

What is your name?

Sophia George

What is your gender?

Female

What ethnicity do you identify as?

Afro-Caribbean

What race do you identify as?

Black

Where were you born?

Dominica

Where were your parents born?

Dominica

Is your blackness unique or does it have similarities to other ethnicities?

No, my blackness is not unique. It is similar to I think, about 30 to 40 million people from the region and hundreds of millions more from continents and people in Africa and people in Europe. Well, black and brown. How I express myself maybe is unique, but I don't see it as my blackness, I see it as my person which is separate from what my color looks like.

Do you feel like your blackness is questioned? If so, what aspects?

What is blackness? What do you define as that? I'm going to push back on that blackness thing, you know. I only know my blackness has been defined and redefined when I moved to the United States. When I lived in Canada I did not know I was brown. I'm black, yes, but I was not aware of my difference in the context of being black until I moved here 5-6 years ago. So what that means for me now is I guess, which has always been what it meant to me before, but without that definition I am a female from the Caribbean who has brown skin.

Do you believe there to be an implicit or explicit hierarchy of blackness? i.e. Is Afro-Cuban seen as lower than African-American in society?

I don't know about Afro-Cuban, but I know that there are hierarchies self imposed and also society in the United States. So African people from the Caribbean and also African immigrants, Afro-Caribbean immigrants, brown immigrants from the Caribbean, brown immigrants from Africa seem to be welcomed or embraced easier than African Americans. I don't think that is fair, but I also understand that there is hundreds of years of tension. And I don't like that actually, because it feels like it dismisses the presence of African Americans and what they have to contribute. It undermines them. So me walking into the room and feeling like I am better than a person who was born and raised in like 5-6 generations, I am no better than them, but I don't have the burden of slavery and Jim Crow. I know segregation and of having and being discriminated against because of the color of my skin because I came from a majority minority country.

Did you grow up in a house or apartment?

House.

How many people lived there?

7 people

Which of the following rooms were in your living space? Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, Dining Room, Living Room, Den, Foyer, Library, Office, Front Porch, Back Porch, Balcony, Basement, Laundry Room, Front Yard, Back Yard

Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, Dining Room, Living Room, Foyer, Front Porch, Back Porch, Laundry Room, Front Yard, Back Yard

What activities did you participate or witness in the kitchen or on the porch that is unique to your culture? If you did not have a formal porch, was there a communal space that acted as a porch?

Oh boy, cooking and hanging out with family. But I don't know if it's unique, but for sure it's part of our culture and maybe part of many Afrocentric cultures. Community within the kitchen. Cooking, baking, learning, washing. And on the porch for sure, games. Sleeping on the veranda, watching people sitting and chilling.

What type of non-conventional activities did you participate or witness in the

A Spectrum of Blackness

Interview with Sophia George  
by Gabriel Soomar

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kitchen, on the porch? If you did not have a formal porch, was there a communal space that acted as a porch?

So I can say we used to sometimes do laundry, and sit down in the kitchen, but like the kitchen was actually small. And there was these two sets of doors leading up to the top of the house and sometimes I would have to wash like my clothes. Yeah, sometimes I would have to go through them to wash my clothes like small things, not major laundry and I'll do it in the kitchen. Although 'cause we had the veranda, we could hang some clothes to dry in the porch in the veranda.

What is your relationship to water?

I'm comfortable with water. I swim in open seas. And in beaches. I go to the beach whenever I travel to a place with a beach, I go to the water. It's like I have to. When I wake up in the mornings, I look at my pool 'cause it's calming and it's freeing.

In what spaces do you feel liberated?

I have a walkin closet and I go in there to meditate and just sit and be quiet. Even if I generally have quiet I just like to have stillness. No distraction in there. The clothes and the colors can distract me so sometimes even in my office like I put a blanket over my head to have no external stimulation.

In what spaces do you feel restricted?

I do not feel restricted. People can restrict me. I don't have people to restrict me. But spaces are not restrictions to me, but I don't like people trying to put restrictions on me