were moving through out divorce and... he minimized the sexual assault by saying, "well you know in the African American community it is common that older men you know, have relations with younger woman and they don't necessarily, nobody says anything, it's just a you know, kind of, you know or whatever." So powerlessness and then from that also growing what it means to be a person fully restored to integrity. You know, like full power, whatever the case may be." (Reverend Carla)
	Transforming from Within the Institution • Seeking opportunities to alter the organizational culture and structure using processes embedded within the institution • Identifying aspects of the institutions (e.g., mission and values) to use for ushering in changes that cultivate equality	"I think woman …judge our effectiveness by whether or not people like us or whether or not, you know. So even, even not getting any response from the men after I preached that Bill Cosby sermon says something about how effective that was. Because it made them sit upright. So even when I've made people feel uncomfortable. You know, I, now that I'm saying it out loud, I realize I need to start thinking about that as being effective too. Instead of looking for the accolades and the applause, if I made people feel like damn, that was nasty, then I've done my job. And I think that's what being prophetic is, right. You have to be a godly. You can't always make people feel good, you need to make them squirm about those splinters that you're you know, poking them with." (Reverend Dya)
	Accountability and Intentionality • Create and or maintain standards set forth by their organization • Hold the organization accountable and intentional to these standards	"When she [a lesbian couple] asked me to marry them… the deacons said, "You can't do it because it would look bad for [our church]." Okay. So I emailed her and she sent me this long email [saying], "this church has been here for so long, you guys have dealt with so many issues…you have this history," everything she said…So the thing about being a critical lover of the institution…how do Black woman stay in Black churches…where we have found our foundation…how do we stay and hold our tongues when we know that we need to be critical lovers of the institution? So part of the backlash that I got…the chair of the deaconate wanted to know why I didn't defend [the church]. And I said "I'm not here to defend [the church]. I think to be a leader you have to be honest. You

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		can't, you can't always paint the Black Church…you can't always look through rose colored glasses. You have to be able to say we're wrong about an issue. And I feel sometimes…I am that critical lover of the institution. I think we're required to be the critical lover of the institution." (Reverend Dya)
Redefining the Self	*Behaving Authentically* • Behavior aligned with one's values despite confirming to stereotypes or risk of social backlash • Disclosing potentially marginalizing aspects of the self	"There are people who, uh, find me somewhat abrasive at times because I don't go along to get along. I don't stay in my place in terms of—I'm not talking about being disrespectful or anything like that…I was very respectful as an associate minister. I respected my pastor and did all that I should. But in terms of doors opening, I didn't shrink back from walking through an open door because I didn't think that I should. God has blessed me. I've never been a wilting flower." (Pastor Steph)
	Theologizing the Collective • Develop a theology that supports the unique life experiences of Black clergywomen • Using a theological stance to advocate on behalf of Black clergywomen	"But when I think about like my core, sort of uh- ministerial identity, I do think momma, mystique and minister…and I think Black women in general are ministers. Like we're taking care of so many people, but the mystique part is so important to me because it speaks to the need for solitude. So you know that womanist quote where it says the part about…"we're not separatist except for the need for self-care or separatist only…as necessary for self-care," or something like that…It talks about separatist only for need, only for the used need of self-care. So that's me, and I think…that is the downfall of so many Black woman who spend their ministry caring for other person in the world is that we don't balance it with the mystique or the need for the care of self. So I'm like, "I will schedule my massage before I walk out of this massage studio because if I don't it'll be 6 months from now." (Pastor Alyssa)
	Meeting the Needs of Self and Others • Ability to recognize their own unmet needs. • Seeking to fulfill their own needs enables them to meet the needs of others.	"The question was posed what do we want as Black woman and she said um to expand our imagination…about how we can respond to violence in the world or how we respond to all the things that we feel like are missing….Expanding our imagination about um, what ministry looks like…not all of us are built for parish ministry. Some of us are built for the streets…some of us are built to be activists. So how do we expand our imagination? How do we make that expansion a reality? How do we make

		that come to life? Um yeah, that's what I would like to see." (Reverend Dya)

Figure 1 Model of the process for constructing positive work identities through marginality
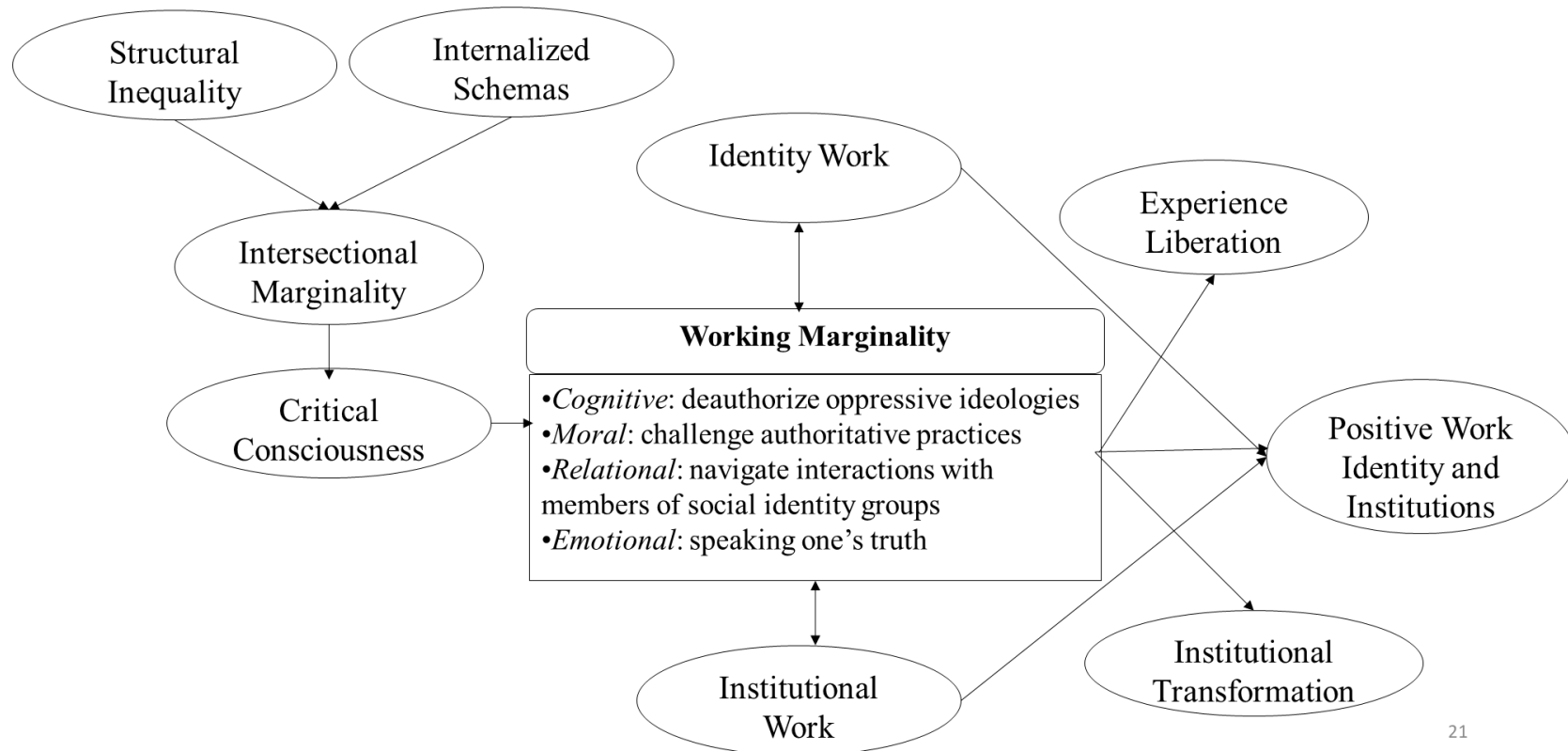
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

<u>University of Michigan</u>
<u>Consent to Participate in Research Study</u>

Title of the research project: Black Clergywomen Leadership Study
Name(s) of the researcher(s): Courtney L. McCluney, M.S., Jacqueline Mattis, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, and Laura Morgan Roberts, Ph.D., Program on Leadership and Change, Antioch University

What this study is about: The purpose of this research study is to understand the experiences of Black clergywomen as leaders of churches.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to participate in our study, we will conduct a semi-structured interview with you. The interview will include questions about your life experiences prior to and currently as a clergy member in a Christian church. The interview will take about 90 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to audio record the interview.

Risks and Benefits: This study involves no more than minimal risk associated with organizational behavior/psychology research. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life.
In the unlikely event that you experience any discomfort during any part of the interview, you may end it early. You may refuse to respond to any question if you do not wish to answer.

You may receive some psychological benefits from participating in this study as sharing your personal story and journey could be personally empowering and provide some relief. Additionally, your stories may encourage similar others to pursue leadership roles in other faith- and community-based organizations.

Compensations: For participating in this study, you will receive a $25 Visa gift card as a token of our appreciation. You may withdraw your participation at any time without loss of any benefit to which you are already entitled.

Your answers will be confidential. The records for this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the record. If we audio-record the interview, we will erase the file after it has been transcribed, which we anticipate will be within two months of its recording.

Principal Investigator Contact Information: Courtney L. McCluney, M.S., PhD Candidate mccluney@umich.edu, Jacqueline Mattis, Professor of Psychology, jmattis@umich.edu.

If you have questions: Should you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board, (734) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

IRB #: HUM00106135

Statement of Consent: By signing below, you agree that you have read and understood our consent form, have received answers to any questions that you may have, and that you consent to take part in the study.
1. Do you consent to participating in this study?

_____   _____

Yes, I consent to participate   Date

_____   _____

No, I decline to participate   Date

2. Do you consent to audio recording the interview for this study?

_____   _____

Yes, I consent to audio record the interview   Date

_____   _____

No, I decline to audio record the interview   Date

Prescreening Questionnaire

Please answer the following demographic questions.
1. What is your current age?

2. What is your marital status?
   a. Married
   b. Single, never married
   c. Divorced, never remarried
   d. Divorced, remarried
   e. Long-term partner
   f. Widowed
   g. Other:_____

3. Do you have any children?
   a. If yes, how many and what are their ages?

4. Are you a caretaker for anyone outside of your immediate family?
   a. If so, what is your relationship with them?
   b. What does your care look like?

5. What is your ethnicity?
   a. Black/African American
   b. Black Caribbean
   c. Black African
   d. Multiracial
   e. Other:_____

6. Please indicate your highest level of education
   a. Some high school
   b. High school graduate/GED
   c. Some college
   d. Associate's degree
   e. Bachelor's degree
   f. Some graduate school
   g. Graduate/Professional degree

7. Do you have formal seminary training?
   If yes, what is your *highest* seminary degree?
       a. BA in Theology/Divinity/Ministry, etc.
       b. Licentiate of Theology/Scripture/Canon Law, etc.
       c. M.Div/M.Min/M.Theology
       d. Doctor of Divinity/Ministry/Theology

8. What year did you receive your degree?

9. What is the name of the school/institution where you received your ministry degree?

10. What is your annual income?
        a. < $25,000
        b. $25,001 - $50,000
        c. $50,001-$75,000
        d. $75,001 - $100,000
        e. $100,001 - $125,000
        f. $125,001 - $150,000
        g. >$150,000

11. Is ministry your full time job?
        a. If no, what is your primary job role/title?
        b. What industry is your primary job?
        c. How long have you worked at your primary job?

12. What percentage of your income does your clergy work contribute to your overall income?
        a. 100%—full time minister
        b. 50-75%—part time minister
        c. Less than 50%
        d. 0%—volunteer minister

Now I will ask you specific questions about your church where you practice ministry.
13. How large is your church?
        a. 100 or fewer members
        b. 100-250 members
        c. 250-500 members
        d. 500-1,000 members
        e. More than 1,000 members

14. How many ministers are on your church staff?
        a. Of those, how many ministers are full-time? Part time? Volunteer?
        b. How would you describe your 'position' on the church staff?
            i. Senior Pastor
            ii. Associate Pastor—fulfill all minister functions in the absence of the senior pastor

      iii. Assistant Minister—spearhead ministry in a specific area (e.g., Outreach)

      iv. Other: (please describe)

15. How long have you been a minister at this church?

16. Does your church consist of:
   a. All or mostly women
   b. Slightly more women than men
   c. Equal number of men and women
   d. Slightly more men than women
   e. All or mostly men

17. What is the class breakdown of your church?
   a. All or mostly working class
   b. Slightly more working class than middle/upper class
   c. Equal numbers of middle/upper class
   d. Slightly more middle/upper class than working class
   e. All or mostly middle/upper class

18. How racially diverse is your church?
   a. All or mostly Black/African American
   b. Slightly more Blacks than non-Blacks
   c. Equal numbers of Blacks and non-Blacks
   d. Slightly more non-Blacks than Blacks
   e. All or mostly non-Black
      i. If 'e', what is the racial majority of your church?

Interview Protocol

Date:

Time:

Location:

Interviewer: Courtney L. McCluney

Interviewee:

Introduction (Turn on recorders)
"You have been asked to take part in a study on Black clergywomen's leadership experiences I would like to understand your life and day-to-day experiences as a Black clergywoman. You are not obligated to answer any questions, and are welcome to ask me any questions. I hope that you find this interview interesting and useful to you. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Interview questions
"Let's begin with some general questions about your role as a Black clergywoman."

QUESTION 1: Can you tell me about when you felt called to minister and the steps that you took to get to your current position?

       PROBE: Can you tell me more about that?

QUESTION 2: When you did your first sermon, what was the subject and text?

       PROBE: How would you describe your purpose or mission?

PROBE: How has your ministry evolved over the years?

QUESTION 3a: Can you walk me through a typical week where you schedule your ministry work?

PROBE: How do you spend your weekday in preparation for the sermon on Sunday?

QUESTION 3b: Can you walk me through a typical month where you schedule your ministry work?

PROBE: What does an atypical month look like?

QUESTION 4: Please describe some of the work that you currently do in and outside of the church.

PROBE: Would you describe what you do as leadership? In what ways?

PROBE: If you don't think of it as leadership, how would you describe it?

QUESTION 5: How do you define your leadership [or other word stated above] and your impact as a clergy member?

PROBE: Where do you see yourself making the most impact in your church, community, society?

"Now I want to ask you some specific questions about your role in ministry as a Black woman."

QUESTION 6: What are some things that you and others notice about youas a woman in the clergy?

> PROBE: Are there aspects of yourself that you or others notice because you are a woman in clergy that they may not notice if you were a man?

> PROBE: If so, what are some reasons why you might keep those things hidden?

QUESTION 7: Have others noticed things about you as a woman in clergy that you do not see in yourself? What are they?

> PROBE: Why might it be difficult for you to notice these things?

QUESTION 8: Are there any aspects of yourself that you are wanting to learn more about as a woman in clergy?

> PROBE: How might you come to know these things?

QUESTION 9: Can you tell me about moments that being a Black woman challenges your ministry work?

> PROBE: Did any of these experiences change or redirect your faith/beliefs?

QUESTION 10: Can you tell me about moments that being a Black woman affirms your ministry work?

PROBE: How did these moments enhance your faith/beliefs?

QUESTION 11: Please tell me about a time that you felt especially effective doing God's work.

PROBE: How did this work help you live out your purpose and calling into ministry?

Closing
"Thank you for sharing your experiences with me today. Is there anything else that I need to know to understand who you are as Black clergywoman?"

"Thank you very much for your thoughtful input. You've been extremely helpful."

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