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Low-income black parents' perceptions of familial acculturation processes during urban to college town transitions

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LOW-INCOME BLACK PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILIAL
ACCULTURATION PROCESSES DURING URBAN TO COLLEGE TOWN
TRANSITIONS

by

Mashone Nicole Parker

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
degree in Rehabilitation and Counselor Education in the Graduate College of The
University of Iowa

December 2013

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Malik Henfield

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Mashone Nicole Parker

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the
Doctor of Philosophy degree in Rehabilitation and Counselor Education at the December
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To my loving parents, Debra Parker and Rick Diggs, without you, I would not be the person I am today. You have taught me what I needed to know about life, and whatever you were unable to teach me, you gave me the necessary tools to teach myself and learn from others. To my partner, best friend, and husband, Corey, without you, none of this would have been possible. Thanks for believing in me and pushing me to be a better me. Thanks for blessing me with my greatest accomplishment yet, CJ. CJ, you are my rock and for you, I dedicate this project. You may not realize it now, but you are the motivating factor that contributed to the completion of this project.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of parents' perceptions of their role in helping their children acculturate to a new cultural and social environment. Specifically, this study used qualitative methods to interview Black families who moved from large urban communities to a smaller Midwestern college town. The sample consisted of ten Black parents who had moved to this college town from a United States (U.S) urban community with a population size of at least 100,000 persons. The results indicated that parents perceived their role in helping their children adapt to this new environment as important. However, they all described their role differently. Furthermore, the results suggested that all parents in the study moved out of their home towns to escape violence and crime and to pursue an overall better quality of life for themselves and their families. Data gathered from this study will assist administrators, teachers, school counselors, community leaders and parents to better understand geographic mobility and ways to successfully assist with such transitions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The process of adjusting to a new culture or society is known as acculturation (Gibson, 2001). Historically, this construct has been applied to immigrant groups (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). However, the United States (U.S.) has a distinct dominant culture and group norms associated with persons considered White in terms of racial identification or European American with regard to ethnicity; therefore, it can be applied to the experiences of minorities such as Blacks whose culture has been promoted as inferior relative to European American culture throughout history (Berry, 1997; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994).

Lower-income families move more often than higher income families (Cohen & Wardrip, 2011) due to many factors including, but not limited to, unaffordable housing costs, loss of employment, and the lack of a safety net that compels them to relocate (Clark, 2012). Despite what can be defined as justifiable reasons, this readjustment oftentimes has serious consequences for entire families (Berry, 1997; Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Singh, 2004). For example, children have been found to experience academic failure (Gruman, Harachi, Abbott, Catalano, & Fleming, 2008), internal conflict with their own cultural identity (Gomez, Miranda, & Polanco, 2011; Thompson, Lightfoot, Castillo & Hurst, 2010) and/or psychological harm as a function of their move from a place of familiarity to a new environment. In addition to negative consequences for students, adult family members have also reported negative experiences such as discriminatory practices in employment and housing (Berry, 2001), which can indirectly impact a child's adjustment to the new environment. Some people have negative experiences upon

relocating (Schwebel & Johnson Hodari, 2005), which is called acculturation stress (Cho & Haslam, 2010). Acculturation stress refers to the negative outcome associated with adjusting to one culture when accustomed to another and is often accompanied by feelings of depression, isolation and alienation (Cho & Haslam, 2010; Gomez, et al., 2011; Thompson, Anderson, & Bakeman, 2000). Therefore, it was important to gain a better understanding of how parents are socializing their children for school environments that are most likely much different from what they have grown accustomed to in their previous urban environments. Moreover, given the suspected social differences between low-income urban areas and college towns, it is imperative that we gain a better understanding of how parents prepare their children according to perceived racial and social class expectations and demands which may lead to acculturation stress if not done effectively.

College towns usually have a stronger intellectual climate than do other types of towns (Gumprecht, 2003). Using the definition provided by Gumprecht (2003) this study considers a college town, "any city where a college or university and the cultures it creates exert a dominant influence over the character of the community" (Gumprecht, 2003, p. 2) where student enrollment makes up at least twenty percent of the population (Gumprecht). Further, as Gumprecht argues, when the college population takes up more than 20% of a town's population, the collegiate environment is likely to exert the greatest influence on the community. Furthermore, college town environments typically adopt White, European American values and beliefs (Castillo, 2010) which are typically very different than minority cultures (Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991). Other than this, little research has been done on college communities (Gumprecht, 2008); however, scholars

have agreed that the characteristics that comprise a college town are not like any other town (Castillo, 2010).

The urban environments to which many Black families are accustomed is often such a striking contrast to college towns that they feel pressured to adapt to Eurocentric values that tend to dominate such environments (Anderson, 1991). The urban culture has a distinct set of characteristics that makes it unique when compared to other communities; therefore, these characteristics will be described throughout this project in order to help readers develop an understanding of urban culture. Generally speaking, Blacks, in order to establish a socially acceptable pattern of behavior, often experience conflict when trying to find a balance between dominant cultures and their own cultural group (Thompson, et al., 2010; Walker, 2007). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that difficulties trying to adjust to life in college towns might exist among Black families transitioning there from urban areas.

Statement of the Problem

By the time many inner-city youth reach adolescence, they have been exposed to an inordinate amount of inadequate educational experiences and challenges, poverty, family disruption, crime, community violence, abuse and neglect (Evans, 2004), frequent mobility, (Bryan, 2005). Families are attracted to certain communities due to the availability and affordability of housing, and often for a better quality of life, including a better education for their children (Schafft, 2006), which often characterizes college towns. However, some people have negative experiences upon relocating (Schwebel & Johnson Hodari, 2005) due to symptoms associated with acculturation stress (Cho & Haslam, 2010).

When Black children move to mixed race schools or schools that are predominately White, they experience social isolation from their peers (Gunby, 2007), which can be associated with many negative outcomes. For example, Black children are underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (Yoon & Gentry, 2009) and overrepresented in special education programs in many multiracial schools (Raines, Dever, Kamphaus, & Roach, 2012). Further, there is a substantial achievement gap between Black students and their White peers that starts in kindergarten (Graham & Provost, 2012) and grows through eighth grade (Braun, Wang, Jenkins, and Weinbaum, 2006). Because school is the one place Black children will likely experience issues with discrimination, negative stereotypes (Lawrence & Crokcer, 2009), and/or microaggressions (Henfield, 2011) from both teachers and peers, having a strong racial identity as well as receiving proactive socialization messages can help alleviate negative experiences with mixed-race relations (Hughes, et al., 2011).

Parents are seen as vital to the success of their children both inside and outside of school (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Stevenson, Spicer, 2006). Many disciplines have discussed the racial socialization of Black children and the implications this has on academic achievement (Peters & Massey, 1983; Hughes, McGill, Ford, & Tubbs, 2011). However, research aimed at understanding the socialization practices of urban Black families who move to predominately White communities like college towns is relatively scant in the counseling literature. Without such information, it is difficult to know what parents perceive as the proper means to help their children adjust to their new learning environment, which may leave educators at a loss in terms of understanding how to best meet their needs and make the transition as easy as possible.

Purpose of the Study

Research related to Black families' acculturation practices in college towns is limited. In addition, due to the growing prevalence of Black families making the transition from urban to non-urban environments such as college towns, the potential for them to experience acculturation stress is quite high; particularly, Black students, who are, by virtue of their youth, particularly vulnerable to experiencing difficulties in the transition to mixed-race schools.

Black families form the basis of this research study because they have been subjected to a significant amount of racial segregation and inequality when compared to non-minority groups (Ananat, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1993; Quillian, 2012). They have a very unique history within the U.S. with issues such as slavery, Jim Crow, as well as present-day incidences of racial discrimination. Race is clearly one of the factors that make being Black an important aspect of how they acculturate to new environments; White Anglo cultures are thought to be very different than minority cultures (Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991).

Some research suggests that when Blacks go to school with predominately White students they experience some amount of discomfort with cross race relations (Eggleston & Halsell Miranda, 2009; Thompson, Anderson & Bakeman, 2000). Although the acculturation process is not always stressful (Milller, Kim & Benet-Martinez, 2011) some people do experience some form of distress (Schwebel & Johnson Hodari, 2005). Furthermore, when acculturation struggles are not addressed there is an increased risk for suicide among African Americans (Walker, 2007). This distress subsequently affects the academic outcomes (Berry, 1997) of these children and is therefore pertinent to the study.

Therefore, parents have a vital role in helping their child gain success. Parents' roles in

socializing their children have positive or negative implications for academic success

(Hill, Mann, & Fitzgerald, 2011). This can be particularly important following relocation

to a contrasting culture, as parents then have the responsibility of sending messages

related to culture and race helping their child understand and process issues with racism

and discrimination (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). The "new vision" of school counseling

promotes school counselors as having leadership roles in their schools (DeVoss &

Andrews, 2006). In addition to this initiative, school counselors need to use skills not

traditionally associated with counseling programs in order to create systemic change

(McMahon, Mason, & Paisley, 2009). School counselors must cross cultural borders and

become comfortable talking about race and poverty to become effective agents of change

(Crockett, 2003). School counselors must accept responsibility for assisting all children,

as well as families from various SES and diverse groups who transition to new cultural

environments.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of parents'

perceptions of their roles in helping their child acculturate to a new cultural and social

environment. The hope was that the study's findings would help inform educational

policy and programming as it relates to the school counseling profession, which is

charged with forming strong connections with families as a means to help meet students'

needs. This study is unique as it focuses specifically on the socialization practices of

Black parents once they move to predominately White college towns from urban

communities, an increasingly common practice among urban Black families.

Specifically, this study was designed to examine the perceived socialization practices of

low income Black parents and how they socialize their children to succeed in different class and cultural contexts, including schools, as a means to increase their ability to adapt. In this study, the primary focus will be racial and class socialization as this is particularly important in communities that are heterogeneous in nature (Hughes et al., 2006). It is known that socialization messages can be intentional or unintentional (Hughes, et al., 2011), so the study was specifically targeting socialization practices that emerge as a function of in-depth qualitative explorative methods.

Theoretical Framework

Given the study's focus on adaptation and transitions to new environments, an acculturation theory was selected as the framework for the study. The classical definition was presented by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits in 1936. The construct has undergone some developments over the years and for purposes of this study, Berry's (1984) Acculturation Theory will be used. Acculturation theories describe the psychological and sociological adaptation of an individual or cultural group to another (Berry, 1994; Berry, 2001; Berry, Phinney Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Pope-Davis & Liu, 2000). The non-dominant group is said to experience the greatest impact of acculturation although both cultures are affected to some degree (Berry, 2001). In order for a positive experience to occur, both groups must come to a mutual agreement regarding respectful attitudes and behaviors towards one another that will allow two culturally different groups to live together in one society with relatively few issues (Berry, 2001).

Psychological acculturation is specific to how individuals acculturate. When acculturating, or adapting to a society, individuals must decide how they will do so (Berry, 1997). Individuals who are adapting to this new environment will constantly

confront situations that test their ability to function into their new setting (Molinsky, 2007). For instance, neighborhoods are segregated by social class and SES, which leads the disadvantaged population to receiving fewer educational opportunities (Swindler Boutte, 2012). Further, in school, teacher's interactions coupled with low expectations (Watson, Charner-Laird, Kirkpatrick, Szczesiul, & Gordon, 2006) reinforce negative educational outcomes and carry on stereotypes about urban children (Swindler Boutte, 2012).

Berry describes four types of acculturation strategies (assimilation, integration, separation or marginalization) that occur at the individual level: Assimilation refers to an individual who loses all or most of their cultural heritage and becomes actively involved in the new culture (Berry 1994; Berry 2001). Integration refers to an individual who chooses to be part of their old and new cultures, deciding to integrate him or herself into both (Berry, 1997; Berry 2001). This individual will adopt the necessary skills to succeed in the new culture, but not allow the values and customs of the new environment conflict with their own (Sayegh & Lasry, 1995). Individuals who integrate their own cultural heritage into the host culture have less psychological turmoil (Schwebel & Johnson Hodari, 2005). These individuals will appear to be the most adapted of the four types (Berry, 2005).

Separation occurs when an individual places value on their cultural heritage and rejects the other culture (Berry, 2001; Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Singh, 2006). For example, this person carries an idealized view of their own culture that makes them unwilling to place value on the new culture. This individual feels an aversion to the host cultural, and may experience homesickness and alienation (Sobral, Villar, Gómez-Fraguela, Romero,

& Luengo, 2013). Marginalization describes an individual who is not part of either culture. This person has made the conscious decision to separate themselves from the values and practices of the old and new cultures entirely. These individuals are oftentimes "geographically separated from their own cultural group and unwilling to conform to the dominant culture" (Olsen & Martins, 2012, p. 1174). To further illustrate, this individual will not form social ties with individuals from the host culture who can allow them to learn practices of the majority culture (Samnani, Boekhorst, & Harrison, 2012). Furthermore, they will not have ties with their own ethnic group as well. Consequently, these individuals will have weak social ties causing difficulty with acculturating (Samnani et al., 2012).

Research and interview questions have been developed utilizing this acculturation framework. Although originally used to describe the experience of immigrant groups, this will be used to describe the experiences of African American groups adjusting to a culture much different than their own.

Research questions

This research study proposes to conduct an in-depth qualitative exploration of the cultural and social capital accruement practices imbedded in the experiences of low-income Black families with implications for their children's academic achievement. Many families move from Chicago to eastern Iowa, often in search of affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, and economic opportunities (Keene, Padilla, & Geronimus, 2010). Hoping to gain an understanding of the meaning, context, and process by which transient, low income Black parents socialize their children to participate in different cultural realms, the following research questions were addressed:

a. How do low income Black families decide to relocate to a culture different from their own?

b. How do they perceive themselves as being part of that new culture?

c. How do urban Black parents/guardians from low social economic statuses perceive the way they socialize their children to succeed in different class and cultural contexts?

d. What kinds of experiences do they have following relocation with school systems/ personnel?

Definition of terms

The following section outlines operational definitions necessary to conduct this study. African Americans or Blacks are citizens or residents of the U.S. who have origins or ancestry in any of the Black populations or racial groups of Africa as defined by the Census Bureau. For the purposes of this paper, in an effort to all-encompassing of the term, "Black," it will be used to represent this group as some individuals may not identify with the African American subgroup. Social class and social economic status has been used interchangeably throughout the literature. For the purposes of the current research, the term social class will be used to describe a construct related to one's occupation prestige, educational achievement, access to resources and parental income. However, socioeconomic status (SES) will be used primarily to describe the individual participants in the present study who identified as having a low SES based primarily on monetary resources. Due to the complexity of the term, the author attempted to integrate prior definitions and descriptions. The terms defined are: economically disadvantaged, poverty, and classism. These terms have been used to describe a group of individuals

who lack resources that enable them to have a slightly decent life (Blank, 2008).

Privilege will also be defined, as it represents the group of individuals that are often

compared to those who are disadvantaged.

Urban Families

"Urban" consists of territory, persons, and housing units in places of 2,500 or

more persons (US Census Bureau, 1995). In this study, urban families will refer to

individuals who live in an area like the one described by the US Census Bureau.

Specifically, the urban families in this study will be from a large metropolitan city. In

this study large will refer to cities with a population of more than 100,000 people, which

is larger than the new environment to which the participants have moved.

Black Family

A Black family is defined "as constellations of households related by blood or

marriage or function that provides basic instrumental and expressive functions of the

family to the members of those networks (Hill, p. 18)," including networks of fictive kin

(unrelated but provide familial support). Each family has its own role in the academic

success of children. Through the discussion of parental involvement, family disruptions,

and family support the role of the family in making sure the children in the home are

cared for, will be discussed. These individuals are important because like

parents/guardians they have a great influence on shaping children worldview about their

social world and position by sending socialization messages like those discussed above

(Liu, 2011).

Family Support

Family support refers to the support parents give to their children per their report. It also refers to support they receive from other family members inside or outside the home to help with their children.

Social Class

Social class describes one's social standing and can be measured by a number of factors, such as educational achievement, occupation, parental income and access to resources. One's social class can be defined by various stratifications, and oftentimes referred to as low, middle or high.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status (SES) is defined by the monetary resources or income an individual possesses and is based on a social hierarchy or stratification of low, middle and high SES. Resources are those things an individual possesses, such as education, material prosperity, and social support (Fujishiro, Xu & Gong, 2009).

Economically Disadvantaged

When someone has economic disadvantages, they are seen as having fewer resources than those from higher SES, including medical care. Such individuals have higher risk factors such as increased instances of mental health issues, lower educational attainment, and less family stability, which puts their children at particular risk. Due to these risk factors, children from low economic backgrounds are given high attention in research.

Poverty

Resources such as schools, health, stability in jobs and housing, and purchasing goods are reflective of available resources in our society that those in poverty oftentimes

lack. Poverty is defined by a threshold usually developed by a society to determine success and status. For example, the US Census Bureau's measure of poverty includes income from the following sources;

> Earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, assistance from outside the household, and other miscellaneous sources. Noncash benefits (such as food stamps and housing subsidies) do not count, before taxes, excludes capital gains or losses. If a person lives with a family, add up the income of all family members. (Non-relatives, such as housemates, do not count).

Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status. Thresholds vary according to: the size of the family and ages of the members. The same thresholds are used throughout the United States (do not vary geographically).

Classism

Classism will be used to describe and identify an interpersonal form of prejudice and discrimination towards members of various social class groups (Liu, 2002). For example, individuals from 'low' status have undergone some prejudices and discriminatory treatment that may impede their upward mobility (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009; Liu, 2011). Overall, classism refers to gestures and behaviors that marginalize non-group members.

Middle Class

Middle class individuals are described as having a 'middling' income. They are

not part of the elite or rich groups, nor are they part of the poor (Zweig, 2012). Other

scholars define middle class by parental education. For example, Lindsay (2011) defined

middle class individuals as persons who had a parent with a college degree. Middle class

individuals were seen as having more choices and flexibility in work schedules

(Bowman, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2009). Moreover, middle class individuals tend to have

more personal control and choice outside of work through more leisure and vacation

time, and greater disposable income (Earle & Heymann, 2004). Middle class individuals

are not included in this study, but because of the flexibility in middle class status the term

is defined.

Privilege

Privilege, is defined by individuals or groups of persons receiving advantages, or

favor, based solely on demographic statuses such as race, gender, or social class (Scott

Lapour & Heppner, 2009). Liu and his colleagues (2007) stated that social class privilege

is oftentimes intertwined with other privilege such as White privilege, sexual identity

privilege, and religious privilege. Privilege is often times described as one possessing it

or lack thereof. It exists in many forms and contexts. The intersection of gender, race

and class is apparent when discussing privilege. For instance, masculine privilege refers

to the privilege based on gender. "In the United States, there is a set of idealized

standards for men" (Coston & Kimmel, 2012). Men are seen as providers, strong,

independent and successful. Further, there lies a further privilege in regard to race.

White privilege oftentimes is "invisible" to those who possess it (Coston & Kimmel, 2012), and exist regardless of class status or income. Individuals may be privileged in multiple contexts, or privileged in one way but marginalized in another. For example, a Black male will have gender privilege, but lack privilege regarding race. In a study examining social class privilege, Nenga (2011) used qualitative methods to interview forty affluent (middle class, middle/upper-middle class, upper-middle class, or upper class) volunteers aged fifteen to twenty-three. The youth in Nenga's study responded to class privilege by employing discursive strategies such as 'blindness' or denying it exists, saying poverty is a matter of luck, or blaming cultural capital (clothing, communication style, education, music, leisure pursuits, and values) as to why efforts to form relationships across social class groups failed.

For the present study, privileged individuals will be those belonging to the host culture as their college environment will closely resemble the values of a White, European American society (Castillo, 2010). Participants in the proposed study lack privilege in terms of both race and class. They are also attempting to acclimate to this new environment, making them more vulnerable. When these things are intertwined, their disadvantages may be more prevalent. For instance, a lack of privilege limits people of color in available resources, better jobs in life, better schools, and perception and exposure (Lapour & Heppner, 2009). However, no individual is only privileged or only disadvantaged (McIntosh, 2012). Individuals in the study will have privilege that others do not possess. Every person has a place where they stand in the world. This place is determined by many factors: language, religion, histories, geographic regions, gender,

gender identity, sexual orientation, body types, hair, complexions, physical ability, and the like. (McIntosh, 2012).

Link Card

A link card is a government issued plastic card that works like a debit card. It is loaded each month with food and/or cash benefits (Saddler). In order to qualify, families must meet specific family size and income requirements as outlined by the state in which they live. The amount rewarded will be determined by family size and income, although there is a maximum amount each family can receive.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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Chapter 1 provided an overview of the factors related to social class and SES. Social class, a very popular term used throughout literature, was defined for the purposes of this study along with other terms that are necessary in developing a clear understanding of social class. Black parents from low social class families are the core of the study, and common issues they face in U.S. society were provided. This chapter concluded with the purpose statement, guiding research questions and definition of terms.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter one offered the rationale for a study designed to gain an understanding of parents' perceptions of their role in helping their children acculturate to a new cultural and social environment. The study is particularly concerned with parents' socialization practices aimed at helping their children acculturate in their new environment, particularly school. Chapter two presents literature pertinent to the study's goals and are as follows: a) experiences of being Black, urban and poor; b) relocation experience; c) Black acculturation strategies; d) Psychological Impact of acculturating; and e) In closing, a summary of the chapter will be provided.

Experiences of Being Black and Poor in Urban Environments

Black Culture

The cultural influences on Black students' academic achievement can be explained and understood in many ways. Because education is a primary source for measuring ones social class (Oakes & Rossi, 2003), it is necessary to help readers understand the importance of culture on academic achievement. Culture has been used as a source to help explain the academic achievement gap between Blacks and Whites (Warikoo & Carter, 2009). Culture includes practices and meanings shared by members of a particular social group, such as families, ethnic networks, neighborhoods, communities, schools, and organizations (Warikoo & Carter, 2009, p. 368). Historically, the overarching philosophy of White America has been that Blacks belonged to a race that was inferior to the White race biologically, culturally, and socially (Ogbu, 2004).

While the subject of black education in America received increased attention in the 1950s, Black students have had minimal educational opportunities dating back to slavery. Historically, Blacks were punished for learning to read and write, and slaves were forbidden to participate in these activities (Haley, 1976). Reading and writing was a privilege and during slave times forbidden (Ogbu, 2004). If a slave was caught reading, punishment was sometimes extended to all slaves on the plantation. These ancestral stories are oftentimes passed on through generations of children. Although the children born in today's society did not experience segregated schools or slavery, grandparents or great-grandparents have and, as a result, these stories have impacted how many parents view individuals in educational settings and school systems, in general. Evenwith *Brown vs. Board of Education* and other educational reforms educational opportunities for Black students have been, theoretically, opened up and on par with those of White students; however, economic disadvantages continue to persist along racial lines.

Impact of poverty on education

In 2007, the poverty rate in the U.S. increased by 2.6 percentage points, from 12.5 percent to 15.1 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The number of people in poverty in 2010 (46.2 million) was the largest figure in the 52 years for which poverty estimates have been published (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). In 2010, Black family households had the lowest median income among all racial groups (U.S. Census, 2010). Income gaps between Blacks and other cultural groups also tend to remain consistent over time. For example, individuals who grew up in poor families earn less income, and are over three times as likely to be poor as adults (Heflin & Pattillo, 2006). Factors like non-marital

childbearing, high male unemployment, and welfare dependence, also contribute to the perpetuation of poverty of Black families (McLanahan, 2010).

Black children represent a large number of children educated in urban school districts (Sanbonmatsu, Kling, Duncan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2006; Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, Chin-Chih Chen, 2012) with significantly lower academic performance and achievement than children educated in other school districts (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Many students raised in urban, low-income environments are at risk of academic failure due to a wide array of systemic in-school and out-of-school factors (Bemak, Chi-Ying, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005).

Black children, on average enter kindergarten with less preparedness in pre-reading, pre-math and behavioral skills than do White students (Farkas, 2003). Factors such as poverty, poor diet or coming to school hungry (Fraser, 2004), and substandard schools (Spring, 2008; Tinsley Li, Nussbaum, & Richards, 2007; Warikoo & Carter, 2009) have contributed to the unfortunate circumstance of low achievement among Black students in low-income, urban areas. When children have to worry about their next meal or violent communities, focusing on school work becomes an issue (Jones Thomas, Carey, Prewitt, Romero, Richards, & Velsor-Friedrich, 2012). Children growing up in urban environments may face perils that are unique or more prevalent for them. For example, these children are more likely to be impacted by community violence exposure and parents/guardians juggling multiple low-wage jobs (Greene & Anyon, 2010). All of these things can serve as distractions to school performance or doing homework. However, risk factors do not guarantee that children will have academic problems, but rather increases the probability that such problems will arise.

Much research has focused on the underachievement of low-income Blacks, however, there are many Blacks who do succeed and do well in school (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Palmer & Young, 2009). Some students succeed despite economic hardships, discriminatory practices, negative stereotypes, and perceived educational detachment. These students possess protective factors, those things that can counteract the aforementioned risks, and help them succeed. Some school protective factors are a strong teacher–student culture (Conchas, 2006), parental supervision and support (Goldner, Peters, Richards & Pearce, 2010) and structured activities (Larson, Pearce, Sullivan, & Jarett, 2007), which can build skill sets and shelter children from negative influences.

Poor school systems

Every student, regardless of race or socio-economic status is entitled to a positive school experience that will ultimately increase their potential for career advancement and positively impact their quality of life (National Center for Transforming School Counseling, 2007). Nevertheless, many low-income urban neighborhoods are comprised of poor educational systems (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; McKoy & Vincent, 2005) with Black children performing lower on test scores than their White counterparts (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006).

The largest gap in achievement is observed in the urban schools in large cities (Lewis, James, Hancock, & Hill-Jackson, 2008), particularly when contrasted with the performance of White children in rural and suburban schools. Blacks in grade one had lower mathematics and reading scores than Whites, and the same disparity continued in grade 12. These findings imply that Black-White disparities continue as students'

progress through elementary or secondary school (NCES). Braun, Wang, Jenkins, and Weinbaum (2006) found that in every SES strata, the Black–White eighth-grade math achievement gap is "pervasive, profound and persistent."

Students who grow up poor are more likely to drop out of school, be viewed as being disengaged in their education and have lower incomes later in life Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). Issues such as discrimination, poor teacher quality, and elevated teacher turnover rates all have a negative impact on the educational success of low income students and families. Children who are poor are less likely to utilize early head start programs and enter school with the necessary skills to succeed later (Barnett, Epstein, Friedman, Boyd, & Hustedt, 2008; Farkas, 2003). In turn, the students who start behind tend to fall further behind (Farkas, 2003; Fryer & Levitt, 2006). Poor urban children frequently enter kindergarten with lower reading and math skills than suburban children (Graham & Provost, 2012), with the achievement gap continuing through eighth grade.

Due to the low quality school systems in urban areas, these children often fare worse than their suburban counterparts (Graham & Provost, 2012). Suburban children fare better academically when compared to both urban and rural children, with urban children scoring the lowest on math achievement in Kindergarten (Graham & Provost, 2012). Rural schools do not always have access to the same level of federal funding as urban and suburban schools, which can have implications on academic achievement (Graham & Provost, 2012). And although, there has not been a general study of university communities published since 1961 (Gumprecht, 2003), Winters (2010) suggested that areas with a strong presence of higher education institutions are more successful at graduating college students than areas without access to higher education.

This influence may impact children if families are indeed engaged in university activities. Moreover, flagship universities similar to the one in this study receive more expenditures in their states (Gumprecht, 2003), possibly having an impact on the entire community.

McKenzie (2009) conducted a qualitative study reflecting on the perceptions of being white female educators working in schools serving students of color. McKenzie found that many of the teachers working at this urban school admitted to being mean to their students, often purposely shaming them as a form of punishment and referring to their behavior as 'gangster.' Experiences such as the ones described in McKenzie's (2009) study are an example of poor school experiences in urban schools with Black children. Black children receive more punishments in school (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008) when compared to their White peers and more likely to be placed in special education classes (Raines, Dever, Kamphaus, & Roach, 2012). This has much to do with the cultural misunderstanding (Delpit, 2006) of their White, often female, middle class teachers and less to do with the student's potential. Further, when Black kids moved to schools with predominately Whites, issues such as microaggressions (Henfield, 2011); accusations of acting White (Ogbu, 2004) became apparent. That is, those subtle racial slights targeted toward an individual or group, intentional or unintentional that devalues students were school experiences of some Black children.

Community violence

Community violence refers to direct victimization, witnessing, and hearing about violent acts in the community (McDonald, Deatrick, Kassam-Adams, & Richmond, 2011)). Individuals from low social class backgrounds are also at great risk for exposure to community violence (Dahl, Ceballo, & Huerta, 2010). Research has also suggested

that this has detrimental effects on youth development (McMahon, Felix, Halpert, & Petropoulos, 2009; Suglia, Staudenmayer, Cohen, & Wright, 2010; Wilson, Woods, Emerson, & Donenberg, 2012). However, some youth despite persistent exposure to violence develop positively. For example, McDonald et al. (2011) surveyed 110 urban youth ages 10–16 years, 97% of the sample reported some type of community violence exposure. Over 96% of the sample was African American, 1% White, and 2% from multiracial backgrounds. Family functioning, parental support and supervision were all factors that contributed to positive youth development despite community violence exposure. Community violence affected Black youth at a disproportionate rate (McDonald, et al., 2011).

This disproportion also stands true for urban youth when compared to any other geographical group (Goldner, Peters, Richards & Pearce, 2010; McDonald et al., 2011; Ruggiero, Van Wynsberghe, Stevens, & Kilpatrick, 2006). This is partly true because of the lack of community activities in urban communities for young children (Goldner, et al., 2010). Living in high violence communities impacts adolescents' academic performance (Goldner, Peters, Richards, Pearce, 2011). When children are faced with a constant worry of being involved or 'caught up' in violent acts, anxiety makes focusing on school work becomes a challenge (Jones Thomas, Carey, et al., 2012).

Gender factors are salient in regard to the experiences of individuals from low social class backgrounds. Black men and boys have a difficult time navigating their social world as they are usually targeted in undesirable ways with stereotypes such as being aggressive and violent (Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac & Zine, 1997). In relation to young Black poor men, the research has been slightly negative naming this group as

high-risk for academic failure, community violence exposure and involvement (Chipman, 1998; Malik, 2008) and being part of the criminal justice system as offenders and victims (ASA, 2009). However, it should be noted that these young men are directly connected to urban women (their mothers, sisters, girlfriends, grandmothers, etc.) and, therefore, their behaviors and issues will indirectly affect the women in these communities, as well. This makes Black women particularly vulnerable to psychological dysfunction associated with community violence (Clark, et al., 2007).

Single parenting

In the early 2000's Black men under the age of 40 were twice more likely to have prison records than college degrees (Western & Wildeman, 2009). "Blacks are almost seven times more likely to go there [to prison] than are Whites, and people who fail to finish high school are three times more likely to spend time behind prison bars than are high school graduates" (Clear, 2008, p. 102-3). These incarceration rates create a family dysfunction, often leaving single mothers or other extended family to raise children. Many poor urban households are matriarchal (i.e., female headed) (Joseph, 2006), which also impacts the daily struggle of urban woman from low SES backgrounds (Mechoulan, 2011). Single mothers on average spend less overall time with their children (Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004) with Blacks being at the higher end and reported as spending the least amount of time with their children. As involvement with children on homework and school activities increases academic performance this places their children at a further disadvantage.

The incarceration of Black fathers leads to female-headed households, which are said to be at higher risk for poverty and economic strain (Western & Wildeman, 2009;

Wildeman & Western, 2010), and this negatively impacts children. Incarceration also

leads to high divorce rates due to the stressors that accompany having an incarcerated

spouse (Wildeman &Western, 2010). Forty-fifty percent of marriages in the U.S. will

end in divorce, although the rate for persons with less education is higher (Cherlin, 2010).

Additionally, Black women are less likely to marry than White women (Crowder &

Tolnay, 2000). In 2009, 1.5 % of children in the U.S lived in the home of a parent who

divorced in the last year (U.S Census Bureau 2009). Children living with a divorced

parent were also more likely to be living with their mothers (73%).

The factors discussed above are part of the experience of some Black, urban low-

income families. Not all families in the present study will experience these things, but it

is important to understand the culture in which many of the families may come from.

These same experiences have great influence on their choice to relocate their families for

a better quality of life.

<div align="center">**Relocation Experiences**</div>

Relocation Efforts

Since black families are most likely to be poor they are also most likely to

experience generational poverty, causing them to move more often (Cohen & Wardrip,

2011). Relocation efforts by housing authorities and initiatives focused on de-

concentrating neighborhood poverty by providing families with low SES housing

vouchers or rent subsidies, and constructing public housing in low poverty neighborhoods

(Wildeman & Western, 2010). In Clark's (2008) study examining low-income families

who moved from urban areas to rural Pennsylvania, participants reported moving to that

community for an overall better quality of life.

The Housing Choice Voucher program, also known as Section 8, was developed to allow individuals from low social class to move to private rental housing. Mixed-income living was seen as one of the best hopes for low-income families (Clampet-Lundquist, 2004; Wilson, 1987). Individuals who moved from neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into less poor neighborhoods might have access to improved neighborhood resources (Clampet-Lundquist, 2004). Children of low-income parents may experience greater educational outcomes as individuals from suburban schools are more likely to complete high school than their urban counterparts (Graham & Provost, 2012). However, public housing provides benefits such as close support systems of family and friends that transient families may not have in their new neighborhoods (Jacob, 2004). Although there is much support related to the benefits that transient families receive by moving to their poverty reduced neighborhoods, there are some risks as well (Keene, et al., 2010). These urban migrants are not always received with open arms by their local cohabitants who lived in the neighborhoods before they came. Further, these urban families transport with them lived experiences that may be at odds with local residents (Clark, 2008). These local residents fear that their once small town will become concentrated and look similar to that of an urban community. When individuals from low social class backgrounds move from their poor neighborhood, their new neighborhoods are usually less poor (Clampet-Lundquist, 2010). The new neighborhoods do not carry the same culture as the individual's previous neighborhoods. The difficult in transition is exacerbated due to the change in cultural norms and expectations as well as other factors. Individuals have to suddenly get accustomed to a

new culture with less violence, or less economic strain, while simultaneously accepting

the loss of social ties (Clampet-Lundquist, 2010).

In 1994, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

developed the Moving to Opportunity Fair Housing program **(**MTO). MTO was carried

out to provide low income families with dependent children the opportunity to move into

low poverty neighborhoods in hopes to increase social opportunities. The primary goal

of the program was to develop effective mobility strategies for these families (Gay,

2011). Approximately 4,000 families were chosen to participate in this lottery. Many of

the families randomly chosen to participate in the MTO program either chose not to move

or moved into higher poverty neighborhoods (Ludwig, et al., 2008). However; Ludwig et

al (2008) contended that the biggest issue with MTO was its focus on social class and

ignoring the intersectionality of race and social class.

Families from low-income background tend to move more than families from

higher income backgrounds (Cohen & Wardrip, 2011). Low-income families are drawn

to various communities for the availability and affordability of housing, safer

communities, portability of welfare benefits, and better school environments (Schafft,

2006). Thus this move for the families may contribute to an overall better quality of life

(Schafft, 2006). Clark (2008) conducted a study of eighteen low-income urban families

who chose to relocate to a specific small rural town from their metropolitan communities.

The findings in this study stated that each respondent reported being drawn to a rural

community for a better quality of life. Furthermore, some respondents shared that they

came to move to the rural communities based on the experiences of their family and

social networks who shared positive experiences. Also, section 8 housing availability

was a factor that contributed to the transition of the families from their urban communities (Clark, 2008).

In conclusion, there are many issues that may co-occur in poor urban communities that make daily living difficult for some. These risks factors will affect the children in the households and impact their academic performance. These unfortunate circumstances lead many urban families into smaller communities to seek a better quality of life. With housing initiatives such as MTO and Section 8 programs, these families are able to afford more quality housing for a lower cost.

College town environment

U.S. college towns are similar in that they differ from most cities and regions in which they are located in many ways including, but not limited to the fact that the primary source of business is education, which breeds a strong academic climate (Gumprecht, 2006). In terms of other distinctive characteristics, Gumprecht (2008) discussed the following unique elements associated with college towns: (a) Individuals in college towns are typically younger; (b) they are more educated and twice as likely as the general US population to hold college degrees; (c) the cost of living is typically greater in college towns; (d) adults in these towns are usually more affluent with higher incomes than those in the general population;(e) college towns are typically transient in that most people leave upon graduating, and; (f) college towns are typically more diverse. In terms of ethnic minorities, they typically have more Asian adults than Black or Hispanics compared to other small urban towns and have higher quality rated schools.

Support through relocation

  Parenting and socialization practices. The socialization messages sent to children from their parents plays a vital role in preparing children for academic success (Stewart, 2007). Given the increase in racially mixed neighborhoods in the U.S. (Friedman 2008), racial socialization messages and practices are particularly important. Indeed, parents living in mixed race or predominately White neighborhoods are more likely to socialize their children in terms of race and discrimination (Lesane-Brown, 2006).

  Racial socialization has been linked to positive school outcomes for Black children (Suizzo, Robinson, &Pahlke, 2007). Black children typically experience the greatest amount of discrimination when living in predominately White societies (Smith, Juarez and Jacobson (2011). Black parents must offer coping skills for their children to cope with racism and help them develop a strong sense of their own racial identity. Oftentimes, parents' experiences influence the way they socialize their children (Lesane-Brown, 2006). For example, parents have been found to take into account their perception of the racial climate of their surroundings, which impacts how they socialize their children and the discussions they have about race relations (Parker Terhune, 2007).

  Hughes, Rodrigues, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, and Spicer (2006) conducted a review of the literature regarding the racial socialization practices of parents and found salient themes of mistrust relayed from Black parents in several qualitative articles. For example, the authors found that many parents transmitted messages to their children that emphasized keeping a social distance between themselves and White students. Black

children also received messages from their parents to overachieve just to be viewed as equal to White students (Parker Terhune, 2007).

Parent involvement. Parental involvement is vital to a child's development (You, & Nguyen, 2011) and educational success. However, parents and school professionals from urban areas have different understandings of parental involvement (Williams & Sánchez, 2011). Despite the literature suggesting that Black parents are marginally involved (Chen, 2008), some opposing research support that many Black are indeed involved in their child's academic lives or would like to be (Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Smrekar & Cohen- Vogel, 2001). Their interests appear to be no different than other racial groups says these authors. Minority parents who are, according to traditional norms of parental involvement, not involved as much, describe multiple barriers they feel prevent them from being active within the school community and, more specifically, the school building.

For individuals from low social class groups, lack of schooling, time restraints, cultural barriers (Finders & Lewis, 2002), lack of social networks (Lareau, 1987), and negative feelings toward schools based on their own previous school experiences (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000) all represent parents explain not being involved in their child's schooling. For example, as Lareau (2003) indicated low-income parents do not have access to the same financial and educational resources as their middle-class counterparts; therefore, inflexible work schedules limit parents' ability to participate in evening meetings and activities at school (Williams & Sánchez, 2011). Opposing researchers have rejected this idea of low-income parents being disengaged or lacking

interests as a cultural mishap in understanding the role that cultural differences play (Smith, 2009).

  School. It is the role of the school to help families overcome barriers to students' successful academic achievement. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model supports school counselors' efforts to help students find personal, social, career, as well as academic success (ASCA, 2006- 2012). ASCA developed the ASCA National Model in order to provide school counselors with a structure for effective practice with students from all backgrounds, including those living in poverty or in/from urban areas. The ASCA National Model allows for a more inclusive, systemic model, transitioning from previous individually focused models (Blakely, Underwood, & Rehfuss, 2009). It focuses on the "academic, personal/social, and career well-being of all students through the delivery systems of (a) guidance curriculum, (b) individual student planning, (c) responsive services, and (d) system support" (Pyne, 2011). It was developed to hold school counselors accountable for their work in the school (Dimmitt & Carey, 2007). It calls for school counselors to promote equity and help all students gain equal access to educational resources (Dimmitt & Carey, 2007).

Experience of loss

  Black children are reported to live with grandparents and other relatives more than any other racial group (Fuller-Thomson, Esme, Minkler, & Meredith, 2000; Ross & Aday, 2006). When families relocate their support from family members may diminish. Social support from family is an important feature in Black culture (Ross & Aday, 2006). Black families have an increased reliance on kin (Brown, Cohen, & Wheeler, 2002), especially grandparents (Ross & Aday, 2006; Murphy, 2008; Murphy & Hunter, 2008).

For individuals from low social class statuses, this support will be particularly salient as childcare costs are usually high. This is important for families who move if these important kin do not move with them. They run the risk of losing the support they have been accustomed to for so long.

Black Acculturation Strategies

Acculturation

The process of adapting to a new culture or society is known as acculturation (Gibson, 2001). Typically, this construct is applied to immigrant groups (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010); however, it can be applied to the experiences of minorities such as Blacks whose culture has been promoted as inferior relative to European American culture throughout history (Berry, 1997; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994). In relation to social class, individuals tend to form relationships and connections with people from similar social class statuses (Allensworth, Bryk, & Sebring, 2010; Liu, 2011; Liu et al., 2004). This also means that, in general, they will share other commonalities that go along with social class identity. For example, a child born into an impoverished segment of society will be linked to that social world through common language (Champbers, 2003). This child, based on knowledge gleaned through verbal and nonverbal interactions in that culture, will learn behavior deemed acceptable in that particular context. This mode of being and behaving may not always carry over into middle class school culture (MacRuairc, 2011), which becomes an important factor in terms of socialization for all students.

Adapting to middle class school cultures can be problematic for low-income students once they move to a more heterogeneous social environment. Upon moving to

new cultures, individuals have been found to acclimate in different ways. Many of the concepts overlap with each other, describing similar, but different, processes that are defined throughout the acculturation literature. More controversial phenomena such as acting White will be described as well as theoretically supported constructs such as assimilation. The main purpose of describing these constructs is to provide insight on various ways individuals may attempt to acclimate to new environments.

Burden of Acting White

According to the literature, "acting White" can be defined as Black students participating in acts that demonstrate their care for high academic achievement (Wildhagen & College, 2011). For example, Black students who embraced the school curriculum, spoke Standard English, spent a lot of time in the library, and got good grades, have been accused by other Black students of trying to "act White," which suggests such behavior is thought to be reserved for White students alone. Standard English is considered a form of "acting White" (Wildhagen & College, 2011) with language being an important aspect of one's social class. Language acts as a marker and is used to signify a sense of solidarity within a group (MacRuairc, 2011). Therefore, language may represent the strongest instance of White-identified behavior for Black students (Wildhagen & College, 2011). White English dialect is portrayed by Whites and Blacks as proper, correct, good and standard. For example, in Murray, Neal-Barnett, Demmings and Stadulis (2012) one participant shared that they were accused of acting White because of talking "proper." Black English dialect, by contrast, was stigmatized as improper, incorrect, flat, country, slang and bad (Ogbu, 2004). In contemporary culture, acting White is described in the same way, with minorities showing behavioral

characteristics that are associated with Whites such as getting good grades or having an interest in ballet (Fryer Jr. & Torelli, 2008). While acculturating, students may struggle with this burden, creating a negative impact on academic performance as well as positive adaptation to this new environment.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) contended that Black youth resisted "acting White" accusations by avoiding or rejecting social behavioral patterns often associated with Whiteness. For example, Bergin and Cooks (2002) conducted a qualitative study with thirty-eight high-achieving African American and Mexican American students. The purpose of the study was to examine whether students avoided academic achievement to avoid accusations of acting White. One participant in the study who was in honors classes stated that these classes usually had White students; therefore, there was a perception that she preferred hanging out with Whites (Bergin & Cooks). However, findings suggest that these students did not avoid academic achievement to fit in; instead, individuals in this study reported resentment and anger about the accusations. Murray, Neal-Barnett, Demmings, and Stadulis (2012) examined the relationship between experiencing acting White accusations (AWA), racial identity, and anxiety among Black adolescents. Participants were 110 African American, low-income adolescents from 14 to 18 years old enrolled in a predominantly Black urban school in a Midwestern city. Findings suggest that individuals who experienced AWA directly and indirectly had higher levels of anxiety than students who experienced it only indirectly. The authors concluded that adolescents were indeed being impacted by this accusation.

Oppositional culture refers to minority groups actively disengaging from activities such as those associated with "acting White" to avoid being perceived as 'selling out'

(Harris, 2006; Goza & Ryabov, 2009; Ogbu, 1981). Scholars have asserted that Black students may participate in oppositional behavior as a way to avoid being perceived as "acting White." Harris (2006) conducted a study using data from the Maryland Adolescence Development In Context Study (MADICS), to test the proposition that Black students resist school more than Whites, and concluded that the major tenets of the theory were not supported. Further, in a subsequent study, Harris stated that Black students have a higher belief in the value of school than White students (Harris, 2008). Nonetheless, if this phenomenon does exist, children may intentionally self-sabotage their academic potential as a way to fit into groups that promote academic failure; however, no study using nationally representative data has tested for this link (Wildhagen & College, 2011).

Currently, the lack of quantitative evidence to support the acting White phenomenon has produced a large debate in the research literature (Cook & Ludwig, 1997; Harris, 2006). For example some scholars argue that the burden of acting White does not deter students from academic excellence (Tyson, 2006); instead it concluded that it depended on the contexts. For instance, children in integrated schools were more likely to report academic excellence as being associated with Whiteness (Tyson, 2006). Furthermore, others stated that although students have some anger and resentment when being accused of acting White, not all adolescents are negatively impacted (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Murray, 2008).

Assimilation

Assimilation occurs when one begins to identify with the majority culture to the point where they do not maintain their own cultural heritage, choosing instead to totally

enmesh themselves in the host culture in a variety of ways (Berry, 2001). For instance,

Ogbu (2006) described a process known as cultural and linguistic assimilation, which

referred to Blacks emulating Whites in order to be successful in education and corporate

society, for example, by emulating what they perceive to be White behavior and speech

patterns. These individuals believe abandoning their own Black identity will allow them

to be more accepted by Whites, increasing their chances of social mobility (Ogbu, 2006).

For example, some individuals may use techniques such as bleaching their skin,

straightening their hair and pinching their noses so that it points in order to look more

White (Becknell, 1987). The major difference between this phenomenon and acting

White is that assimilation has been used to describe a greater array of behaviors and

psychological concepts related to adopting the values of an entire culture, and goes

beyond what is typically described as acting White. Acting White has typically been

used to describe behaviors associated with the academic achievement of students of color

(Fryer Jr. & Torelli, 2008).

Accommodation without Assimilation

Individuals who move to different cultural settings also learn to adapt in ways that

do not force them to eliminate their own values. For example, accommodation without

assimilation describes how individuals adopt what is perceived as White cultural values

and norms in order to be successful in predominantly White cultures without giving up

their Black identity (Ogbu, 2004). One example of explaining how individuals learn to

adapt to their White environment, while not giving up who they truly are is a construct

known as code switching (Molinsky, 2007). Specifically, "cross-cultural code-switching

is the act of purposefully modifying one's behavior during an interaction in a foreign

setting in order to accommodate different cultural norms for appropriate behavior"
(Molinsky, 2007, p. 624). Code switching can also involve a dialectical shift between
Standard English and Black English (Flowers, 2000) similar to practices associated with
acting White. Very common in school and work settings (Molinsky, 2007), code
switching has become an acceptable way to fit into new environments and is typically
discussed in regard to bilingual speakers.

Code Switching

African Americans have been found to use code switching to negotiate
appropriate communication contexts in which Black English is seen as inferior (Greene
& Walker, 2004; Ogbu, 2004). Most people understand that when moving to a new
culture, the norms, values and ways of being may be different than their own. These
same individuals also understand that they may have to adapt in order to be successful in
these settings; therefore, for some, code switching has its benefits. For instance, one
benefit of code-switching is that it provides advantages for students for attainment of
literacy skills (Craig, Zhang, Hensel, & Quinn, 2009). Some dangers associated with not
code switching for instance is that individuals in powerful academic positions use
Standard English and often have negative opinions about those who do not (Godley &
Escher. 2012). Therefore, this same form of behavior can cause internal conflict with the
switcher as it presents a challenge to behave in a way that conflict with their own values
and identity (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). For example, code switching can cause
guilt, embarrassment, anxiety or distress in individuals (Molinsky, 2007).

Biculturalism

Biculturalism is another term used to describe an individual learning to adjust in two cultures without giving up their own cultural heritage (Carter, 2006). Like accommodation without assimilation, bicultural individuals learn to value the norms of a westernized American culture as well as their own African American culture (Carter, 2006; Rust, Jackson, Ponterotto, & Blumberg, 2011) and are said to have a higher sense of well-being than monocultural individuals (LaFromboise et al., 1995). For example, Carter (2006) conducted a mixed-methods study with 68 low-income (identified as poor and qualified for government subsidized housing), native-born Black and Latino youths, ranging in age from 13 to 20. The primary purpose of the study was to examine how these youths negotiated the boundaries between school and peer group contexts. Bicultural individuals were described as cultural straddlers in Carter's study. Findings suggest that cultural straddlers successfully participated in both their own culture as well as the middle class culture that dominates school environments (Carter, 2006). Findings from this study and other research on biculturalism (LaFromboise et al., 1995; Tadmore, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009) suggest that there is a benefit to learning to live in two cultures. This means that the individuals learn that they do not have to reject their own cultural identity they can instead participate in the new culture viewing what they learn as an additive.

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Acculturation Stress and Psychological Impact

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Although defined in many ways, acculturation refers to the adaptation that occurs when culturally dissimilar groups have contact that produces long term social and emotional change (Teske, Jr., & Nelson, 2006; Walker 2007). While most recent

scholars have concluded that this change is bidirectional, they also assert that the most privileged group will experience the least impact during this contact as a result of little, if any pressure to adjust to those with less privilege (Abdullah & Brown, 2012). Acculturation stress refers to the psychological process that occurs upon contact with a different culture; it alters the mental health people experiencing pressure to conform to the new environment (Berry & Kim, 1988; Cho & Haslam 2010)). More specifically, acculturation stress occurs when an individual experiences internal conflict regarding whether to adopt dominant cultural values and beliefs or maintain their own cultural heritage. Individuals may experience depression and isolation while acculturating (Cho & Haslam 2010). When not addressed, acculturation stress can lead to mental health issues associated with depression and anxiety (Walker, 2007).

Higher levels of acculturation stress are found to be associated with higher incidences of suicide among Blacks (Walker, 2007). Given that acculturation stress is more prevalent among Blacks when they represent the minority population in any given environment (Joiner & Walker, 2002), combined with this population's historic cultural reluctance to seek assistance for mental health issues (Broman, 2012), this association comes as no surprise. For example, in a quantitative research study, Castle, Conner, Kaukeinen, and Tu (2011) recruited 250 Black individuals aged 18–24 residing in a northeastern city to participate in a study examining the association between perceived discrimination, racism, and acculturation with lifetime suicidal ideation (SI) and suicide attempt (SA) among Black young adults. The findings suggested a relationship between acculturation and suicidal ideation among Blacks. This is consistent with previous research (Walker, 2007) which found that when Blacks become more acculturated to a

White society, suicide ideation and attempts increase due to the prevalence of suicide behaviors within dominant society (Gibbs, 1997). Factors such as diminishing community connectedness, family, and religious support, make ethnic minorities who acculturate or assimilate more susceptible to suicide risk factors (Castle, Conner, Kaukeinen, & Tu, 2011).

Conclusion

Unfortunately, there is very little information in the literature regarding the parent-child socialization practices amongst low-income families who relocate from urban to college town environments. Thus, as has been mentioned, the purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of Black parents' perceptions of socialization practices that help their child acculturate to new cultural and social environments, particularly school. In the next chapter the methodology guiding this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter III presents the qualitative research design used in the study. Specifically, the qualitative research methods in conducting the study are organized as follows: (a) research methodology; (b) research design; (c) data collection procedures; (d) data analysis, and (e) methods for establishing trustworthiness.

Research Methodology

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of African American families from low SES who recently transitioned from an urban city to a Midwestern college town. The primary goal was to understand how they describe their socialization practices aimed to help their children acculturate to this new cultural context. More specifically, this study explored parents' perceptions of experiences that have shaped the way they promote academic success for their children, who are often considered at-risk for academic failure by educators unfamiliar with urban culture. Exploring these families' experiences could be helpful to educators concerned with understanding how best to support Black students who relocate from urban areas. The study may also expand on the acculturation literature (Payne, 2005). The following research questions were addressed in the study:

a. How do low income Black families decide to relocate to a culture different from their own?

b. How do they perceive themselves as being part of that new culture?

c. How do urban Black parents/guardians from low social economic statuses perceive the way they socialize their children to succeed in different class and cultural contexts?

d. What kinds of experiences do they have following relocation with school systems/ personnel?

Paradigm of Inquiry

Constructivists are concerned with how people construct meaning out of their lives (Crotty, 1998). This study was guided by this epistemological framework. "An 'epistemology' is a framework or theory for specifying the constitution and generation of knowledge about the social world; that is, it concerns how to understand the nature of 'reality'" (Stanley, 1993). The participants described their world based on their own social constructs and experiences. Their perceptions of these experiences explained how they came to know (Lundin, 1998; Stanley, 1993) their reality or understand their place in a social world. Their stories are their worldview and explain how they make sense of their own realities (Tuli, 2010). This exploration was aimed at examining how they make sense of these realities or how do they know these things to be true (personal experience, hearsay, general knowledge, etc.).

From an epistemological point of view, "knowledge is achieved when a subject correctly mirrors or represents objective reality" (Walters, 1995, p. 794). For example, African Americans from low SES were asked to share their stories regarding their transition from urban communities to this Midwestern college town. In their stories lies a reality that is influenced by their perceptions of their life situations. It is also important to note that their experiences can be described in alternative ways. For instance, some

individuals may describe discriminatory practices they "know" to exist. Using Berry's Acculturation theory as the framework to guide this study this project elicited information on how individuals describe their own socialization practices to live in their new culture in an attempt to understand the factors shaping perceptions of their respective realities.

Multiple Case Study Design

This qualitative research study utilized a multiple case study approach. A qualitative research design was necessary and advantageous to this research endeavor because it allowed the principal investigator to collect in-depth data reflective of families' perceptions of how they encouraged the success of their children in their new cultural environment. A multiple case study approach was appropriate for this study because (a) the focus of the study was to answer "how" and "why" questions; and (b) the data were collected in natural settings (Yin, 2012). The benefit in doing case study research is its ability to deal with an array of evidence, such as artifacts, observations and interviews to support analytic generalizations (Yin, 2009). The primary purpose of using a multiple case study approach was to disaggregate the participants' complex situations into more discretely defined chunks. The use of case study design allowed the researcher to receive meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2003) and explore in depth understanding of a number of cases (Yin, 2012), which is essential in order to explore the perceptions and experiences of a marginalized population. As Yin (2009) contends, multiple case studies can yield more information than single-case designs as emerging conclusions from multiple cases would be more powerful than a single case.

Sampling Methods

Participant Selection Criteria

Purposeful or purposive sampling, the most common qualitative sampling

method, was employed in this study (Marshall, 1996; Polkinghorne, 2005). As Patton

(2002) notes, even single cases are selected purposefully because of the small sample

sizes in qualitative research. The selection of participants should not be random

(Polkinghorne, 2005). The primary objective was to find participants with specific

experiences (Creswell, 2007; Marshall, 1996), in this case, transitioning to a new cultural

environment. One form of purposeful sampling, snowball sampling, was also used to

elicit participation through participants' social networks (Marshall, 1996; Patton, 2002).

Snowball sampling is an informal method of reaching participants through subjects. For

example, participants in the study were asked to nominate others who they felt could

participate in the study, by providing the researchers contact information (Faugier &

Sargeant, 2008).   The process sampling began in a community agency that was found to

assist transient low-income families that move to this college town.   The community

leaders from this agency allowed the researcher to advertise the research by hanging

flyers on the wall. These leaders also put flyers in the local shelter. This method was

particularly useful for creating a more diverse participant pool.

There has not been a consensus in determining adequate sample size for

qualitative research. For example, Creswell (1998) contended that five to 25 was

reasonable, while Morse (1994) stated that at least six participants should be used.

However, too many participants do not allow for an adequate in-depth exploration

(Sandelowski, 1995). In other words, as data saturation occurs, an adequate sample size

becomes clearer to the researcher (Marshall, 1996). Researchers argue that because of the attention it takes during analysis, smaller sample sizes are sufficient, realistic, and should depend more on the richness of the cases and less on the numbers (Smith & Osbron, 2007). Smaller sample sizes allow for a detailed examination of similarities and difference and convergence and divergence (Smith & Osborn). Following this approach, a sample between five to 20 African American parents/guardians was the goal.

Ten participants were interviewed based on their experiences as part of a lower income group, as well as having transitioned to a new context with different cultural views and lifestyles different than the one they had once lived. Participants for the study were identified and selected based on two social networks that served African American families who have transitioned from low-income urban communities. For the purposes of this research, the participants in the study were the primary parent/guardian(s) who spoke for their family. These individuals were chosen because of their ability to provide rich data to the study (Marshall, 1996).

After the research study was approved by the IRB, community agency leaders were identified and rapport was built with individuals to gain their assistance in recruiting families for the study. These community leaders agreed to help with participant recruitment upon IRB approval. Their assistance included passing out an advertisement for the study to individuals they felt were qualified or would be interested in participating. This advertisement included the researcher's phone number and email address.

In this qualitative study, ten Black parents (seven females and three males) were interviewed in order to gain an understanding of their experiences upon relocating to this

new community. In order to be eligible for participation the families had to meet the

following criteria:

(a) Live in a Midwestern college town (No specific time fame was pre-determined).

(b) Have at least one child currently enrolled in an elementary/middle/junior high

school/high school in this town;

(c) Identify as Black or African American;

(d) Be considered low SES as it is indicated by the school district (i.e., child qualifies

for free or reduced lunch); and

(e) Have moved from an urban area/community where their child attended school

before moving to their new town.

The purpose of having a sample comprised of individuals who met the above criteria

is that they represented the demographic makeup of the factors that guided this study

(race, US region and social class status). Other factors such as having a child enrolled in

school guaranteed that the individual could speak of experiences that related to the role of

the school or other educational supports.

Procedures

Before data collection started, permission was granted from the University of Iowa's

IRB. Upon approval, a meeting with leaders who had already been identified was

organized. The researcher sent community leaders a letter via email explaining the

project with consent forms for parents to take home and look over and discuss with their

support networks. This consent form was signed and given to the researcher before data

collection began. This consent form identified the purpose of the study and the

expectations of participation, including participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Demographic Questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to assess the participants' background information, including: age, sex, race, participation in federally funded free or reduced lunch program, parents' educational background and marital status, estimated annual family income, residency information (including when the family moved from their urban communities as well as how many people currently lived in the home). Financial information was obtained to understand the family's SES as it has been defined in the literature (i.e., parents' education, qualifying for government assistance, etc.). Furthermore, these questions helped determine participant eligibility. Factors such as marital status (two-parent homes) also had implications for the study. Having some knowledge about household size gave attention to the amount of potential kin support the families received within their own households as well as support these families expected to offer others. This information helped guide the study's interview questions (Liu et al., 2004).

Individual Interviews. In case study research, the most important source of data collection may be the individual interview (Yin, 2009). Interviews were conducted in a private area negotiated by researcher and participant (Corbi, 2003) (i.e., neighborhood centers. or the participants' home). Interviews were conducted with the primary parent/guardian(s) who provided the voice for their family. The researcher and participant found a designated place where the interview could not be heard or interrupted by others if the neighborhood centers were chosen. Interviews lasted no more than one hour.

As is typical in case study research (Yin, 2009) semi-structured interviews developed by the researcher were used as a primary strategy for data collection (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Patton, 2002). The interview should be conversational in nature during case study research (Yin, 2009). This semi-structured interview guide was developed based on Berry's Acculturation framework and previous literature on social class and school-community-family-partnerships. The interview guide provided some structure but allowed flexibility by allowing participants to go where they wished (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Patton), making meaning of events and elaborating beyond the interview questions.

In this case study research, semi-structured interviews were necessary because they allowed the researcher to probe interesting ideas as they arose (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Fully structured interviews were not used in this study because of their inflexibility (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Completely structured interviews would have taken away from the flexibility that allowed the participants to talk about concepts that were not addressed by the interview questions.

Face to face interviews are particularly important in qualitative research because they capture non-verbal communication (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). N this study, face to face interviews were also possible because of the close proximity and low amounts of travel needed to gain access to the participants. This study gathered participant data from questionnaires and interviews. According to Patton (2002), multiple sources of data can "provide cross-data validity checks" (p. 248) or triangulation (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Pauwels & Matthyssens, 2004).

To verify the relevance of the semi-structured interview questions a pilot study was completed with two participants. Participants were asked to review and provide feedback on the interview questions. At that time questions were changed based on appropriateness. However, their responses of the pilot participants were not included in the results of the study.

An audio recorder and transcriptions were used to ensure accuracy of interpretation during analysis. Note taking was used in conjunction with recording to jot down non-verbal communication such as body language (Brenner, 2006).   The interviews were later transcribed by the researcher. Verification ensured accuracy of the transcriptions. The interviews were then stored in a secure Microsoft word document on the researcher's private computer in a password protected folder. Each typed interview was sent via email or delivered to the participant to ensure accuracy (member checking), one of the most viable forms of trustworthiness. Participants were given the option to read over the transcripts to verify that the researcher captured the essence of their experiences and what they had hoped to share. No changes were made and the participants agreed with the interviews.

Data Analysis

Multiple strategies were used during data analysis. First, individual case studies were examined and analyzed through coding to catch the complexity of each individual case (Stake, 1995). Next cross-case analysis was used to compare cases, looking for both similarities and differences in the data (Merriam, 1998).

Cross-case Synthesis

Individual cases were analyzed by the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The initial stage, open coding, refers to breaking down data in order to categorize (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, the author coded each transcript sentence by sentence in order to create categories and subcategories. During this stage the researcher asked questions, made comparisons and looked for similarities and differences within the transcribed document.

The next step, axial coding, refers to developing new categories. The emphasis during this stage was to relate subcategories to a category. Selective coding was the next stage of this analysis procedure. It involved identifying and choosing a core category by making connections between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). This was done in a systematic way, relating it to other categories through filling in and refining the categories. The selective coding allowed a storyline to develop that described what happened in the phenomenon that is being studied. The final stage involved developing a theory that represented the categories and themes (i.e., constant comparative method) and attempted to answer the research questions.

Once individual analyses were complete a cross-case analyses were conducted to compare cases (Merriam, 1998). Cross Case analysis "looks across individuals in order to identify common themes about the phenomenon being studied, aiming to see which aspects are shared across participants" (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliot, 2002, p.221). However, each case is treated as a separate study (Yin, 2009). Therefore, this analysis looked similar to individual case analysis (Merriam, 1998). Using word tables to capture findings in the cross-case analysis, the researcher looked at how the cases were similar

and different and how they may conflict (Yin, 2009). This sort of analysis relies mostly on interpretation rather than quantitative tallies (Yin, 2009). Therefore, it was important to develop fair arguments that were supported by the data.

Researcher Subjectivity

Qualitative analysis is often described as "subjectivity" because the researcher is the instrument for analysis. The researcher makes all the judgments during this process, making biases important to pay close attention to (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). In this study, furthermore there are particular experiences that the researcher had that are vital to mention. As a Black female who grew up in a low-income urban community, the researcher had to pay particular attention to biases. My personal experiences made me very close to the phenomenon under study. I grew up in a low-income community 'projects' part of Chicago's housing authority. Due to negative experiences in my neighborhood that align with what the research says many individuals from low-income communities face, I have a personal bias in the project. Therefore, it would be easy for me to make assumptions based on my own personal experiences (experiences in schools, community violence exposure, etc.). Although I did not transition directly from my urban community, I was born and raised in that community and therefore still have connections with the community. Further, I have family who continue to live in that same community and have had negative experiences with individuals who judged them, and who have judged me because of my own background.

Since relocating, I have encountered individuals who have made assumptions about my own family and upbringing because I am from Chicago; at least until I tell people I am a student at the University. I have overheard conversations by school personnel

regarding 'those kids' from Chicago. Counselors have asked me at conferences what they should and can do for the kids from Chicago. For me, this implies that these children are seen as 'different' or somehow deviant from the culture under study. Given all of the personal connections that I have to issues that these families may face, I had to pay special attention to my biases throughout the entire study. Researcher bias can also have an effect on the interpretation of findings, data collection methods and organization of the study including interview questions. For example, the researcher can lose objectivity and start to use her own personal experiences when interpreting data.

Qualitative research is personal and close. Through the use of trustworthiness techniques described below the researcher did her best to account for subjectivity while conducting this research. Bracketing procedures (i.e., checking in with self) to eliminate potential bias from the participants' experiences was used as analysis was approached (Trepal & Stinchfield, 2011). Bracketing was completed in a reflexive journal (Ahern, 1999). During this process the researcher went into reflection by asking herself many why questions in an attempt to make meaning to how decisions were being made throughout the study.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to strategies used to reach the following in order to account for researcher subjectivity: (a) credibility; (b) transferability; (c) confirmability; and (d) dependability. There are many strategies qualitative researchers view as important in developing trustworthy data. The researcher utilized various methods; all described below to ensure the study was trustworthy (Patton, 2002).

Credibility. Credibility, also referred to as internal validity (Shenton, 2004), seeks to ensure that the study measures or tests what is intended. One way to ensure credibility is to emphasize the use of multiple sorts of rigorous data collection methods such as individual interviews and cross-checking, otherwise known as data triangulation (Patton, 2002; Shenton, 2004). The study focused on individual interviews for data collection. A demographic questionnaire was used to ascertain participant's eligibility for the study (see above).

Another aspect of credibility is to ensure that the research findings represent the actual experiences of the participants. To ensure credibility, the researcher actively involved participants throughout the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000) by asking questions about their experiences with the project. Furthermore, as Creswell & Miller (2000) suggest, an external reviewer with no direct connection to the research can have an unbiased stance and increase credibility by offering feedback on the study, as well. For this study, the external reviewer was another doctoral student in the counselor education program who had received advanced training in qualitative research. Credibility of the researcher is another important aspect of trustworthiness. This refers to the researcher's level of training, experience and status. As a doctoral student, the researcher took many advanced level research and qualitative courses. Also, the researcher has conducted multiple qualitative research projects in the past with Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

As Shenton (2004) explains, familiarity with the culture of participants is another important factor associated with credibility in qualitative research. The researcher has already attended a family night promoted by the Neighborhood Center and is quite

familiar with other contexts in which potential participants congregate (e.g., church, neighborhood centers, etc.). In this way, this aspect of credibility has also been addressed.

Being in the natural environment of the participants before data collection helped the researcher gain an adequate understanding of the organizations of which these individuals are a part as well as establish a relationship of trust (Lincoln & Guba). This is particularly important for this group, because of mistrust due to their own past negative experiences with certain groups (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Prolonged engagement in the field is beneficial to the researcher and provides validity for the study as well (Creswell & Miller, 2000). It gives the researcher an opportunity to gain rapport with the participants, which encourages them to share rather personal information. Finally, by utilizing methods such as the researcher's reflective commentary and peer debriefing trustworthiness of the study was increased. In the study, the researcher communicated with key informants that have some expertise in the population being investigated. The role of the peer debrief was to help the researcher maintain objectivity during the research project including analysis. These individuals were actively involved on the research committee.

Transferability. Transferability, also known as external validity in quantitative research, is achieved by assuring that the findings of one study can be applied or generalized to other situations (Shenton, 2004). In the study, thick description of the phenomena under investigation was provided to allow readers to determine the transferability of the cases. The degree of transferability is the function of the similarity of the two contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher should provide readers with

adequate information regarding the study to allow them the opportunity to make

extrapolations (Patton, 2002).   For example, multiple methods of data collection and

multiple analyses steps provided a thick description of the participants' experiences.

Furthermore, transferability was facilitated by specific details about the participants and

their environment to contextualize the study findings.

   Confirmability. Confirmability can be increased by undertaking steps to help ensure

that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants and not due

to researcher bias (Shenton, 2004). In order to do this, the researcher used member

checking, audit trails, triangulation and reflective journaling as sources of confirmability.

An audit trail based on researcher notes regarding decisions made throughout data

collection and data analysis supported trustworthiness. An external then reviewed the

notes and confirmed their agreement with the codes and themes that the researcher

developed, supporting credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

   Dependability. To ensure dependability or reliability the researcher also relied on the

use of an audit trail and reflective journaling. Dependability ensures that the research can

be repeated by others. As a first step, the researcher provided an in-depth description of

the research project and its findings (Shenton, 2004). This step helps the reader to assess

whether proper research practiced has been followed (Shenton, 2004). In addition to

providing rigor in qualitative research (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004; Patton, 2002) as

with conformability above this audit trail providing detailed notes referencing decisions

made throughout data collection and data analysis (Kuper, Lingard, Levinson, 2008) was

given to an external auditor for review regarding dependability. This auditor traced the

audit to make sure inferences were logical (Carcary, 2009). After reviewing the steps

taken throughout the study, the external reviewer had the opportunity to debrief with the researcher, identifying issues if they had arisen. These issues were addressed by going back over the data and openly discussing interpretations so the research process can continue. The journal also served a useful purpose in this project, allowing the researcher a place to store notes, and descriptions of personal feelings and emotions that occurred while doing this project. Field notes, reflexivity (Curtin & Fossey, 2007), peer debriefing and member checking were all used to enhance the integrity of the research process (Patton, 2002). The use of peer debriefing in the study involved the researcher having periodic consultations with a peer regarding emotions and researcher subjectivity that arose from conducting the study as well as any other issues that came about. The peer debriefer was also useful in the auditing process described above during data analysis.

An important purpose of the peer debriefing was to help the researcher remain open and honest about the researcher's own experiences in such a familiar context. Personal biases and perspectives may be positive when the researcher brings the issues to the forefront (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005). Member checking was used to promote accuracy of findings making sure the analyses were congruent with the participants' experiences (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). The transcripts were either emailed or hand delivered to participants. If individuals did not agree with the transcription, they had the opportunity to make necessary changes by deleting, clarifying or elaborating on the data (Doyle, 2007) before returning to the researcher. Participants' all agreed that the interview matched what they planned to depict in their interview. No one opposed to their transcript. One participant refused the transcript stating that what they said was the truth and "real" and did not want to see their interview on paper. Creswell (2009)

suggest that member checking is most useful when the researcher provides the participant with a summarized version of the full transcripts that includes themes and patterns.

Limitations

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument (Patton, 2002). To ensure trustworthiness the researcher has to familiarize herself with the phenomenon under study and have good investigative skills (Kreftin, 1990). Because the interview is semi-structured with the intent to allow for further unanticipated direction, there lies a risk that the interviewer can lead the interviewee (Opdenakker, 2006). To counter this limitation, triangulation strategies were utilized throughout the study.

Participants were all recruited from one geographical location located in the Midwestern region of the U.S. The researcher located local agencies with a primary mission to assist families in transition. This geographical location presented a limitation because a single location will have its own unique factors (i.e. job and housing availability and security, population size and diversity, etc.) that can affect participants' experiences. Including other locations may have elicited more diverse information regarding experiences of relocated families.

The study's design puts a limit on generalization beonnd the scope of the cases. They do not have the capability to be generalized to every family that reolcates (Myers, 2000). However it should not be an issue when comparisons are made with similar people and settings (Johnson, 1997). In general, qualitative research usually does not claim to be generalizable in the same way that scientific surveys are (Myers, 2000). Mostly, case study researchers reject population generalizability as a goal (Schofield, 2002), in favor of analytic generalizability (Yin, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher gained IRB approval from The University of Iowa prior to the start of the research process to ensure ethical protection of all participants. Possible ethical concerns could have risen from issues with "informed consent, confidentiality, data generation and analysis, researcher/ participant relationships, and reporting of final outcomes" (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000, p. 94). Participants signed a consent form that addressed the following: (a) The primary purpose and description of the study; (b) The expectations and requirements for the study; (c) Participants rights, risks and benefits; and (d) Their right to leave the study at any time.

Participants were giving autonomy by providing participants their right to voluntarily accept or refuse to participate in the study. Also, when conducting any type of research it is important to do good or prevent harm. When dealing with sensitive information harm can occur. In order to prevent harm, the researcher made participants aware of the data collection methods as well as informed participants that some questions may ask sensitive information that the individual may not be comfortable with sharing. Some of the participants may have experienced a history of violence either directly or indirectly. As described in the informed consent document, the individual were given the right to skip any question they chose. In addition, the participants were made aware of the researcher's obligation to report harm to elders or children (Orb et al., 2000). In keeping with beneficence (preventing harm), the researcher also removed all possible identifying information of participants. Pseudonyms were good for this purpose. All materials were stowed away in a locked cabinet and password protected folder. Justice or fairness was relevant in this study as it can be implemented through giving a voice to

marginalized populations (Orb et al., 2000). This project may have been emotional for some as it asked participants to share very personal and maybe even negative experiences with their financial status as well as past experiences in their urban environments. In order to avoid doing harm the researcher allowed the participant the freedom to share what they liked, refrain from answering any question they wished as well as the autonomy to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences.

Summary

This chapter summarized the methodology that was used to conduct this study. With a qualitative approach, the researcher examined thick descriptions of each participant's life. Due to the intrusiveness of qualitative research, the inquirer had to undergo many steps prior to, during and following the research study to protect participants and establish trustworthiness.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV presents the results of the research study. This qualitative study examined the experiences of Black parents from low income urban communities upon their relocation to a smaller Midwestern college town. Overall, the purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of parents' perceptions of their role in helping their child acculturate in their new environment. Data were analyzed within the acculturation framework, with attention given to parents' perceptions of their children's adjustment. This study sought to answer the following central research question: How do low-income, urban, transient Black families help their child acculturate to new cultural environments?

The study was conducted as a multiple case study of ten Black parents from urban communities that were very unique: Chicago, with an estimated population of 2,714,856; Rock Island County with a population of approximately 147,000 people; and St. Louis, with a population of approximately 1,000,000 people. These cities served as the backdrop for distinct, yet similar experiences and circumstances for each of the participants. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with all participants.

Table 1 (see Appendix D) provides the demographic information. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' confidentiality. Each within-case analysis begins with a rich description of the participant based on interviews and participant profiles followed by a presentation of themes that emerged from each participant interview. Interviews were first coded individually using Berry's 1984 theory of acculturation. Then they were organized according to factors that pushed each individual from their old to new

communities and which factors encouraged them to stay (pull) and how they and their family adjusted to this push-pull tension. A summary of emerging themes from each interview can be found below. Finally, the within-case themes were re-coded to develop and highlight similarities across cases.

Profiles

As has been mentioned, to protect the confidentiality of the participants, a pseudonym or phrase marked by [brackets] will be used to identify each participant. Each profile will provide an overview of each participant. The purpose of the profiles is to assist readers in understanding the overall life experiences of each participant as well as assessing similarities and differences across cases. The summaries were derived from the in-depth interview conducted with each participant.

Case 1: Rose

Rose was a middle aged female from a large urban Midwestern town. At the time of the interview, she and her two youngest children were living in a homeless shelter. Rose shared that she decided to move from her hometown because of the violence and drugs in the neighborhood where she was raising her children. With one child suffering from mental illness, Rose felt that coming to [Midwestern college town] was the best decision she could have made for her family, although she had some regrets. Specifically, she shared feeling guilty about her son's long history with the Johnson County police. She stated:

> But, overall, I'm glad I came down here, overall. And if I didn't come down here my daughter would have never met her husband. She met him here. I have to think of that, too. Then, on the negative side, if I didn't come down here my son wouldn't have all those 15, 16 [police] charges on him right now. He wouldn't be running from the police.

She believed that there was a lot of injustice in relation to her son, and that the police focused more on her son's behaviors than the struggles he suffered as a result of his mental illness. Despite issues concerning her son's legal troubles, being from one of the worst neighborhoods (in relation to violence and murder rates) in her home town, she was very pleased with her experiences in her current town.

Rose was very forthcoming in the interview and shared a lot about how she struggled in an abusive relationship with her husband and had come a long way as she gains her strength in this new community. For example, Rose shared, "I have changed, but by me being in the relationship I'm in, it hasn't been a healthy relationship so, therefore, I couldn't progress like I should have mentally, really or physically or emotionally." Rose felt that this relationship prevented her from succeeding in all areas. She feels that she can start to make progress now that the relationship has ended.

Case 2: Lisa

Lisa is a single mother of three children. Before relocating she grew up in an urban city she described as being very violent. For example, she discussed a situation in which one of her children found a handgun in the play area. According to her, not only had her children's father been incarcerated in the past, but he also physically abused her. Despite the fact that she and her children were homeless in her new town during the time of the interview, she described life in her hometown as "stressful." For instance, Lisa grew up in foster care because both her parents were incarcerated. She had only recently started to develop a relationship with her biological mother when her mother away from alcohol abuse.

Lisa described mostly positive experiences in her new town and felt that the relocation was the best thing for her and her children. She said that her children were adjusting well and showed appreciation for some things others may take for granted:

> They like it more. They can go outside. And there's not all this trash and dirt around you all the time. There's grass. We don't have to play in dirt. Mom {referring to self} don't have to yell at us for being dirty all the time or finding stuff they don't have no business finding.

As Lisa discussed having grass in her neighborhood her smile grew and that alone, according to her, made for a positive experience in her new community. In addition, she expressed really enjoying the free activities that are available for her children in the community.

Although Lisa seemed very satisfied with her experiences in her new town, there were things she missed about being home:

> The biggest thing is that you had more access to things like we had corner stores like if you ran out of something you can go to the corner store and get this off your link card. Up here (laughs) it's like y'all don't have a corner store.

Case 3: Tamm

Tamm was born and raised in a large Midwestern urban town. She quickly described being frightened of her hometown after moving to a smaller town in Illinois before moving back:

> By the time I moved back to [hometown] it was scary. Had to look over your back. I was never a south sider [person who lives on the south side, which is considered a dangerous part of town], so that was unfamiliar grounds, so it really didn't matter where I went in the city it was bad all over. I became terrified and I couldn't wait to get down here to get away from there.

Her family members encouraged her to move to this smaller town in order to take advantage of opportunities and benefits such as cheaper cost of living, school and job

opportunities. She mentioned that the past year was quite a struggle and that during this

time she experienced poverty in a different way:

> I have never really, all my life really, experienced poverty, maybe, till a year ago. I'm not gonna say never experienced it, but felt it. I mean you can experience it but never really feel it….where I ended up living in a shelter.

She went on to later say:

> I wanted to be somewhere that I can get based [settled]…needed for them [family members] to get grounded…opposed to when I really started to feel my poverty and I had to take action on it like going into a shelter. That was the reason why I came. I had family that were willing to open doors for me.

> Tamm relocated with her husband and two youngest children. She said she had

adult children to whom she still gives advice; however, she mentioned they grew up

differently than her younger ones. According to her, in the past, she struggled with drug

use, but was very proud to say that she had been clean for nine years. She went on to

discuss her past issues with drug abuse as follows:

> When you struggle for a long time trying to get rid of something and you can't, and when you throw your hands up and surrender and say 'I'm done,' it's no longer a battle. The battle is over because you surrendered.

She described having a "peace of mind" being in her new town. She felt comfortable and

safe, which was different than what she experienced in her previous large urban

community

Case 4: Tim

Tim was a married man who formerly lived in the inner-city of a large urban

Midwestern town and relocated to a small college town with his wife. He had a very

calm demeanor and shared that the move changed his life for the better:

> It was a change for me and it was a good change. I was really in the streets real heavy so when I came here it was a change. Too much killing and just…where I

come from, it was time to make a change…it was too bad. I don't have to look over my shoulder [in this college town]. I aint gotta carry my gun.

Tim had some reservation with sharing things in the interview, one time asking about his name being used. Once he was assured that the interview was confidential he went on to share multiple experiences about his hometown.

Tim described very positive experiences since being in his current town and has encouraged other family members to relocate, as well. Specifically, he has invited many of his adult children and their grandchildren to live with him as they settle into this new place to better themselves. When asked if there were any similarities between his new and old town he said "no!" and went on to state that "When you come here you can mellow out you don't have to look over your shoulders. It was a big change for me I mean it was really a big change." According to Tim, he has become a better person since moving, which makes him want to stay, in addition to offering an escape from violence. Tim also raved about the job opportunities that he was provided upon moving to his current town and said he has many friends back in his hometown who cannot find a job and must depend on other illegal means to make money: "They gotta be in the streets because they already know when they go look for a job [there] aint nothing."

Case 5: David

David was a 25 year-old man from a large urban Midwestern town. He was born and raised in the inner-city and described his life as "rough," and voiced an appreciation for the peace and an overall better life for his children in the college town. David was also very happy about being able to leave his keys in the car. He did not feel there were any similarities between his old and new communities and seemed very satisfied with being there. He shared that, at first, it was boring and took some getting used to, but he

started to meet good people. He described his daughter's adjustment as going pretty well. When asked whether he ever thought about moving back to his hometown, he shared that he had some negative experiences with the police. He described them as being "thirsty" (eager to make arrests) and "strict." He said he appreciates having grown up in his large urban community and had no regrets about the decisions he's made, but he is happy about being in a college town and not having to be "violent."

Case 6: Stacie

Stacie was a middle-aged woman with three children. She was born and raised in a large urban Midwestern town and decided to relocate due to the senseless violence in her neighborhood. Stacie lost some family members to gun violence and, as a result, did not want to keep her children in such an environment. Stacie stated that her current environment is much better and safer for her and her children, which she seemed to really appreciate. When asked specifically about what she appreciated about living in her new town, she reported the following:

> I appreciate everything. The school system. The job that I have. They gave me the opportunity to get this job I just appreciate [current town]. I appreciate what they have done for me…how I have grown…my kids.

Also, because she struggled with some drug use in the past, she believed that being in a much slower and positive community would encourage her to keep refraining from drug use.

Stacie mentioned that she felt as though she and her family adjusted well to the environment despite some difficult experiences. For example, she had a negative experience with the police after reporting a rape. She stated, quite strongly, that she did not agree with the justice system in her new town. She believed there are a lot of

injustices in the town and expressed disappointment that police were not doing more to help citizens. She also reported losing a teenage son in a house fire, but was very thankful for the support and assistance she received from various organizations in the community in response to the tragedy.

Case 7: Mark

Mark was a young male from the inner city who described his life as "hell." He wanted a better chance at life and decided his best opportunity would be to relocate to a smaller town. According to Mark, experiences are what one makes them and, so far, he's been having a positive attitude about everything. He likes the schools here and was very excited about his kids attending them. Mark described himself as being very involved in his children's lives and has become a more responsible parent in response to being in a small college town.

Mark described going back and forth from his urban town to his new town before finally making the decision to stay. He moved to the small college town as a high school student but moved back to his urban hometown after graduating. When asked what makes him stay now, he mentioned the many available opportunities. Although Mark described numerous positive experiences, he did take issue with the police. For example, when whether he experienced any challenges living in a small college town, Mark stated "in trouble with the law. Like once they found out who I was they used to target me. My biggest problem is them; I wish we could do something about them."

Case 8: Naomi

Naomi was born and raised in a large urban town. During her interview, there were lots of laughs, as well as tears as she described her life in the urban community

where she previously lived as a "struggle." According to Naomi, there were a lot of drug

users and prostitutes, including herself, which she was not proud of; however, she

claimed to have been clean and sober for eight months. Naomi was 49 years old at the

time of the interview, had mostly adult children, and one school-aged daughter. She

recently moved to the small town with her family to escape an abusive relationship with

her live-in boyfriend. She then moved to a homeless shelter, leaving her youngest

daughter with her eldest child. Seemingly uncomfortable with the decision to leave her

children behind, she described not having any other choice as she wanted to protect

herself and her children. Naomi smiled a lot when speaking about her children.

When asked about her transition to this smaller town, she responded with the following:

> I'm actually leaving an abuser who was also my dope man who I have lived with
> for 14 years. I don't have my daughter here [current residence] because it's a risk
> for her. She's staying with my oldest daughter. I'm actually considering leaving
> [current town] because he's hot on my trail he's really hot and I don't feel
> comfortable telling the white folks all my business.

According to Naomi, the homeless shelters in her hometown would not allow her to come

in because of her boyfriends' known involvement with gangs. During the interview, she

appeared very frightened of him, and described herself as "depressed," but also shared

that she was tired of the abuse and ready to move on to a better life:

> I'm tired. I am literally tired. It's not worth it. It's [her life with him] not worth
> the fast money it's not worth the seeing you with all different types of women. ..
> I'm just done with it I can't do it no more."

Case 9: Brandy

Brandy was a 28 year-old single mother to one son who moved to a smaller

community with her family in order to escape the violence in her home community.

According to Brandy, "the differences is he can walk up the street, ride his bike go

anywhere" without her having to worry, which was a completely different from what she experienced in the large urban community where she used to live. Her son seemed to be happy with the new environment as well, according to her "he loves it." She said they both have adjusted very well. She said that since relocating, she has been able to find her own place to live and enroll in college courses. Although she said gets bored, she stated that she has no intentions of going back to her hometown. She described the new environment as "slower" than her hometown. Brandy shared the following when asked how she's changed in response to being in her new community:

> In [home town] I was partying and drinking and gambling real hard, so I have changed a lot. Because I don't gamble like that no more. I may go to the boat every now and then, but as far as shooting dice, playing cards I used to do all that.

Case 10: Angela

Angela was a 39 year-old single mother to four boys. She moved to this smaller town in 2006 and is very pleased with her experiences. She described life in her hometown as "hell.". She shared that living in an environment of violence and unsafe conditions was no way she wanted to raise her four boys. She grew up with four brothers who, she explained, made her realize she needed to get her sons away from her previous community. She lived in a few areas in this large urban city, but said that they all were similar to each other. Therefore, she wanted to provide her children with a chance she did not feel she had as a child:

> It's just too much. I had to give them a chance. I didn't have a chance. I had to give them one. That was my thing: give my babies a chance. I didn't finish school. My two oldest and my third finna [are going to] finish this year, then my baby boy got two more years left. My youngest is in high school. I got my two oldest out, then my two youngest. My 17 year-old finna be a senior then my 15 year-old finna be a sophomore. I told them if you don't do nothing else, I want [you to finish school and earn] a high school diploma.

She went on to say, "I've always been mom and dad. I'm all they got, anyway." As a single black female, she seemed to believe that she was unable to teach her boys to be men, but she has already, according to her, "got them on this path…on this road…you know…doing straight [doing well]." She raved about how smart and talented her boys were and how very proud of how she has done as a single mother. She said that her boys keep her out of trouble, and she only hopes for the best when it comes to their futures.

Emergent themes

This section of the chapter summarizes the major themes and subthemes that emerged from the data. Themes were developed based on participants' responses to the individual interviews and later categorized as push and pull factors. For example, violence and fear pushed parents/guardians away from their known home environment. Seeking personal and familial growth and safety were major factors that pulled families to stay in their current college town environments. Finally, acculturation strategies such as building relational networks within the community and using traditional and non-traditional parenting approaches were used to help families and their children adjust to their new cultures, based on the data analysis. There were a total of five major themes that emerged collectively from all interviews. The major themes are as follows: (a) Violence; (b) seeking personal and familial growth; (c) safety; (d) community networks, and; (e) traditional and non-traditional parental support. Direct quotes and narratives are used to help readers understand the major themes.

Push Factors

Community violence experiences

There were many commonalities among the individual participant interviews. For instance, all participants mentioned experiences in which they were either directly a part of or witnessed violence as the main reason for moving from their previous urban cities to their current town. During the course of the interviews, it seemed as though participants were describing a war zone, with countless acts of terror, violence and death. They often described their lives as "hell."

Community violence experiences are related to participants who were either directly a part of violence or a witness to community violence, which refers to direct victimization, witnessing, and hearing about violent acts in a community (McDonald et al., 2011). All ten participants (n=10) reported being impacted by violence in their past communities, with four participants reporting being directly involved as a perpetrator or victim of violent acts.

Mark reported that, in his opinion, his chances of surviving increased because of living in a college town as opposed to his previous hometown: "If I was in [my previous urban city] I woulda been doing the same shit…same stuff. Probably be in jail, dead aint no telling." Below is an excerpt from an interview from David describing his direct involvement with violence:

> David: I can say I did a whole lotta stuff, violent stuff for no reason. And now…I think about it now…about what I been doing and what I used to do. I matured a lot… Yea I probably woulda been around a whole different people…A lotta people I used to hang with they not around no mo'.
> Researcher: Because they passed away or…
> David: Passed away and went to jail, yea.

Further, Naomi shared a story about violence in her own home when she lived in her

hometown:

> So now that I'm not using [drugs] anymore, you [former husband] lost your power. You lost a lotta power. And I talk back too. I talk real crazy. I fight back too, I'm crazy. Because I'm tired now. So you think you just gonna hit me and I'm not gonna hit you back. Really? Where they do that at? He knocked all my teeth out my mouth. I'm sick of him. Sick. Done. You knocked my [teeth] out all that money you make you could've been got me some more. But you're so ornery and don't want nobody else to want me. But what you don't know is people look at me every day. Because I'm a beautiful person. My teeth don't make me. My personality and my heart make me.

Seven participants, specifically, made reference to either personally carrying a gun for

protection, losing a loved one to gun violence, or having seen someone shot or killed by a

firearm. For example, Tim said the following:

> My oldest [child] is 21. When he was one, he knew when he heard a firecracker…my baby would duck on the floor. He would fall on the floor. That's a good thing but it's a fucked up thing that for a one year old to have to do. And then I had my second baby, my 3rd baby then my 4th and I was like, uh uh, it's just too much going on for me.

Stacie and Tamm both shared their experiences with losing loved ones to gun violence.

For example, Tamm said: "I lost a loved one to gun violence [date] of this year and that

took a toll on us. Like I said I have two kids that been raised in the streets."

Stacie shared the following:

> I had a nephew got killed. I got a cousin who got shot up when he was 14. It was too much crime and I had three boys. They was little. One was four, one was seven and [one was] eight. I had to come up here because I didn't want that to happen to my child. My 14 year-old nephew was shot in the head.

In this example, Mark talked about a constant fear and watching over his back:

> It was hell like worrying about looking over your back. Hearing gun shots. Seeing people shot. Just it wasn't right. I come to [current town] to better myself. I heard it was a lot of opportunities and stuff like that. It's better chances out here. I come to see it for myself and I see it. And I like it.

Tim's response to carrying an illegal firearm was as follows: "I don't have to carry my gun no mo. That was a huge change for me. Rather be caught with it than without it in [previous hometown]. I'm telling you."

Seven participants briefly mentioned the prevalence of crime and drugs in their previous communities. David raved about being able to leave his doors open and keys in the car without anyone touching or stealing his things, which was different from his previous hometown. Rose talked about the drug activity in her previous community:

> Drugs…in the neighborhood we were staying, there was a lot of drug activity. You couldn't go a block without seeing a drug dealer or something like that. I got tired of that life, so I wanted to relocate.

Tamm described the crime rate as "tremendous," while Rose said the crime rates started to be more than she could handle: "I got tired of that life so I wanted to relocate."

Pull Factors

Major themes were categorized as pull factors if they related to the reasons individuals decided to move to the specific community. In a pursuit for personal growth, these parents all chose the same Midwestern college town. Excerpts and direct quotations will be used to illuminate parents' specific reasons for choosing and staying in this town.

Personal and Familial Growth

Ninety percent of the participants (n=9) described this town as being more resourceful than their previous communities. Within the domain, Personal and Familial Growth, two subthemes emerged as participants specified the available resources they have used or those that have helped their families: more job and employment opportunities and education.

Job and employment opportunities

Six of the parents talked specifically about job opportunities being better, more available or easier to secure than in their hometown. For example, Lisa mentioned the following:

> …you can't really find a job [in home town] it was hard finding a job…. It's so easy to get a job [in current town] it's like every Thursday you can get an interview. Especially in [specific place in current town]. You can get a job anywhere. You see all these places talking about hiring.

Stacie agreed, offering the following:

> …here it's more job opportunities because it's smaller. I mean its job opportunities there, but it's much smaller here so you get more jobs…you get jobs easier because it's a smaller town… The job that I have, they [new community] gave me the opportunity to get this job. I just appreciate [current town].

The following comment came from Tim, when discussing the benefits of his current town:

> The opportunity that you have here you won't have in [hometown]. In [hometown], I couldn't even find a job. I can find a job down here when I get ready. That's what makes me wanna stay. It's totally different than from [hometown] and [current town]. You can't even go to [hometown] and find a job. All my friends in [hometown] don't even work. Majority of them don't even go try to look for a job they gotta be in the streets because they already know when they go look for a job aint nothing. With your criminal background, you can't even get no job. There are a lot of opportunities for a Black man. For a Black man he can really change his life if he move here. So that's where I'm at. I tell people when I go I won't move back there.

Education

Nine of the ten parents expressed their love for the school systems and believed their children have been receiving great educational opportunities and would continue to do so in the future. For example, Mark offered the following:

> The schools out here is good. I went to high school out here. It's better. It's like they take time to teach you. They want you to learn. In [home town] they don't care. As long as you show up.

Angela agreed with the statement about students in her college town receiving more attention to help students perform better:

> Here, I believe the school system… I've been fortunate to come across a couple of schools that my kids have been involved with that are more attentive to them. They give them more time and resources. I think the schools in [home community] are overcrowded. So that's a good thing that's a positive thing. So they're getting a better education here.

Again, this parent discussed how much her children also enjoyed the schools in the college town versus her hometown due to more structured activities and educators' ability to engage her children:

> They go to a [specific] afterschool program that helps them with their reading. They went from 'no I don't like school, to we got school?' They think they got school on Saturday and Sunday (laughs). Most of the schools in [hometown]... they [my kids] take [took] a lot of those activities from those kids probably cause…I don't know what the reason. Up here, they have Big Brothers [Big Brothers Big Sisters] centers to go to for free. They do more activities at school then they do [did] down there [hometown]. My daughter is so excited about track and field. We go to different classes for this, we go swimming…

Safety

The third major theme in the study was safety. All of the participants (n=10) reported having escaped a difficult situation and a sense of and/or relaxation because of safety once they moved to their new community. They all suggested this specific pull factor as one of the reasons they chose their particular community and was offered as a reason they stay.

In the following interview excerpt, Tamm described the fear of letting her kids leave her sight in her hometown and expressed a sense of "freedom" in her new community:

> When we lived in [a previous community near her hometown], I would let them go everywhere outside, but when we moved to [hometown] that was all snatched away. They say 'can I go outside'…no. Now [since they couldn't go outside at the time] you're spending time with me almost 24 hours a day. I know I gotta send you to school but if I could, I would do home school. I really don't wanna send you out there, you understand what I'm saying …the freedom the peace of mind for them….my 12 year-old son, he'll be 13 this year. He's already learned the bus system. I wouldn't let them ride the bus in [hometown]. And when I was in [hometown] trying to catch the bus, I was holding their hands and dragging their hands like they were toddlers. I'm pulling, I'm watching, because they don't know what to be aware of.

Brandy described a similar feeling, as evidenced by the following:

> In [hometown], you gon' stay right there in that backyard…he couldn't do that…go to the store. He used to be so mad at me…'ma can I walk with my cousin?' 'No you gon' stay right here.' So it's much better.

When asked about the biggest difference between her old and new communities, Mark offered the following to explain why others moved to the college town where he lives and why he likes living there:

> People come out here and they change…that's probably why [they leave urban areas and move to college towns]. A lot of people don't, but a lot of people do. Biggest difference is safety. That's the number one thing. You can let your kids play in the front yard and aint gotta worry about nothing, you know. It's calm and collect…it's what you make it, basically.

Community Networks

The fourth major theme in the present study pertains to how participants adjusted to the overall environments. All participants felt they and their children did a good job adjusting to their new communities; however, the process appeared to be more difficult

for some than others.   All ten of the participants discussed either receiving support from people in the community or seeking support from community resources.

This theme related to participants who talked about the benefits they gained from meeting people in the community. This was important for some, while others thought it was best to keep to themselves and not make too many friends. Examples to illustrate how some parents thought making too many friends was troubling are as follows:

> Brandy: … I don't communicate with everybody. Out there I had a lot of people to hang with,] 'Oh girl I'm about to come get you [experienced in her previous town which led her to hang out more.' I have one person that I ride [am close] with. So, she'll come get me, we'll take the kids out to eat, do things with the kids, but other than that…Um I have gotten immune to a lot of people. I met lots of people and now they would speak but when I first came they was like 'who is that, who is that?'

Rose concurred:

> I still don't know many people because I've never been the 'Hi neighbor so and so and so [type].' (laughs). I'm not a mean person, but I just don't have that many friends. I fit in a little better now because I know how to get around [the community].

Brandy mentioned that she had one friend. According to her, too many friends were viewed as trouble.

Making friends was important for some people as long as the individuals were staying out of trouble. For example, David believed that making new friends was beneficial to his daughter's acclimation to her new environment. For instance, when asked how his daughter was adjusting since she moved, he described her as "blending in," which meant:

> Um, she met a whole lotta friends. Some White friends. She started hanging around with her White friends. I told her, 'hey these some nice people it's a better chance out here for you. It's more school opportunities, more classes you can take. Stuff like that.' And she just understood that.

Stacie, a mother of four, was very happy about the support she received from the community; particularly, after losing a loved one to a house fire. She raved about how much city and community organizations assisted her following this tragedy. As she told her story, she seemed emotional, but at the same time happy to have gotten the much-needed support. She described losing every material item she possessed, along with her son. As a result of this tragedy, she checked herself into a mental institution, which was a huge challenge for her during such a vulnerable time. She shared the following regarding this event:

> I lost a boy like a year ago in a house fire. He was 14… When my son [died]... that was the hardest thing. That had pulled me where I had to go into the psych ward because that was my baby. But the people here, the support I got. My job, the people around me, the church people, [the church]. They helped me. The neighborhood center…oh they helped me so much. I love 'em…. Even [community organizations] helped me with my boys. They helped me a lot.

The support she received was not atypical for families in this community, but as nine out of ten participants described, this sort of assistance was certainly unusual in their home communities. For instance, Stacie talked about the assistance she received to secure housing: "And housing…I got housing quick. Section eight. In [home community], I had been on the list 20 years and still didn't get no call." Mark, as another example, discussed utilizing family programs in the following statement: "Like family programs. They help you and the kids. Even if you don't need it. They gon' give it to you. They don't got stuff like that in [home community]."

Traditional and Non-traditional Parental Support

All participants believed it to be their responsibility to help their child adjust to the new environment, although two reported not having to be involved too much. These two participants stated that their children had a very easy time adjusting.

All) of the parents in the current study described activities that could be construed

as traditional or non-traditional parental support and involvement. For example, when

asked how she helped her kids adjust to the new environment, Lisa offered the following:

> I sat them down and talked to them and was like, 'Mom is not comfortable living down here [home community] and I don't believe I should raise y'all in this environment. I don't think it's appropriate because I don't want y'all to raise up thinking this or that so I think I should raise y'all up somewhere different.' So they was like, 'Ok where we going?'

She went on to about how important it is for her to have open, honest conversations with

her children:

> …like if we have a family problem or something big or emotional going on…I talk to them. Like my mom died. They didn't wanna go in the room and see her when she died, but I explained to them this is what she died from and this is why she died. She's in heaven. They were like, 'What's hell and heaven?' I'm like, 'Let's watch this Bible movie. I can't really explain it but this movie can probably give y'all a little hint of what it is.' They were like, 'Ok,' now. So they get adjusted to stuff. I talk to them like they're grown. I don't do…like want them to wonder or ask questions. I actually tell them like, 'Mommy and daddy are not getting along. Daddy is going back home. We're going to stay here a little bit [current town]. We're gonna start all over again. Mommy's sorry. We're going to do it all over again. We're gonna get back up and try to work it out.' I talk to them. 'With your attitudes, you know...I know y'all gone have this [bad attitude] you know, but y'all gotta work it out calm, cool and collective.'
> But everyone always say, 'You shouldn't be telling them that.' But actually, you should tell your children and not let them wonder. [My friends say] 'They're too young.' No they are not. I used to tell my kids when their daddy went to jail that daddy live in a center for three months. Now I'm like, 'Daddy did bad and that's where he has to go. It's called a jail.' And they're like, 'What is that?' And I'm like, 'It's where people have to go when they do bad…that's where they be at.' I tell my oldest son, 'You keep doing what you doing, this [jail] where you gonna be at, you know.' He say, 'I don't wanna be there.' So just more talking to them about different stuff up here [current city]. They get more understanding. Like I tell people I don't soft love my kids I'm not that hard on them but ...I do bring it down on them.

As Lisa mentioned, some people do not agree with her parenting style. However, it's her

own and she says it works for her and her children. Other parents talked about walking

their children to school, helping with homework, and participating in school and

community activities as ways they helped their child adjust. For instance, in the next example, Rose stated that she talked to her children about staying true to themselves and remaining in school by reminding them that education is important:

> I just try to talk to them and let them know that no matter where you are, you be who you are. Don't think that anybody is better than you and that's it… I told them they need to go to school, they have to go to school so they can become older and be anything you want to be. Just whatever it is, be the best at it.

Tamm talked about doing the following activities with her children: "Go up to the school, go to the rec center together, go to the library together." However, according to Tim he did not have to do much because, for his daughter, transitioning to their new community was relatively easy:

> She can adjust to kids anywhere. I don't know where she get that from but she easily adjust to anything. She fit right on in…right on in. I don't let her go out too much. I let her go to the activities, but other than that, I don't let her get out my eyesight.

> Rose expressed some challenges with one of her children's' adjustment, however.

For instance, Rose shared the following situation she encountered as her son attempted to adjust to this new environment and the way she dealt with it as a parent:

> The only thing, it's a lot of African American children that's in that school, but as far as the class he's in, he's the only African American in the class.
> Researcher: Does he talk about that?
> He does. He says things like he wish he was white. He's going through 'Why do I have to be this color' and 'Why can't I be that color,' and he's asking me all these questions. So…and then he's saying that all of his white friends are smarter and he has that slow learner thing going on. I tell him he's just as smart as anybody else. They may know things that you don't know, but I bet you know things they don't know. I let him know he's just as equal as anybody else.

Rose also shared that her other children did not go through similar adjustment issues; her daughter, for example, experienced something different during her adjustment: "My 17 year-old…she's never been crazy about the other [white] race she's never been too crazy

about them. I can say that she may have a little prejudice in her." She explained that because her daughter saw the older brother have so much negative contact and unfair treatment by the police she in turn developed a dislike and mistrust for Whites. This is an example of the socialization messages her daughter was sent that may have come unintentional, but nonetheless helped her daughter form her own opinion of the police. Rose was very weary of the police because of this situation as well.

Furthermore, six out of ten participants discussed being involved in their child's education by helping with homework and participating in activities, such as going to the library, visiting their child's school, and speaking with teachers, which the literature has defined as traditional involvement. Angela shared what she appreciated about the teachers: "I love the teachers here. They talk to you." Further, Lisa stated:

> My kids never liked to go to the library, but now they like the library. I go to both[libraries]. I have a library card for both. My son walks. They will play in the park area. They're like, 'Mom, they got things for adults to do around here, [too].'

Tim shared his interest in the activities available for him to participate in with his children:

> I like the activities they have for the kids down here as far as the park, the learning system, the spot [neighborhood recreation center]. I think it's a good place to raise your kids. I think that's what I like the most. You can be relaxed…aint gotta worry about your kids getting shot. If you were in [hometown], they won't have none of these opportunities down there. They got camps down here for these kids.

Brandy discussed getting many calls from the school and appeared annoyed. However, she shared that after taking time out to visit the school, educators at the school explained that they, "…call parents to let them know what's going on with the kids." According to her, once she had a better understanding, she was appreciative of the amount of communication she received:

> They stopped calling me once I said if it's like an emergency that's when you can call me. But don't call me if he made a mistake and hit a girl on the booty or stuff like that. Just handle it. Whatever y'all gotta do, just take care of it. Then send a letter home.

When asked if she received that amount of communication from school when her child was enrolled in schools in her hometown she went on to say, "I never got no calls. They said the school [here] is different."

Angela managed to keep her four boys out of trouble and had them involved in sports and other activities. "All my kids is talented in basketball, baseball but they don't know what they wanna do. They good at art everything." She felt that by moving her kids out of her previous community she served them a great justice. She shared the following:

> Everyone always told me I got good boys but a kid gone be a kid. It's all good I think I did good leaving the state of Illinois. Leaving the state of [omitted]. Had I not left? I honestly think things would've been…cause the area we used to live in it wasn't good. I got four brothers that's why I knew I had to get my babies out of [previous town] because they needed to know it's a better way to live.

Difficulties in Adjustment/Acculturating

As mentioned previously, the majority of the participants described their adjustment as being fairly easy. Through building social networks or just learning to fit in, these families made this new cultural environment home for them. However, for some participants there were factors mentioned that caused some challenges. Two subthemes developed within this domain: (a) racist police/justice system; and (b) racism, making individuals feel mistreated in their new community. Narratives and quotes will help reiterate this theme.

Racist Police

This subtheme developed as five participants discussed feeling treated unfairly by the police and targeted because of their race. In the following example, Tim talked about his issues with the police and their targeting Blacks: Its kinda prejudice down here, but I can get by that. That's okay. I think the police target more Black people than White. I have to make adjustments to that. I can't change that. I   just gotta do what I need to do for me. David shared that negative experiences with the police in his college town are the only thing that, at one time, made him consider moving. He said, "That's the only reason I wanted to leave [current town]. The police and the bugs." This was echoed by Stacie when asked what she disliked about her new community: "Here what I don't like about here is the police." Mark offered the following about his experiences with the police:

> Yea they over doing themselves [the police]. They [the police] target the little people they know try to get you for anything. Every time they gotta break they neck and look. But I don't do nothing no mo. Just baby sit and go to school.

The following was offered by Angela, who elaborated on a negative situation with the police:

> I don't like they law. They don't have no laws. They make up as they go. I don't like that. It's like our voice don't mean nothing. In [hometown] you can still have freedom of speech   like if an officer talk to you, you can talk to them. Here, they don't want that. You can't say something, you just hush. I'm older than you…how can you tell me to hush? It's all about respect. I don't care for their law here. They don't have….they laws is discombobulated.

Researcher: When you say "our voice," who were you referring to?

> Meaning like, we can't talk to them. People period. Like me…I went to jail for speaking my mind to an officer downtown. I went to jail and end up having to pay a $500 fine. Obstruction of a police officer. I say first of all they downtown messing with us. He come messing with us. They got mad because I told them they were wrong…they was…for tazing someone. I'm like, 'Dang we just

stepped out the club how y'all gone taze him like that? Y'all wrong.' To which the officer replied, 'Oh you shut up dah dah dah dah dah. If you want respect you got to give it.' And it went from there. I guess he was a chief. [The officer went on to say] 'Blow her. If she comes back dirty lock her ass up. Naw she's good.' I was like, 'Na, now what the fuck you have to say. Lock her ass up?' They manhandled me. Two of them. I'm like, 'This is uncalled for.' They don't want you to talk to them. It's a lot of racism in the world, period. I've seen enough of it…not a lot…but I've seen enough of it in [current town].

However, Lisa contradicted the others. She appeared more ambivalent about the police in her current town. Her outrage was more at the police in her home community. When she compared the police in her present community to her home community, she seemed to appreciate the police in her current town more. It should be noted the Lisa was not from the same urban town as the other participants, however. Nonetheless, she shared the following regarding her feelings about the police:

> You can sit in your yard and hang out and a police come bother you [in hometown]. Down there [hometown],you sit in your yard and they see too many people hanging out they think you doings something. Down here [new community], they think it's a family function. [The officers will ask] 'Is everything okay?' No they are more….but they do come to the rescue if something happen [current town]. It don't take no hours. My ex[-boyfriend] got in a fight and took them almost two hours [in home community] and we live across the street from the police station. It's more better up here.

Racism

A more general discussion of racism that was not specific to the police or the justice system led to the subtheme of racism. Naomi discussed the following with regard to racism:

> …you can't stereotype people. That's like me saying all white people belong to the KKK because you know they still around. So I'm gonna throw all y'all in one bag. Y'all got the little white thangs on your head…everybody just racist. But I can't do that cause everybody not the same. And that's one thing they do here in [current hometown]. And I don't care…I've talked to people from [a city near current hometown with a relatively significant Black population],…I talked to people from [another city near current hometown with a relatively significant Black population] and that's what they do. They throw you all in a bag together.

> You can be a judge…you can be…they don't know. Here …look at you, a Black woman with a degree. But you stereotyped though. You can't tell me you aint. Here in [current town] you are… There's still racism everywhere.

Summary

Chapter IV presented the findings that were derived from transcriptions of data obtained from ten urban, Black parent/guardians from low-income communities. Participants from these urban communities overwhelmingly agreed that their choice of moving was the best possible atmosphere for their children. Parents came to their new communities from differing contexts and backgrounds; however, there were unifying factors that emerged from data analysis. According to participants, in order to successfully acculturate to their new cultural contexts they got involved in their children's lives in various ways. For most, this adjustment process was easy. Their responses provided credible answers to the four research questions. These parents discussed the benefit of the relocation and the risks associated with staying in the old environment with their children. Although it took some getting used to, within months all of the parents reported that their children gained an appreciation for the new environment. None of the children even cared for visiting their home communities for short periods of time. The children started to appreciate the quietness and freedom they received in their new communities. Chapter five explains and illustrates the link between participants' comments, emergent themes and the literature.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore parents' perceptions of their role in helping their children acculturate to new cultural and social environments—college towns, specifically. Psychological acculturation (see Table 2) can occur in four ways (Berry, 1997). Because so few research studies have focused on the parents/guardians' interpretation and understanding of such a life transition, a qualitative study was deemed appropriate given its focus on developing in-depth understanding of, in this case, the relocation experiences of low-income African American parents and guardians.

In a traditional sense, involvement refers to direct parental contact with school staff, parental attendance at school events, workshops, PTA meetings, and academic consultations (McKay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown, & Lynn, 2003). The findings in this study contradict research such as Chen's (2008), which regards low-income parents as marginally involved. Indeed, despite what the literature says about low involvement among low-income urban parents in their child's education (Chen, 2008), the current study, which focused on 10 low-income Black parents' experiences, suggests that there are some who are, indeed, involved in their children's education and overall adaptation to their new environment. Parents from the current study spoke quite candidly about personal responsibilities to help their children adjust. Specifically, the results revealed that parents' participation in community and school activities, as well as open lines of communication with their children contributed to their children's successful adaptation to their new environment. There were two participants who reported not having to play an

active role in helping their children adjust. This was, however, due in large part to their children's ability to get their needs met on their own. This study aligns with research from other scholars, such as Williams and Sánchez (2011), who contended that urban parents simply have different understandings of parental involvement.

Results from the current study indicated that a number of factors contributed to families choosing to relocate from a place they called home to one that was unknown. The results suggest that violence was the number one reason parents ultimately made this choice. Issues associated with violence revolved around community violence, random gun shootings and, for some, domestic abuse. For instance, parents reported feeling tired of being fearful for their children's lives, as well as their own. When parents described their struggles, many mentioned having financial problems in addition to a constant worry about their safety. It seems the senseless violence in their previous communities had become too much to bear.

Previous research in community violence shows that individuals from low-income environments are likely to experience community violence exposure more often than those with higher incomes (Dahl, Ceballo, & Huerta, 2010). The current findings further support the ideas of Goldner, Peters, Richards and Pearce (2010), and Ruggiero, Van Wynsberghe, Stevens, & Kilpatrick (2006), which argue this is also true for urban youth compared to youth from other geographical regions. All of the parents in the current study witnessed or were directly involved in violence in their homes and home communities. Consistent with previous research (Goldner, et al., 2010), participant responses also suggested that being exposed to community violence was due to the lack of community activities and resources available to their children in their previous

communities. Further, similar to other findings in the literature (Jones Thomas, Carey, et al., 2012), constant worry and fear of losing a child to gun violence was found to be alarming to parents and was strongly considered when choosing to move to a college town.

Related to gender, the males in the current study all reported having direct or indirect participation or affiliation with violence, which is consistent with research related to gender salience (Malik, 2008) that has named poor Black men as particularly vulnerable to community violence. Furthermore, the females who had sons mentioned the struggles they endured as a function of being a single parent raising young men. These mothers mentioned their decision to move was a critical to their families' futures because of the risks their sons would have been exposed to had they stayed in their old communities. The research related to poor, Black men has been slightly negative, characterizing this group as high-risk for academic failure and community violence exposure and involvement (Malik, 2008). Two mothers shared that their older sons made life choices that either led to experiencing gang violence and/or incarceration. Further, Black men are incarcerated at a higher rate than any other race (Western & Wildeman, 2009). Black men's high levels of incarceration lead to more female-headed households, which adversely impacts woman from low SES backgrounds (Mechoulan, 2011).

When asked to compare their old and new environments, parents mentioned the positive activities that were available to their children in their new community. For instance, one parent discussed the nice parks, another talked about the summer activities, and another mentioned sports. The parents in the current study expressed an appreciation of the things their new town had to offer, which they perceived as contributing to their

children's overall quality of life in the present, as well as the future. In addition to focusing on their children, parents in the current study described looking for a community that would help them grow as positive individuals, as well. All of the participants described being better people and better parents since relocating. They all agreed that because of this new and different environment, they were able to make better choices. In their previous communities, unemployment, unaffordable housing costs and lack of a safety net compelled them to move, which is consistent with research about urban relocation (Clark, 2012; Cohen & Wardrip, 2011)

Although the participants discussed mostly positive experiences in their new communities, a few mentioned some challenges associated with adjustment. These challenges, according to them, stemmed from issues with the police/justice system and racism. In particular, participants believed that they were either treated unjustly or discriminated against in their new communities for various reasons. These experiences made it difficult for them to feel completely comfortable in their new community; however, most seemed to believe that the good experiences outweighed the bad experiences.

The parents in this study reported that their experiences being black in a majority white society were both positive and negative, which is consistent with research on the topic (Smith, Juarez and Jacobson, 2011). As Rose shared, her child experienced issues with his race in a classroom comprised of all White children, which caused some difficulty. For example, her son often compared himself to his White peers, and expressed feeling inferior to them. He often asked her why he had to be Black and why he could not be White like his friends. The support this parent offered her child was

consistent with research related to the parent's role in helping their child develop a positive identity (Hughes, Rodrigues, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, and Spicer, 2006; Parker Terhune, 2007). She reminded him of who he was and let him know that he was special just the way he was made. She also convinced him that although there are things his White peers knew that he did not, there were things he knew that they had no knowledge of. She said her son continues to struggle with this, but she remains hopeful that things will get better as he gets older. This was an example of an attempt to teach her son coping skills following his enrollment in a mixed-race school while helping him develop a strong appreciation for his race (Suizzo, Robinson, &Pahlke, 2007). Rose described her son as feeling alienated and experiencing some depression during this acculturation process as he tried to fit in with his White peers. Cho and Haslam (2010) referred to negative emotion related to adapting to new cultures as acculturation stress. However; overall, parents in the study described their children as fitting in easily and not requiring much help adapting. Two parents mentioned their children's "White friends."

In relation to challenges while adapting to their new communities, more than half shared that they had negative experiences with the police, the justice system or felt that they lived in a racist environment. For example, two male participants said they wished something could be done about police unfairness in the college town. Other parents seemed to believe they were targeted because they are Black. Rose described her experiences with being pulled over multiple times for no apparent reason, and others shared similar stories that led to unjust treatment, from their perspective. Naomi described feeling discriminated against whenever she shopped in a particular store. She described being followed for what she feels is related to her being Black. She also felt as

though she is often stereotyped in several ways. Although she knows that these things go on everywhere, she feels that they are worse in her current town.

Some parents did not report any negative emotion or disturbances related to experiences with racism, which contradicted some research on the topic of acculturation and racism (Tu, 2011). For example, there is research that suggests individuals who acculturate to new communities are more susceptible to suicidal risk factors and emotional stress (Castle, Conner, Kaukeinen, & Tu, 2011). Results of the current study suggest that participants got used to situations that made them feel discriminated against and although some felt their treatment was unfair, the benefits of their new environment led them to stay. The individuals in the current study did not report any emotional stress due to the negative experiences they had while adapting to their new environment. Instead, the participants reported being happier in their new communities, with only one participant describing their child as experiencing negative emotion while adapting to this new environment.

When asked how they adjusted to their new environments, many of the participants used the words "trying to blend in," "fit in" or "adapt." The results suggest that overall the individuals in the study learned to successfully exist in their new communities but did so in different ways. These parents described themselves as doing things that were consistent with the environment in which they lived, whether they considered these things to be good or bad. When talking about their old environment they spoke about hanging out a lot, or being with the wrong crowds partying. When discussing their new environment which most described as "slow" paced they talked about working and going to school, and spending more time with their children. When

asked how they feel they changed, all (n=10) participants stated they felt they changed

for the better. When asked how, participants mentioned that because their current

environments were slower paced, their behavior in their home communities did not make

sense in their current neighborhoods. The process they described was very similar to the

acculturation strategy of integrating. They discussed hanging out with friends, or

reminding their children of who they are as a Black person in this society, while at the

same time accepting the host culture. These participants described their own process of

integration, which occurs when a person chooses to be part of both old and new cultures,

deciding to integrate him or herself into both (Berry, 1997). These individuals do not

give up all of their own cultures rather they learn to accept the new culture as part of

themselves.

Based on the findings, it seems their new environments informed their individual

behaviors, which in turn affected their parental behavior. The researcher identified two

major themes that help describe the process of adaptation of the parents and their

families: relational networks within the community and parenting strategies to assist in

adjustment. Consistent with research related to the school experiences of poor families,

the parents in this study felt that the experiences their children had in school was vital to

their overall success in life (National Center for Transforming School Counseling, 2007).

Furthermore, all of the parents agreed that the school systems and educational

opportunities were greater in their new community than their previous one. Some parents

did, however, share that their children struggled academically following the move from

their poor communities. For example, one parent shared the following about her

children's academic standing: "the learning ability both of them are a little behind. I

knew that from before that's why I said I need to get them grounded so they can focus more." She seemed to understand that if she did not do something to help her children's academic performance they would continue to fall behind their peers.

As the parents shared their experiences interacting with teachers and other school personnel, one thing stood out as inconsistent with literature regarding teachers who work with urban students. Research related to the education of poor Black students contends that urban students have negative experiences in school such as poor academic performance, negative interactions with teachers, (McKenzie, 2009), microaggressions (Henfield, 2011), discrimination and stereotypes (Lawrence & Crokcer, 2009). None of the parents felt like their children were judged because of their upbringing, misdiagnosed, experienced lack of positive communication with teachers or discriminated against by their teachers—fairly common occurrences in the literature (Delpit, 2006; McKenzie, 2009; Raines, Dever, Kamphaus, & Roach, 2012; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Instead, these parents described the teachers as caring, sometimes over protective, and supportive. Another important factor is that although at least two out of the ten parents mentioned that their child was either placed in special education classes or was behind, they agreed with the diagnoses. However, it is worth noting that these experiences can be different now that the families live in smaller college towns rather than the larger, more condensed communities where they used to live. One parent described coming close to physical altercations with her children's teachers in her former urban community due to lack of positive communication between the parents and teachers.

Implications

Implications for School Counselors and Other School Personnel

With an unprecedented shift in demographics in our nation (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009), this study has implications for professionals who work with displaced groups or minority groups upon relocation. It is vital to understand the experiences of specific minority cultures as they transition to a new multi-cultural environment. The results of this study are useful to school personnel who work directly with children and families who relocate from larger, urban communities to smaller communities like college towns. Because of differences in the cultural and social environments (Castillo, 2010), the current research can help school personnel understand the factors that lead families to relocate to a place that is unknown to many of them. The findings provide the following insights that can help facilitate educational success for the children in such families: (a) There was a struggle that pushed these individuals out of their home communities; (b) parents were frightened for their children's lives, and; (c) parents felt that the smaller environment would be much safer.

For school counselors, it is imperative to understand the struggles that can occur when children make such drastic changes in their cultural environments (Castle, Conner, Kaukeinen, & Tu, 2011). School counselors should empower these children by talking to them about the recent changes they have made. Although most parents in the current study described their children as adapting fairly easily it would be important to help those who did not. For example, one parent described her child as having some issues in his new mixed race school. The school counselor could be very helpful in cases like this

trying to understand the struggles this child is experiencing. Other suggestions for school

counselors are to work closely with teachers to help identify the children who are not

adjusting well. It is worth noting that the information derived about the children in the

current study was only from the perspective of their parents, therefore, possibly not

completely accurate. Because the parents all reported finding the new environment more

peaceful and better for their children it is possible that their perceptions are skewed.

Future studies can focus more on the children's perspective to help identify common

themes and issues that they may experience. Further, the school counselor has the

responsibility of making sure that the other children in the school are open and receptive

to the new students. Forming groups within classrooms and having activities to help

bring kids closer will be one positive way to help both parties understand the transitional

changes.

For teachers, it will very helpful to understand the environment from which the

child comes. There are many factors that affect a child's academic performance and

therefore ignoring those things will be a disservice to the youth. Teachers share the

responsibilities to communicate with the school counselors when they notice behavior or

emotional problems as they may be associated with the recent transition. When the

teacher takes the time to understand the cultural aspects of the individual child, he/she

better understands the behavioral outcomes. Acting out in school is not always an

indication of behavioral problems, but may result from a cultural misunderstanding. In

the more urban, larger school communities, there lies a difference in expectations of

teachers as well as behaviors of classmates. Further, many of the parents reported living

in a community that was mostly Black, and their children having little contact with

individuals of other races. This is important for teachers to be aware of. Having

activities in the classroom that encourages acceptance of culture and differences is vital

to these children's positive development. Also, keeping communication open with

families is very important. Families in the current study reported feeling cared for and

their children cared for because of the communication between the teachers and

themselves. Although one parent expressed some annoyance at the overprotection of her

child by his teacher, she also felt an appreciation of the level of care shown. Finally,

principals if they hold their staff accountable for positive actions can have an important

impact as well.

Implications for Community Organizations

The study holds significance as an association to connect educational policy and

community organizations with the actual experiences of low-income Black

parent/guardians. Participants felt that the organizations in their community provided

them and their children a great deal of support. They attributed a lot of their children's

successes to their participation in community-based activities, which suggests a need for

communities to foster students' development outside of formal school settings.

Furthermore, community organization resources provided much-needed assistance when

it came to families adapting in their new communities through providing resources to

help support them. The organizations offered both safe and organized out-of-school

activities for children. Also, the parents expressed an appreciation for affordable

organizational activities for their children. It is important that activities in communities

like college towns continue to reduce the risks associated with coming from a low-

income, urban, minority background. The parents in the current study felt that their old

communities did not provide their children with positive afterschool activities to help

keep them out of trouble. Instead, they described their communities as gang-ridden and

violent. Communities that offer programs throughout the summers and after school that

are affordable seemed to be the most appreciated by these parents. The parents

mentioned activities that were "free" as being the most beneficial as it releases a financial

burden for them. Parents also want their community leaders to speak to them about their

needs to better understand how they can assist their children. Community leaders hold

the responsibility of getting the word out about such activities so that everyone could be

made aware. Some individuals in the current study discussed a frustration about not

knowing about certain resources that was available. For the most part, word of mouth

was the most common way families learned about community activities. Lastly, it is

essential that organizations form partnerships with families, schools, communities,

churches and other resources utilized by members in the community. By building these

partnerships most families in the community can be made aware of the resources

available to help them and their children. For example, not all families will utilize

neighborhood centers, but their children will, more than likely, attend the neighborhood

school. If these organizations were connected, families can be made aware of the

resources through the ones they utilize. It is also important that parents feel connected

with their communities to build a trusting relationship that enhances the development and

positive adaptation to their new communities. Being from a larger urban community,

these parents did not always feel connected to others and/or community resources

because there are "so many people." In smaller communities like college towns,

organizational connections may be easily accessible and beneficial for parents and their

families.

Implications for Parents

The parents' narratives offer a look into their perceived roles in helping their

children to acculturate to new cultural environments as well as their perceptions of the

new schools. Parents in the current study talked about having an open communication

with their children making them aware of the changes that were to take place. These

parents discussed with their children the benefit of the relocation and the risks associated

with staying in the old environment. Although it took some getting used to, within

months all of the parents reported that their children gained an appreciation for the new

environment. None of the children even cared for visiting their home communities for

short periods of time. The children started to appreciate the quietness and freedom they

received in their new communities. This open communication allowed children to adjust

better according to parents in the current study. Parents play a very vital role in

socializing their children, especially in mixed race environments (Hughes, McGill, Ford,

& Tubbs, 2011). Because socialization messages can be intentional or unintentional,

parents often sent messages to their children sometimes without knowing it. Their

communications about their old and new communities set the tone for their children and

served as the beginning of the acculturation process aimed at preparing their children for

the move. When children move to mixed race environments they can experience

negative interactions with peers and feel socially isolated due to cultural differences

(Gunby, 2007). Parents should be aware of the challenges their children can face.

Acculturation stress is a risk factor associated with adapting to new cultural environments

and parents should be made aware of the associated risks.

They also, like school counselors and teachers share the responsibility of building

relationships with the school. It will be helpful to ask questions of the teacher or

counselor (if applicable) about their children's behavior at school as well as their

academic performance. The parent will also be the best teacher in helping others

understand their child based on previous environments or past issues within the school.

When parents feel misunderstood communication will be the best way to alleviate further

issues with the school administration.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study dove into many aspects of low-income Black parents' urban

experiences and relocation experiences, it had its limitations like any other study. In

relation to trustworthiness, some participants moved, changed phone numbers, or had

numbers that were disconnected over the course of the study. Therefore, member

checking procedures were not able to take place with a number of participants (n = 4).

The researcher attempted to contact the participants on the number they provided at least

three times after data was collected. Further, at the time of the study, some participants

were homeless and residing in a shelter. As a result, during data analysis, those

individuals were unable to be located and, therefore, unable to verify the interpretation of

their words' meaning and transcription of their interviews. When conducting research on

low-income populations, it would be important to keep in mind the forms of future

communication. If individuals are in a temporary housing situation, the best form of

future communication should be specifically discussed. Researchers should also be open to the chance that for some, there may not be a way to contact in the future if needed.

The parents and/or guardians offered much information about their experiences in this new and different environment. However, future qualitative research could also include children's voices to learn more about their perspective on the relocation experience, as well. One of the interview questions asked the parents to describe how their children adjusted, but there may be shortcomings as descriptions were based solely on the parents' interpretation of their child's behavior. Further, in depth case studies could focus on leaders in the community and what they are doing to help relocated families adjust to their new environments. Finally, quantitative studies can help build a comparison between the experiences of those who have transitioned within the past five years and those who have been in their new communities longer. This would be useful because it can help shed light on the process of adaption of transitional families. It would help others who conduct research on the group identify the biggest needs and answer many questions about how families adapt to new cultural environments within the U.S. Is this adaptation similar for those who have lived in a particular place longer? Will families feel more accustomed to the community over time? Quantitative studies can help answer specific questions about this research topic.

Conclusion

Although these parents described being involved in their children's lives in different ways all of them were involved to some degree. Six of the participants made particular mention of being involved with their children's academics, and other described

offering general support. Either way, these parents understood what they had to do to make this a smooth transition.

All of the families in the study felt that they had an important role in helping their child adjust, big or small. For Tim, this process was easy because of his daughter's natural ability to adjust to her environments. For others, it was a mere matter of being involved and supporting their children however they knew how. These parents described offering support with whatever tools they had.

Overall, they shared both positive and negative experiences in their current communities. It is important to understand, however, that these parents felt that not having to deal with their violent communities or fearing their own lives outweighed the negative experiences with racism and police. For the most part, although one parent felt that racism was worse here, others felt that these sorts of things may happen wherever you go. The parents had to adjust to the ways of living in their new community as well as the new norms and rules that according to Angela is sometimes unspoken.

Parents' responses to interview questions seemed to suggest that moving to a college town environment, although described as being completely different by all parents, provided a better quality of life for them and their families. With time, parents were able to gain a better understanding of the context in which they had to raise their child, which, in turn, provided multiple benefits for their children. So much information initially focused on the parents to help understand their perception of their old and new environments as well as the community in which they were trying to raise their child. With so few research studies focused on relocated low-income families, this study helped fill a gap as it provided insight into the experiences of such parents. With support from

family, friends and the community as a whole, a healthy adjustment was created for families moving from dramatically different environments. The benefits in the new environment were tremendous for the participants in the study, making any negative experiences seem minute.

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APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Race _____
2. What is your current partnership relationship (please circle one): --single, --divorced, --married, living together with an unmarried partner, --other (please describe in your own words_____
3. How many people live with you? (please include both relatives and non-relatives)
    a. How many of those individuals are related to you by blood?
    b. Anyone else living in your home?
4. Please circle all of the following sources of support that you or your family members have received in the last calendar year: -food stamps, --free/reduced lunch., --other (please describe--
5. Were you born in [current town]?
    a. where did you live for the longest period of time?"

6. What year did you move to [current town]? Have you ever lived in [current town] before?
7. For all of your children who live with you, please list their grades in school. If you have two children in the same grade, please list that grade twice.

8. Circle the one choice that best describes your current employment status: --not employed for pay,   --employed for part-time pay,   --employed for full-time pay.

9. Please circle all of the following which you completed: --some high school, --graduated high school, --finished a GED, --some college, --two year associates degree, --four year degree, --other (please describe)_____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Ok, tell me what living in [your hometown] was like for you and your family!"
   What are the reasons or the things that made you want to relocate

   a. Who relocated with you?

2. What things are different now that you have moved? (for you as a family,
   individual family members, etc.

3. What are the similarities and differences between {your home town} and new
   town?

4. Tell me about your family's and everyone's adjustment since moving.

   i. To the environment overall?
   ii. To the neighborhood you live in?
   iii. To their school?

5. What role have you played in the adjustment of your children?

   a. Same probes as above: to the neighborhood? To the school?   To the
   wider community? To the overall environment?

6. Describe for me whether you have thought about moving back at all? What do
   you appreciate about Chicago?" and "What do you appreciate about living in
   [current town]? [If it goes in that direction, ask about plans for moving back.]

7. Describe for me how you have changed in response to being here.

8. Tell me the ways in which you fit in better now than before.

9. Tell me about any challenges you experience with adjustment (with fitting in) as a
   parent at home, in the community, at school or with teachers and school
   administrators, with other parents, etc.

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: **A qualitative exploration of low-income urban Black parents who transitioned to a Midwestern college town perceived role in helping their child acculturate to new class and cultural contexts.**

Principal Investigator: Mashone Parker

Research Team Contact: Mashone Parker at (815) 402-1555 or mashone-parker@uiowa.edu

This consent form describes the research study to help you decide if you want to participate. This form provides important information about what you will be asked to do during the study, about the risks and benefits of the study, and about your rights as a research subject.

- If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the research team for more information.
- You should discuss your participation with anyone you choose such as family or friends.
- Do not agree to participate in this study unless the research team has answered your questions and you decide that you want to be part of this study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This is a research study. We are inviting you to participate in this research study because you are an African American that previously lived in an urban area but have moved to Iowa City, you have a child that lives with you that is currently enrolled in school, or you reported that you and your family either qualifies or receives free or reduced lunch or food stamps/ebt.

The purpose of this research study is to gain an understanding of parents' perceptions of their role in helping their child acculturate to a new cultural and social environment. The hope is that the study's findings will help inform educational policy and programming as it relates to the school counseling profession, which is charged with forming strong connections with families as a means to help meet students' needs. This study is unique as it focuses specifically on the socialization practices of Black parents once they move to predominately White college towns from urban communities, an increasingly common practice amongst urban Black families.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

Approximately 20 people will take part in this study at the University of Iowa.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

If you agree to take part in this study, your involvement will last for about an hour and a half. A member checking procedure will take place to make sure the researcher have represented your statements fairly and the way you meant. This member checking process should also take about 1 ½ hours.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete an interview with the researcher at a time and place that is convenient for you. During the interview, you will be asked questions such as "What was it like living in your urban community?" and "What are some of the main differences here in Iowa City?" You will also be asked some demographic questions that include gender, race, marital status, number of people that live with you (both relatives and non-relatives), if you qualify for food stamps or free/reduced lunch, if you are originally from Iowa City, where you have lived most of your life, when you moved to Iowa City, what grade your child/ren is/are currently in, your employment status and your educational background.

The interview will take about 1 ½ hours. We may schedule additional time if we do not get through all of the interview questions the first time. You are free to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. After the study ends you will be given a chance to check the researchers' analysis. You will be given a summary of how the researcher has summed up your interview to verify that your voice was heard and expressed properly. This will be given to you through postal mail or face to face. You can contact the researcher to correct any part of the interview that you wish.

Audio/Video Recording or Photographs

One aspect of this study involves making audio recordings that will be used during data analysis following your interview. The recordings are used to make analysis easier because the interviewer will be able to pay attention to you during the interview and not worry about taking notes or writing down your responses. The primary researcher will

have access to these audio files and the recordings will be destroyed once your interview is transcribed or written down word for word.

You may be in this study without agreeing to the audio recording of your interview. If you do not wish to be recorded, we will only take written notes of our interview. Please indicate your preference below by placing a check mark or 'x' next to your choice.

[ ] Yes [ ] No I give you permission to make audio recordings of me during this study.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS STUDY?

The interview questions may cause you to feel uncomfortable especially if they bring up memories of negative experiences that you may have had with being poor, being exposed to community violence, etc. There are no financial, legal or physical risks.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

We don't know if you will benefit from being in this study.

However, we hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study because we hope to better understand the impact that moving to a completely new culture can have on a family such as yours. This data provides a basis for further research as well as the development of techniques and plans to improve support given to families who relocate to new environments.

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will be given a $25 gift card to either Wal-Mart or Kmart for participating in this study.

WHO IS FUNDING THIS STUDY?

The primary investigator received a grant from the University of Iowa to help fund the compensation you will receive for participating in this study.

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

We will keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, it is possible that other people such as those indicated below may become aware of your participation in this study and may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you.

- federal government regulatory agencies,
- auditing departments of the University of Iowa, and
- the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies)

To help protect your confidentiality, we will use a pseudonym (or false name) and not your real name to identify the information you provide for this study. The false name we use will not be linked to your name or any other identifying information. It will not be possible for us to link you to your study information. The researcher will only collect data related to the study and will collect the minimum private information needed to answer the research questions. All records will be maintained in locked laboratories on in password protected files on a secure computer system. If a report or article is written about this study, we will do so in such a way that you cannot be directly identified.

IS BEING IN THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you won't be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions concerning the research study please contact Mashone Parker at (815) 402-1555 (mashone-parker@uiowa.edu) or Dr. Malik Henfield at (319) 335-5942 (malik-henfield@uiowa.edu).

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research subject or about research related injury, please contact the Human Subjects Office, 105 Hardin Library for the Health Sciences, 600 Newton Rd, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242-1098, (319) 335-6564, or e-mail irb@uiowa.edu. General information about being a research subject can be found by clicking "Info for Public" on the Human Subjects Office web site, http://hso.research.uiowa.edu/. To offer input about your experiences as a research subject or to speak to someone other than the research staff, call the Human Subjects Office at the number above.

This Informed Consent Document is not a contract. It is a written explanation of what will happen during the study if you decide to participate. You are not waiving any legal rights by signing this Informed Consent Document. Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Subject's Name (printed):

_____

Do not sign this form if today's date is on or after EXPIRATION DATE: 05/14/14 .

_____

_____

(Signature of Subject) (Date)

Statement of Person Who Obtained Consent

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, with the subject's legally authorized representative. It is my opinion that the subject understands the risks, benefits, and procedures involved with participation in this research study.

_____

_____

(Signature of Person who Obtained Consent) (Date)

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1 Participant Demographics					
Name	Rose	Lisa	Tamm	Tim	Dave
Current partnership relationship	Married	Single	Single	Married	Single
How many people currently live in home	Living in homeless shelter with 2 children	Living in homeless shelter with 3 children	4	3	3
Where did you live most of your life?	Large urban town	Small urban town	Large urban town	Large urban town	Large urban town
Current employment status	Unemployed	Employed full-time	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed
What year did you move to your current town?	2008	2012	2013	2011	2012
Educational attainment	Certified Nursing Assistant-certified	High School	General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program, Currently enrolled in college	High School	High School
Child(ren) living at home	2	3	2	1	1
Grade of school aged children	2nd grade, 9th grade, high school grad	1st and 3rd grade	2nd and 5th grade	3rd	K

Table 1 continued…. Participant Demographics					
Name	Stacie	Mark	Naomi	Brandy	Angela
Current partnership relationship	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
How many people currently live in home	3	4	Currently lives in shelter without child	2	4
Where did you live most of your life?	Large urban town	Large urban town	Large urban town	Large urban town	Large urban town
Current employment status	Employed	Unemployed student	Unemployed	Student	Unemployed
What year did you move to current town	2000	In High school and then 2011	2013	2012	2006
Educational attainment	1 year college	High School, some college	Some college (CNA & CMT)	Currently in college	9th grade, some college
Child(ren) living at home	1	1	0	1	2
Grade of school aged children	High school senior	K	3rd	2nd	10th and 12th

APPENDIX E: BERRY'S ACCULTURATION MODEL

Table 2

Berry's Acculturation Strategies

	Abandon home culture	Maintain home culture
Accept Host Culture	Assimilate	Integrate
Reject Host culture	Marginalize	Separate

Adapted from Berry 1997