RAISING DAUGHTERS, RAISING WOMEN:
ASSUMPTIONS AND LESSONS SOUTHERN BLACK AMERICAN MOTHERS TEACH THEIR DAUGHTERS

by

PATSY MARIE NIX

(Under the direction of Dorothy M. Fragaszy)

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the process of parenting in Black American families from the perspective of middle class, southern Black women and sought entry into the topic from the viewpoint of college-aged daughters and, when possible, their mothers. A principal goal was to uncover and chronicle the underlying assumptions that informed southern Black women's experiences of parenting. Daughter participants were recruited from the student population at a large southeastern university. Primary data were collected by semi-structured individual, mother-daughter, and focus group interviews. Data were analyzed using the technique of phenomenological inquiry, a technique that provides a structured means of isolating sociocultural influences and substantive themes in narrative data. Three essential assumptions were identified from narrative data: 1) a belief that women should be independent and self-reliant, 2) a belief that members of the women's network were the most reliable sources of social, emotional, and financial resources, and 3) a belief that gender and race discrimination was a fact of life. Together, these three assumptions shaped how participants conceptualized motherhood, structured interpersonal relationships, and determined the values and life lessons conveyed to daughters. In the process of identifying essential assumptions from narrative data, a rich picture of self and family definitions, familial responsibilities, descriptions of experiences of motherhood, womanhood, values and important life lessons taught to daughters were revealed.

INDEX WORDS: Black Americans, Women, Mother-daughter relationships, Parenting, Southern Women, Values, Identity Development

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DEDICATION

Every woman begins and ends her life as a daughter–we have no choice but to be such. Somewhere in between we may become mothers ourselves, but regardless our status as daughter remains an unchanging element of who we fundamentally are. I am the daughter of many women, who nurtured and gently guided me toward becoming the person I am today. They taught me to celebrate the strength and power of my womanhood and seek humility in my humanity, and for this I will be forever grateful. It is to all mothers who have guided their daughters into womanhood that this research is dedicated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project reflects the influence and contributions of many women without whom it could not have been conceptualized or completed. First, I would like to thank my mother, Patsy Hudson Nix, who, at times, has been my harshest critic but always my strongest ally. She tells the truth, her truth, and I always appreciate her honesty, regardless of whether I like what she says or not. I would like to thank Dr. Mary Jo McGee Brown for reminding me of my mother's most important lesson but one that was momentarily muted by the noise of daily life--trust myself, first. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of the women who opened their hearts and shared their personal stories with me so that I could tell their stories to others. You greatly enriched my life in the process; thank you. I would like to thank Dr. Layli Phillips for her early contributions to this project. Finally, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Dorothy Fragaszy, Dr. Patricia Bell-Scott, Dr. Claire Hamilton, and Dr. Lily McNair for their intellectual and moral support during my education; each of your contributions were unique, insightful, and invaluable. I cannot imagine a more brilliant, eclectic, and wonderful collection of women to serve as my role models both personally and professionally. Thank you for mentoring, guiding, and trusting me during some very challenging moments.

PREFACE

While I have always been a journalist, I am a very private person. Some writers write their journals with an eye toward history; they believe, perhaps even desire, that their notes will be made public and available to the larger world. That is not how I write. My journals are as sacred and private to me as anything I can think of. But when I decided to conduct this research I knew that the only appropriate research method to the topic was phenomenological inquiry. This was not a daunting task for me in the beginning because phenomenology was an integral perspective from which I approached my world everyday. What I did not realize was how difficult it would be to open my journal, and myself, to the scrutiny of others. The realization that I would, in fact, be required to reveal my writings silenced my journaling–almost. I felt vulnerable, and this feeling effectively silenced my writing, but not my thinking. My thoughts, unlike my writing, are perfectly private, and I like that. Its not that I do not share my thoughts with others, its an issue of selection. When I talk with you, I can choose to disclose a particular piece of information or not. Once written, words and sentences take on a life of their own. When they are made public, they became public property, to be read, judged, and interpreted without rejoinder. So for a long time during and after this project began I was unable to commit my thoughts to paper. I certainly tried. At those times when my mind was flying with questions and details of my actions and reactions, I would rush to my notebook and begin to write. As soon as I sat down it was as if all my thoughts vanished into thin air–I was mute. I hated having my words slip away. Never before had I felt so censored in the one arena that I have always carefully guarded. It felt like a violation, an intrusion into a part of my life that was no one's but my own.

But, that was how I felt. What I feel and know are often two distinct creatures. While I felt violated, I knew that actively engaging with my own inner processes was an important element for this project, so I struggled to write what I could as best as I could. I soon realized that I would not, could not, openly engage in the necessary tasks of epoch if my thoughts were to be laid bare. In the end, I decided to keep the raw material of my journals private and reserve my secret thoughts just for me. I knew that eventually my private thoughts would become part of my public writing, naturally, in the course of forming and voicing my interpretation and presentation of the data. More importantly, what I realized while grappling with this issue was that perhaps the informants in my study would feel the same sort of panic and discomfort when they saw their words, spoken to me and reshaped through me, on the printed page. Consequently, I have endeavored to be respectful, without distorting the honesty of data, when selecting which words to quote and which ideas to summarize. Further, all identifying information about participants has been changed to protect their privacy. Pseudonyms have replaced participants' real names, and names of home towns were eliminated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Renewed interest in feminist research during the last 30 years gave rise to numerous studies on motherhood and its implications for and impact on women's lives (McMahan, 1995; Birns and Hay, 1988, Mercer, 1986). However, the scope of these studies frequently failed to reach beyond white, middle class American families or generated data that held little relevance to or meaningful connection with the majority of non-white populations (Allen and James, 1998; Hill, 2001; Phinney, 1996; Garcia Coll, Meyer, and Brillon, 1995). Though being actively challenged by new scholarship, these problems continue to plague the scientific community. As a result, culturally relevant investigations of non-white women's experiences of and beliefs about motherhood, particularly Black women, remain scarce. To partially address this void, the current study explored the process of parenting in Black American[1] families from the perspective of southern Black women.

The topic was approached through narrative interviews with college-aged daughters reflecting on their relationships with their mothers, mother-figures, and other family members. In some cases data were collected during mother-daughter exchanges as well. Because prior research on parenting in Black families has tended to confound ethnicity with socioeconomic status (Hill, 2001; Graham, 1992; Billingsley, 1968), this study was conducted exclusively with a middle-class sample.

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[1] The terms African American and Black American are used deliberately to distinguish country of origin and circumstances of immigration. Specifically, Black Americans are those individuals of African descent who also are descendants of American slaves. In contrast, the term African American includes all individuals of African descent but whose circumstances of becoming American are not limited to forced immigration under slavery.

While most research on motherhood is conducted from the perspective of women who are already mothers, investigating parenting from the viewpoint of young adult daughters offers four advantages. First, as individuals, this age-group of women is undergoing the important developmental shift between childhood to adulthood (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Accordingly, many participants were already actively engaged in the processes of self-reflection and adult identity formation when the study began, which facilitated their engagement with the research topic. Daughters' narrative provided both concrete and abstract entry into the subject matter. Concretely, details of practice–what was done to them–were described. At the more abstract level, culturally and socially based value systems and meanings were revealed (Valsiner and Litvinovic, 1996).

Second, this is the first generation of Black Americans not born into a legal and economic system that blatantly oppresses individuals because of race or ethnicity; in short, they are the first full beneficiaries of the social and legal victories won during the Civil Rights Movement. Because the cultural and social contexts in which parenting occurs are fluid and environmentally responsive, their narratives represent a unique opportunity to investigate dynamically the values and belief systems of southern Black Americans. However, while these women can be characterized as impacted less by overtly institutionalized racism[2], it must also be recognized that fundamental social change is slow. They were born into a multigenerational society, complete with pre-established as well as evolving social mores. Accordingly, both change and stability in the cultural and social beliefs about parenting were represented.

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[2] Racism is defined as a structure of power control that is exerted upon a group of people for the purposes of subjugating that group to the social and economic benefit of the oppressors; this term is specifically distinguished from prejudice, which is defined as general biases and stereotypes individuals hold against unfamiliar others (Jones, 1991).

Third, the "southern-ness" of participants was important. Historians recognize an enduring regional culture and social structure unique to the former Confederate states (Baker, 2001; Wyatt-Brown, 2001). Southern culture is important because of its resiliency. As such, it cannot be ignored simply as an artifact in the lives of southerners, Black or White. Previous research on Black American families, with few exceptions (eg. Dill, 1998), neglected to consider the impact of region of origin on how Black American women experience mothering and the expectations they hold for their daughters. By focusing exclusively on southern families, the scope of this study was refined and sets the groundwork for incorporating regional culture as a meaningful variable of analysis.

Finally, as developing women these daughters represent the next generation of mothers, which lends a prospective edge to their data.

One of the central premises underlying this study asserts that Black Americans have created a coherent and enduring culture that is unique to the American Black community. The initial form of this culture was invented as a response to the conditions under which most of the original ancestors of Black Americans came to and lived in North America, that is, as the enslaved. While most African born slaves were drawn primarily from a relatively restricted geographical region of West Africa, those individuals represented a diverse grouping of ethnicities–identities that remained securely intact under slavery. However, as time passed and fewer African born slaves were brought to the colonies, strong individual ethnic divisions faded and a new collective identity based on blended ethnicities and the common state of enslavement emerged as a group identity situated on the concept of a shared race (Gomez, 1998; Bennett, 1988;

Jones, 1988). This shift from an individual ethnic- to a collective race-based identity was a complicated but important process that yielded the foundation for modern Black American culture (Gomez, 1998).

The Black American Community may be considered as both an abstract construct and concrete entity, the characteristics of which can be examined in terms of two nested levels of organization that are distinguished by magnitude, as a settlement and subculture (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). A settlement is defined as "complexly interrelated sets of encounters, roles, groups, and organizations existing within a socially defined territory and performing a range of life-sustaining functions" (Lofland and Lofland, 1995, p. 110). Historically, the Black Community was defined monolithically as a distinct subset of the American population. To be a member of this community one only had to be of African descent, no matter how distant or small that biological contribution might have been. This was a social and legal policy known as the "one-drop" rule. Accordingly, individuals were denied the opportunity to choose to be a member of the Black Community or not; membership was preordained. Because membership in the Black Community was determined by perceived ancestral heritage and used as a means of controlling the personal, social, and economic welfare of the community members, membership was the initial concrete manifestation of a socially defined boundary that designated Black Americans, especially southern Black Americans, as a separate society. Such separation was then codified through segregationist policies and practices (Gomez, 1998; Gordon, 1995; Edgars, 2000).

Settlements exist and function according to the abstract boundaries of a subculture. A subculture is the broadest category of social organization and is defined as "global adjustments to life by a large number of similarly situated persons...that are organized around values and preferences..." and can include individuals of all socioeconomic levels (Lofland and Lofland, 1995, p. 112). The term “Black Community” is parallel to the concept of a settlement that operates beneath the umbrella of a recognizable subculture, thereby allowing the experiences of Black Americans to be treated as reflecting the values of a coherent social system existing within the larger context of a White culture. In the modern historical atmosphere of segregation, Black Americans can lay claim to an unique and dynamic culture of their own and a shared culture with the larger society. However, the manifest reality of a historically separate existence for southern Black Americans may have given rise to the development of unique value and belief systems for this group (Wyatt-Brown, 2001; Gomez, 1998; Jones-Jackson, 1987; Littlefield, 1981) and warrants being treated as a research variable.

It is important to frame investigations of parenting within the relevant cultural context in order to understand fully the diversity of parenting behaviors existing both in a micro-society and the dominant society. Societies are self-defined groups of individuals. The complex web of abstract concepts and patterns of learned behavior that are shared by a group of people, a society, is that society’s culture. Culture, however, is more than a simple collection of parceled behaviors; it consists of the deeply and communally held sets of rules that determine and govern behavior for members of a society (Barnouw, 1987). From these sets of rules, evaluations of worth are determined that, together, form societal value systems. Culture, hence, provides a coherent, meaning imbued context for encountering and successfully engaging in one’s society.

Culture is relatively stable from one generation to the next because children are born into a preexisting cultural matrix, which they automatically learn from both direct and indirect instruction. This is not to imply, however, that culture is a stagnant entity. All cultures evolve to meet the changing needs and goals of its corresponding society, and cultural change occurs in response to both external and internal causes. When two cultures intimately coexist, as in the case of southern Blacks and Whites, cultural influence is bidirectional, but not always equal (Wyatt-Brown, 2001; Barnouw, 1987). The rate and type of change for any particular cultural pattern or system is influenced by its perceived importance to the society, the degree of transmission of knowledge about and practice of the cultural component of interest, and its perceived worth to the successive generations. Changes in social structure and practice can and frequently do happen relatively quickly. However, cultural change is more complex because it strikes at the very heart of beliefs and values that govern behavior.

The cultural legacy of a formerly slave-owning society continues to surround Black Americans and often identifies, deliberately or not, members of this group as legitimate targets for oppression by means of social, economic and political exclusion–all of which impact parenting experience. It is often assumed that American society has achieved sufficient temporal and moral distance from the demeaning shadow of legalized slavery, and its post-reconstruction form as Jim Crow[3] statutes, that the effects of those indignities, for both individuals and a nation, are largely irrelevant to our current lives. This assumption has limited warrant, however. Value and behavioral systems held by members of a slave-owning society necessarily engendered a culture of oppression that had long-lasting effects. While slave-ownership and Jim Crow laws are no longer an acceptable social practice, the underlying value systems that permitted these systems to exist for more than three centuries did not magically disappear in 1865, 1964 or 2002. Romanticized (eg. smiling black-faced horse jockeys) and political emblems of racially based separatist ideology (eg. the Confederate flag) are still common items displayed in southern storefronts and front yards. While seemingly minor events to some, the commonness of such symbolically meaningful items in public environments reflects a communal acceptance of, or at best a blind numbness to, white supremist attitudes (Jones, 1991).

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[3] The term "Jim Crow" refers to legislative policies that systematically discriminated against and suppressed Black people.

However, institutionalized systems of oppression can be more subtle. For example, early family researchers often adopted a comparative research method to investigate issues relating to Black families (McLoyd, 1991; Azibo,1988). While comparative research can be a productive scientific method, scientists incorrectly assumed that comparison samples drawn from white, middle class populations would provide an appropriate standard against which to measure research findings on Black families, women, and children. As a result, Black Americans too often have been characterized in terms of deviance, rather than simple difference, from Eurocentric models of family life (Cook and Fine, 1995). Once framed in the language of deviance, Black families could not be viewed as legitimate and valuable elements of American society, but instead were defined as a social problem to be solved.

One area of family scholarship in which a deficit model has been abundantly applied is research on motherhood and the concept of a "good" mother (Garcia Coll, Meyer, and Brillon, 1995; McLoyd, 1991). Conceptualizations about what sets of behaviors constitute good or bad mothers are not permanent fixtures in a culture or society; instead, they are artifacts arising from and responsive to specific, historically bound cultural, social and economic conditions (Bullough, Shelton, and Slavin, 1988; Dally, 1982). The current construction of good motherhood prescribes a heterosexual woman who devotes most, if not all, of her energies to child rearing and management of a nuclear household. In contrast, the father's role is to provide the mainstay of financial resources, to have limited responsibility for routine household management chores, and to assume the role of play-partner with the couple's children. Using this definition, the nuclear family is economically independent and consists of a father, mother, and their children living in a single-family dwelling (Collins, 1991, 1990; Bullough, et al., 1988; Dally, 1982).

This idealized model arose, in part, as one component of the social and economic movements that occurred at the end of World War II, wherein employers and governmental agencies sought to remove white women recruited into factory work during the war from the workforce in order to make jobs available for returning veterans. This large-scale shift of women out of the workplace was accomplished, in part, by an highly effective media campaign that idealized homemaking–Rosie the Riveter, once the icon of independent, modern womanhood, was shown happily trading her blowtorch for homemaking and child rearing (Dally, 1982). While such an idealized model of the nuclear home may accurately describe the makeup of some American families, it is predominantly unrealistic for a large portion of modern households, of all ethnicities and socioeconomic levels; yet, the ideal persists (Collins, 1991; Zollar and Honnold, 1988; Arnold, 1985).

One consequence of this model's persistence is that parenting beliefs and practices of nonwhite populations are defined in society and science by their state of deficiency from the idealized model (Allen and James, 1998; Garcia Coll, Meyer, and Brillon, 1995). However, historically based lack of access for Black Americans to social and economic opportunities acted to hinder the ability of most to obtain the necessary financial resources that would allow adoption of the nuclear household model if they so desired (Bennett, 1995; Bennett, 1988; Jones, 1988).

The process of eliminating the culture of oppression surrounding Black Americans has been slow and arduous, and it is incomplete. Institutionalized systems of oppression affect all members of the oppressed group, each differently. Applying a deficiency model to Black family structure and function demonstrates an underlying absence of sensitivity to or awareness of intragroup diversity arising from economic, regional, ethnic, gender, and individual differences (Allen and James, 1998; Garcia Coll, Meyer, and Brillon, 1995; McLoyd, 1990). The social reality of Black Americans is unique because of the history and prominent legacy of slavery in the economic and social development of the United States; institutionalized racism limits access to privilege and power (Jones, 1991; Jones, 1988), which directly and indirectly influences a woman's ability to effectively parent her child(ren). For southern Black women, the impact of continued racism on self-definitions and experiences of motherhood may be especially alienating because of continuing close proximity to the nexus of the slave-owning society and must be considered (Robertson, 1996; McLoyd, 1990; Davis, 1989). Accordingly, it is important to explore how Black women negotiate effective woman- and motherhood in differing environments.

To begin this task the present study investigated the process of parenting in Black American families from the perspective of southern Black women and sought entry into the topic from the viewpoint of college-aged daughters and, when possible, their mothers. A principal goal was to uncover and chronicle the underlying assumptions that informed southern Black women's experiences of parenting. In the process of identifying essential assumptions from narrative data, a rich picture of self and family definitions, familial responsibilities, descriptions of experiences of motherhood, womanhood, values and important life lessons taught to daughters were revealed.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Paramount to any study of southern Black American women's experience of motherhood is an understanding of the exceptional historical relations arising from the legacy of slavery that contributed to the development of an uniquely Black American experience. In this section I will provide a brief history of the development of slavery in the United States, including a brief discussion of the influence the institution of slavery wielded on the development of the Black American community and family development. And, I will conclude with an overview of Collins' (1991, 1990) proposed model of Afrocentric motherhood.

Emergence of Slavery in the United States

The presence of African immigrants in the New World occurred from two general paths: indentured servitude and forced slavery. The first documented Africans to arrive in the New World were on a trading ship that docked at Jamestown, Virginia, in August, 1619. Twenty Africans, captives stolen at sea by an Englishman from a Spanish slave ship, were traded for food and other supplies at Jamestown (Bennett, 1986). Notably, the Africans were not slaves in North America; they were indentured servants, like most of the first immigrants, and were not considered racially inferior (Huggins, 1990). At this point in European-African relations, distinctions were made between different groups of Africans according to their country or ethnic region of origin, which was common practice for newcomers to North America. It was not until the early-middle 19th century, during the period that slavery was facing its most ardent opposition, that the identity of persons of African heritage shifted from one based on ethnic origins to one that was exclusively race centered (Gomez, 1998). For approximately 40 years in all colonies and longer in northern regions, a growing population of freed African-born settlers experienced social and economic equality in the New World.

The tradition of institutionalized, legal slavery unique to the early American colonies began during the late 17th century and continued until the middle 19th century and arose in response to the rapid emergence of large-scale sugar and tobacco production fueling the economic development in southern regions. The need for reliable labor grew as the agricultural economy grew, and the practice of slavery became a perceived necessity to sustained economic welfare of the developing colonies (Gomez, 1998; Robertson, 1996; Bennett, 1988; Jones, 1988). By the mid-1660s, Virginia and Maryland had enacted laws that made African captives slaves for life--a trend that was quickly followed in other southern colonies. Northern colonies also legislated slavery, however, northern Blacks retained significantly more social and economic independence. A vibrant African-centered community developed during this period, complete with independently run businesses, schools, churches, newspapers, and social service organizations (Gomez, 1998). Social separation between blacks and whites eventually emerged in the north during the late 18th century; yet, while slavery did exist in northern colonies, slave ownership remained relatively uncommon. Thus began the dual presence of Africans in the New World.

Development of the Slave Community

Although the slave trade was banned in the United States in 1807, shipping records indicate that new slaves continued to be illegally imported into southern regions, particularly Charleston, as late as 1850, which may account for the approximately four million slaves living in the south reported in the 1860 U.S. Census report.

African Transition to the New World

The majority of African slaves that were eventually exported to North America originated from a 3,000 mile area focused along the sub-Saharan, West African coastline. Gomez (1998) identified seven general geographical regions from which the majority of slaves were drawn. This area began with Senegambia and continued onto Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, and ended with West Central Africa. Slaves drawn from these areas included individuals from the Hausa, Mandingo, Yoruba, Ibo, Efik, Krus, Fantin, Ashanti, Dahomean, Bini, and Senegalese tribes. The enslaved were chosen indiscriminately and included nobles, priests, warriors, and craftsman; as might be expected, enslaved Africans were primarily young adults, individuals with fully formed personal identities, cultures, social knowledge, and life skills. Early in the slave trade, African males were more valued and sought than women, as it was assumed that they would make better workers. However, traders and slave owners alike quickly realized the reproductive value of African women and equal numbers of both men and women slaves were purchased (Gomez, 1998; Edgars, 2000; Bennett, 1988).

Three characteristics of slave capture and sale were important for the development of slave families and communities and for the endurance of African culture in America. First, as the slave trade flourished, traders often captured and shipped significant portions of entire African villages, as the result of regional warfare, to American slave ports (Gomez, 1998). Accordingly, social cohesion and identity were maintained by transportation of relatively intact social and familial groups into a new environment. Second, while individual members of social and familial groups, once in the slave pits, could not expect to be bought by a single owner, plantation agriculture was primarily concentrated within a localized geographical area: the seven southern colonies (Gomez, 1998). Travel between plantations was difficult, hindered by the lack of good roads as well as strict control of slaves by the slave-owner; however, it was possible, and slaves did travel to neighboring plantations, often at their own risk, to visit with family members (Berlin and Rowland, 1997). Third, for those individuals who were separated from family and familiar others, language skills and a broader regional culture in West Africa aided the relatively quick assimilation of disparate individuals into multiple plantation communities (Gomez, 1998). Africans have a history predating European contact of trading and cultural exchange throughout the continent, activities that required a common language. The truth of a common language for the African continent may seem improbable: over eight hundred African languages (not dialects) have been identified by linguists. However, these languages are classified into four basic language families; Africans were and are known for speaking several languages--a tribal language, a regional language, and a more broadly shared trade language (Bascom, 1973). Bantu, of the Niger-Congo language family, is believed to have been the common trade language spoken throughout sub-Saharan West Africa and regions east and west below the Equator (Bascom, 1973; Griffiths, 1985; de Blij & Muller, 1988). While the Bantu language is not associated with a specific Bantu culture or craft style, the extensive presence of Bantu language can be traced to before 500 B.C. (Vansina, 1984).

Evidence for a broad regional culture is prominent within African art and crafts. Vansina notes that "art is an integral part of the culture which it expresses and thereby communicates to others. Visual art works are the visual realization of visual concepts held in a community and realized by the artist" (1980, p. 121). Accordingly, regional, tribal, and individual workshop stylistic differences can be identified, but common characteristics of theme, medium, proportion, and features of African artwork indicate common influences.

In sum, whole-group enslavement, limited dispersion in the new environment, and a common core language and culture are characteristics of the American slave trade that allowed the transplanted Africans to maintain individual and cultural integrity in the hostile slave environment, while at the same time providing the foundation for development of an unique Black American culture in response to EuroAmerican oppression.

Organization of Plantation Life

The process of community development was aided further by the structural organization of plantation life. In particular, three elements of plantation slavery encouraged the development of a universal slave community. First, all slaves lived in segregated housing away from white slave owners and overseers. As a result, the dichotomy of difference based on skin color was reinforced. Second, often in an effort to subdue slave resistance, owners mercilessly sold and moved slaves from one plantation to another. Instead of undermining family and community cohesion, community identity enlarged through the infusion of new members from other plantations, who often carried information about family and conditions on their former or neighboring plantations (Gomez, 1998; Berlin and Rowland, 1997; Kulikoff, 1988). Unwittingly, slave owners' were encouraging the formation of extended communities and family connections that would later serve to protect runaways and abolitionist activities. Finally, slaves were united by their mutual orientation toward achieving freedom. Because the institution of slavery was justified by adopting a universal racism against anyone with “one-drop” African heritage (Davis, 1991), slavery threatened anyone, free or not, with total subjugation (Bennett, 1988). Whatever differences that may have existed between regional and tribal groups in Africa were ameliorated once on the plantation. Slaves were united by both their common heritage and the exigencies of the slave condition (Gomez 1998).

Resistance and Adaptation

Enslaved Africans were proud and defiant people who did not readily accept being enslaved (Gomez, 1998). Of their demeanor, Bennett (1988) notes, "...a French trader complained in 1660 that the Fanti were 'so proud and haughty that a European trader there must stand bare to them'" (p. 33). Defiance was demonstrated in the letters and diaries of traders, which reported numerous incidents of ship rebellion and captives who chose suicide rather than endure servitude. For example, Bennett recounts the story of one man who "attempted to cut his throat. After the wound was sewed up, he ripped out the sutures with his fingernails. He was patched up again but refused to eat and died ten days later of starvation" (p. 54).

Further development of a unique slave community was strengthened by the adaptations slaves made to the Eurocentric world. For example, while slave owners restricted slave use of African language and practice of African religions, slaves were masters at improvisation. As members of a polytheistic and polylinguistic culture, Africans accepted the English language and Christian religion as one of many others encountered and adjusted them to suit their needs and best interests. Bennett (1988) writes, "...the slaves reinterpreted white patterns, weaving a whole new universe around biblical images and giving a whole new meaning to Christianity...which...contradicted the religion taught the slaves" (p. 99). Slaves rejected Christian theology that taught them to be "obedient servants" and instead turned to the god who "delivered the Israelites." In turn, the combination of traditional African religious practices and American Christianity created a religion unlike their White masters' and sufficiently uniform within the slave community to provide another common bond. This experience and link with Africanized Christianity continues to thrive within the modern Black community and serves as the foundation for social and political activism for many Black Americans.

The Structure of Slave Families

Within the slave community, as in their former homeland, family relationships continued to be important sources of mutual support and social organization for slaves. Africans came to the slave colonies with an established set of role behaviors and expectations, styles of behavior, and belief patterns. Regardless of the hardships they faced as slaves, first generation Africans were complete repositories of their African culture, which they transmitted to their children (Gomez, 1998).

Frequently, slave households have been described incorrectly as female-headed units. While it is true that husbands often did not live on the same plantation as their wives, especially on small plantations, this living arrangement did not dissolve the definition and experience of family for slaves (Kulikoff, 1988). Because the undisturbed sanctioning and control of the familial life was so precarious, stable family relations gained significance and value in the minds of the enslaved. For example, while evidence suggests that approximately one-third of slave families were forcibly dissolved by slave owners (Franklin, 1988), evidence also demonstrates that family members, both freed and enslaved, made heroic attempts to locate and reunite their families (Robertson, 1996; Bennett, 1988). One indication of slave commitment to family is provided by marriage records from shortly after emancipation: "55 percent had been married for more than ten years and, of this percentage, 15 percent had been married for more than 30 years" (Rodgers-Rose, 1980, p. 19).

African Womanhood, Motherhood, and Family. To understand how Africans made the successful transition of maintaining a meaningful family within the confines of slavery, it is useful to examine an example of the traditional lifestyle and value system of West African women. In the Yoruba society, for example, a woman is taught that she "cannot let her husband take care of her. She must earn her own way" (Rodgers-Rose, 1980, p. 17). Prior to reaching maturity, African girls associated in predominantly age-matched, all female social groups in which members referred to each other as "sister." Similarly, all older women were called "mother" by younger females. Within this social structure, women were taught to be independent of men and to associate more with other women.

This theme of female independence is also reflected in women's role in African economy; women exclusively controlled certain marketplace industries. For example, the making and selling of cloth, pottery, and spinning were primarily women's crafts. In this economy, women were defined as independent traders, whose earnings were maintained and owned by them solely; financial wealth did not depend on or directly benefit her husband or other male relatives. In addition, women were also experienced agriculturists; they were responsible for raising and providing food for their families.

However, it was in her role as mother that African women gained and asserted their most important role (Zeitlin, 1996). As mothers, women were considered vital sources of group survival. African mythology holds that the universe was conceived and delivered by a woman; Africa is defined as the "motherland." Women were viewed as gods because they bore children. Indeed, the role of mother is an African woman's most important function in life--a role that superseded all other roles.

The supremacy of the motherhood role is reflected by the structure and practices of a woman's role as a wife. The care and maintenance of children were the most important responsibilities of both women and men, therefore expectations of a wife from her husband were subordinate to the woman's role as mother. Polygamy was, and remains where economically viable, a common marital arrangement in Africa. Typically, family compounds were comprised of individual houses for each wife and her children;

while living in the family compound, the husband did not consistently cohabit with any particular wife--he rotated among all wives. As a result, one woman's direct responsibility to care for her husband was shared with other women.

Historians believe that these central themes of African women's social organization, of which there certainly were variations by tribe and region, were central to the successful maintenance of family structure under the reign of slavery (Robertson, 1996; Franklin, 1988; Sudarkasa, 1988; Rodgers-Rose, 1980). African women were socialized to expect to manage multiple roles within the household and were well skilled to accomplish these roles. The confines of slavery added additional resource acquisition hardships, but did not dramatically reorganize their definition of family roles and responsibilities.

Collins' Model of Afrocentric Motherhood

Collins (1991, 1990) proposed a model of motherhood designed to reflect the experiences and reality of Black American women. Collins argues that three competing perspectives of motherhood combined to form an uniquely Afrocentric experience of motherhood. First, the Eurocentric idealized archetype presents motherhood in the confines of the nuclear household described above. Collins observes that the Eurocentric model isolates mothers, creates strict sex role segregation of duties and influence in the family, and links motherhood success with financial dependency on men.

The second perspective that Collins proposes is the Eurocentric view of Black motherhood. Collins contends that this perspective divides Black mothers into the equally denigrating roles as either subservient "Mammies" or overly assertive

"Matriarchs." This limited view of Black motherhood by the dominant culture, Collins argues, functions to minimize Black women as effective mothers and, if internalized, will continue the cycle of social and economic oppression in Black communities.

The third perspective of motherhood that Collins describes is the traditional West African model. In traditional African societies, mothering occurs in and with a community of kin and nonkin "othermothers," in families characterized by fewer gender-dictated roles and more democratic influence, and with the mother providing a portion of or, indeed, all economic support for the family.

Collins suggests that from these three perspectives an uniquely Afrocentric model of motherhood emerged. She argues that the Afrocentric model arose in defiance of systemized oppression that simultaneously exposed Black mothers to the dominant Euro-American mother archetype and denied the economic resources which would allow adoption of that model. In turn, African American women were forced to define motherhood through caretaking practices that maintained their personal integrity as mothers while continuing to function within the boundaries dictated by the dominant culture.

Collins identifies four enduring themes that distinguish an Afrocentric ideology of motherhood: 1) women-centered child care networks, 2) economic support as part of mothering, 3) community “othermothers” and social activism, and 4) motherhood as a symbol of power. Collins maintains that the Afrocentric themes of "women-centered networks" and "providing as part of mothering" are grounded within the traditional West African ideal of motherhood. Corresponding with traditional African communities, African American women-centered networks include kin and nonkin othermothers who share the responsibility of child care; this network of multiple care givers is a well recognized feature of African American family structure. Likewise, economic "providing" is an integral part of maternal behavior in West African societies. While not directly linked to traditional African family practices, Collins suggests that the Afrocentric themes of "othermothers and social activism" and "motherhood as a symbol of power" are an outgrowth of women-centered networks and mothers as providers. She argues that the practice of women-centered networks of child care engendered "a more generalized ethic of care where Black women feel accountable to all the Black community's children" (p. 49). The active, organized presence of women in the community provided the necessary foundation to act in socially conscious ways and create opportunities for their "children." As Collins explains:

> Community othermothers work on behalf of the Black community by trying..."to uplift the race," so that vulnerable members of the community would be able to attain the self-reliance and independence so desperately needed for Black community development under oppressive conditions (p. 51).

The picture that emerges from Collins' description is that of powerful, competent, and intelligent women. As active participants in community organization, operation, and evaluation Black women attained the power that accompanies these activities; interestingly, in white communities, these same roles and the ensuing power are reserved primarily for men.

This model is one of the most recent and serious considerations of the authentic experiences of Black American women. However, one of the limitations with Collins' study, and indeed one of its very strengths, is its historical location. The data on which Collins' model was built was from women in the transition generations representing a continuous link between the lives of families under and immediately following the horrors of slavery. The women in the present study continue the line of transition and demonstrate the coherence without stagnation of the Black family and the ties that bind modern practices to ancient belief systems.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Philosophical Perspective

Philosophical phenomenology served as the guiding heuristic in all stages of designing, conducting, and completing this study. Phenomenological research focuses on how individuals cognitively organize perceptions of experiences in order to make sense of and attribute meaning to the lived world. The goal is to look beyond the concrete details of a phenomenon and uncover the essence, or invariant content, that is common among those who experience the phenomenon. Phenomenology assumes that reality, as we are able to conceptualize it, reflects the interpretative intervention of the mind. The nature of reality is understood and given meaning through the action of human cognitive processing, or thinking. This thinking mind is always present and actively influencing human experience of the material world (Rescher, 1998; Karlsson, 1993; Rescher, 1992; Vesey, 1982). In essence, there can be no cognitive structuring of an experience separate from the structuring activity (Wilson, 1996). This view further asserts that there is a partnership between the mind and material reality in the understanding of that reality; objective separation between the knower and the investigated phenomenon is believed impossible. Accordingly, knowledge is defined in terms of meanings assigned to experience and is assumed to include both our understanding and characterization of the nature of reality. The veracity of knowledge is judged primarily by the standard of conceptual coherence, such that any individual piece of information is viewed in terms of its coherent placement in a holistic context (Wilson, 1996; Rescher, 1992). By seeking the invariant content phenomenology does not discount the importance of individual differences; its focus, however, is aimed at locating the essential nature of a phenomenon that makes it that particular phenomenon and not another.

Phenomenological research rests upon three fundamental assumptions. First, reality cannot be objectively experienced. Reality is a combination of our subjective and intersubjective interpretations of putative experience (Davidson, 1996); material events are given meaning through the dual processes of subjective interpretation by an individual and intersubjective interpretation by multiple individuals living in a social system. Therefore, meaning is constructed through a bidirectional dialog between participants. Second, abstract interpretations reference the lived world, and consciousness is always directed toward, or intentional of, something. Therefore, the conscious mind is a rich network of intentional relations that serves as a powerful substrate from which to discover the essence of experience. Finally, phenomenology assumes that there exists a fundamental, shared essence for any given experience that can be recognized and articulated. Hence, a central goal of phenomenological research is to discover the shared structure and essence of experience for a given phenomenon as revealed through systematic analyses of narrative descriptions (Kocklemans, 1994; Husserl, 1994/1928).

Participants

The study population was middle-class, college-aged, southern Black women who were born and live in the southeastern region of the United States and who were able to trace their family lineage to slavery. It was expected that if Black Americans have developed a separate and unique culture that blended multiple ethnic values and systems retained from Continental West Africa with the socially predominate Euro-American traditions in response to enslavement and institutionalized racism, as argued by many scholars (e.g. Wyatt-Brown, 2001; Gomez, 1998; Berlin and Rowland, 1997; Gordon, 1995; Bennett, 1993, 1988; Littlefield, 1991; Jones-Jackson, 1987; Joyner, 1985), characteristics of a subculture should be detectable in a population of women that traced their family history to slavery and who have maintained close geographical and personal relationships with their families. Sample homogeneity was a design goal; therefore, these criteria reduced possible regional variation in cultural and social mores that could dilute the clarity of data (Allen and James, 1998).

Participants were recruited from the student population at a large university located in the southeast by 1) public notice to the general student population and 2) by personal referral. The study sample was 121 southern Black women[4]. The primary sample (n=103) was comprised of women (referred to hereafter as daughters), between 18 and 23 years of age (mean and mode, 19 years). A secondary sample (n=18) was comprised of the mothers of daughters in the primary sample. Daughters individually recruited their mothers for participation in the study.

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[2] "Being a southerner" was one of the solicitation screening criteria. State of origin was recorded only for women participating in the interview portions of the study. Of these women, the majority were from Georgia (59%) and South Carolina (38%), with 3% of participants originating from Alabama, Louisiana, and North Carolina.

The mean age of participants' mothers[5] was 46 years; modal age was 49 years (range, 35-60 years). All mothers were identified by daughters as heterosexual. A brief outline of the mothers' marital history is presented in Table 1. Ninety percent of all participants' mothers were married, with only 10 percent never marrying. Of the women who married, 83 percent married the father of daughter participants. Four percent (n=1) of all married women lived in a multigenerational household. Seventy-five percent (n=3) of single, never married women lived in multigenerational households.

Sampling Strategies

To increase homogeneity of the study sample the technique of non-random, typical-case sampling was used. Non-random typical-case sampling targets individuals who are generally thought to be typical, normal, and average in the target population (Patton, 1990). Classification as "typical" required that the participants 1) had a minimum of a high school education, 2) be generally classified as middle or higher socioeconomic class as defined by the Four Factor Index of Social Status (Hollingshead, 1975)[6], and 3) did not report a history of psychopathology or substance abuse or be

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[5] Demographic data were collected only from daughter participants who were interviewed.

[6] All daughter participants identified their parental household as their primary residence. Therefore, social status was determined using educational and employment information for the parent(s) living in the household. Social status was divided into five general classifications, ranging from professional as the highest (1) to unskilled laborers as the lowest (5). Participants were located among the top three classifications, professional (1), minor professional and technical workers (2), and clerical and sales workers (3). The mean, mode, and median social status for primary participants were classification 2. No significant between-group differences were found for social status.

Table 1: Marital Status of Mothers

Marital Status of Mothers	N (40)	Married Father	Years Married (Average)
Currently Married, 1st*	18	45%	24.00
Currently Married, 2nd*	4	5%	12.00
Divorced, Not Married	14	33%	11.86
Single, Never Married	4	–	–

*1st and 2nd refer to current marriage

presently exposed to domestic violence. This definition of a typical case participant sought to eliminate widely recognized risk factors--lack of education, poverty, substance abuse and domestic violence (Brown, Brody, and Stoneman, 2000; Erickson and Egeland, 1996; Garcia Coll, Meyers, and Brillon, 1995)–that would confound data results.

Study sample size was determined by theoretical saturation, in the methodological tradition of grounded theory (Strauss, 1987; Glaser, 1978). Theoretical saturation is accomplished when categorical themes provided by participants during data collection and analysis become redundant and provide no substantively unique amendment to data, thereby ending the need for further participant recruitment.

Design and Procedure

Qualitative research design is ideally suited for providing maximum illumination and understanding of dynamic phenomenon without unduly distorting the intent and perspective of the participants (Patton, 1990; Pelto and Pelton, 1978). This study design incorporated both etic and emic[7] strategies in order to capture a fuller understanding of the experiences and interpretations of southern Black women.

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[7] Etic and emic are terms that indicate contrasting orientations toward research design, data collection and analysis. Etic strategies include defintions, units of analysis, and interpretative labels that are supplied by the researcher and are derived mostly from the researcher’s theoretical perspective and background. In contrast, the goal of emic strategies is to include participants’ unique perspectives about phenomena in the research process by incorporating conceputal definitions, categorical units and interpretative labels derived from participants (Pelto and Pelto, 1978).

Data Collection

Data collection techniques included 1) a questionnaire, 2) semi-structured individual interviews, and 3) focus group interviews. Participants were divided into one of four mutually exclusive groups according to their level of involvement in the study tasks as noted in Table 2.

Relationship Questionnaire. Questionnaire data were collected from all daughter participants (n=103). The questionnaire served three purposes in this study: 1) as a means of building a participant pool, 2) as a means of inserting a degree of control in the study design, and 3) to provide triangulation for interview data.

One notable barrier that researchers often encounter when conducting social science research is adequate entry into the research setting and access to the desired participants. This problem is redoubled when the topic of interest is one that is potentially politically and socially volatile and the researcher is a member of the historically offending group. In this instance, the questionnaire served as a means for the researcher to begin the entry process. The questionnaire was administered in a large group setting. Prior to administering the questionnaire, a brief written statement (see Specific Aims, Appendix A) outlining the research perspective, methods, and goals was distributed. The researcher verbally reviewed the handout with participants and invited participants to ask questions or discuss any concerns they may have had about the study. At the end of this introduction participants completed the questionnaire. Women who were interested in participating in the entire study were invited to indicate their interest by completing a contact form attached to the questionnaire.

Table 2. Group membership assigned by study tasks

Group	N	Study Tasks
A	57	Questionnaire Only
B	22	Questionnaire + Individual Interview
C	18*	Questionnaire + Individual Interview + Mother-daughter Interview
D	6	Questionnaire + Focus Group Interview

*Mother-daughter dyads are treated as a single unit.

A central concern surrounding the use of a non-random, volunteer sample is the issue of participant motivation (ie. selection bias). The questionnaire data inserted a means to partially control for and identify motivational differences, if any, between participants who volunteered for the different levels of involvement. A between-group comparison using questionnaire data was conducted to determine the existence of possible group differences.

Finally, the questionnaire format provided a simple, direct, but low-stress means for capturing daughter participants' perceptions of their mother-daughter relationships. These data provided a triangulation resource against which to compare interview data for participants in Groups B, C, and D.

Questionnaire Design. The Relationship Questionnaire (see Appendix B) was compiled using select items from three preexisting instruments, the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), the Provision of Social Relations (PSR) (Turner, Frankel, & Levin, 1983), and the Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale (KPSS) (James, Shumm & Hall, 1985).

The items selected from the IPPA relate to the daughter-mother relationship (items 1-25 on the study instrument). The IPPA was designed by Armsden & Greenberg (1987) to assess the constructs of conflict, warmth, dependency, open communications, troubled feelings, as well as provide an overall profile of the child-parent attachment relationship. Unresolved questions exist, however, about the validity of using a self report instrument to accurately capture and characterize the unconscious nature of affective attachment (see Bartholomew & Shafer, 1998; Bartholomew, 1993). Therefore, items from the IPPA were chosen solely for their face valid qualities and used as a means to identify daughters' explicit perceptions about their mother-daughter relationships. A single composite score that represented the construct "mother-daughter relationship" was created by summing individual item responses and reflects participants' positive and negative feelings.

Social support was measured using the PSR (Turner, Frankel, & Levin, 1983) (study questionnaire items 26-34), which yields a sub-factor score for perceived social support available from family members. This instrument has demonstrated good internal consistency and concurrent validity, correlating significantly with the Kaplan Scale of Social Support.

Family satisfaction was measured using the KPSS (James, Shumm & Hall, 1985) (study questionnaire items 35-39), which yields an overall score for satisfaction with parent-child relations. The KPSS has demonstrated high internal consistency and concurrent validity, correlating significantly with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Questionnaire item responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale indicating how true a particular statement was for participants. In sum, higher scores for constructs indicated more positive perceptions by the daughter, with lower scores indicating dissatisfaction or negative feelings.

Interview Data. Three types of interviews were conducted for this study: individual, mother-daughter, and focus group.

Individual Interviews. Individual interviews (n=40) were conducted with daughter participants in Groups B and C on two separate occasions. The first individual interview (Interview A) was the primary, in-depth interview conducted by the researcher. Interviews ranged from approximately 90 to180 minutes in length. Interviews were semi-structured and maintained an open-ended approach in order to capture the participants' emic perspective; the goal was not to introduce preconceived ideas and categories of the interviewer into the participants' descriptions. As well, follow-up probes drew upon the emic language and perspective initially provided by the participants. Individual interviews were conducted in a private interview room, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriptionist. Follow-up interviews with daughter participants (Interview B) were scheduled after the mother-daughter interviews and were conducted by phone or in person in the researcher's private interview room. Follow-up interviews ranged from 5 to 60 minutes and were audio recorded. See Appendix C for interview questions for daughter participants (Researcher Interview Lists A and B).

Mother-Daughter Interviews. Daughter participants in Group C volunteered to conduct interviews with their mothers. Mother-daughter interviews (n=18) were semi-structured but followed a list of questions provided by the researcher. See Appendix C for mother-daughter interview questions (Daughter Interview List A). Mother-daughter interviews were scheduled after the researcher had completed Interview A with the daughter. Mother-daughter interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, were audio recorded, and ranged in duration from 15 to 30 minutes. Mother-daughter interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Focus Group Interviews. Two types of focus group interviews, family and non-family, were attempted. Volunteers were obtained, however, only for non-family focus groups[8]. Hence, two non-family focus group interviews were conducted as the conclusion of this study. Each focus group was comprised of three unrelated and unfamiliar participants (n=6). Focus group interviews were semi-structured, designed to explore analytic themes emerging from primary interviews, and approximately 180 minutes each in length. See Appendix C for focus group interview questions (Researcher Interview List C).

Journal Data. Journal data from daughters in Groups B and C were included as part of the original study design but proved largely unsuccessful. Immediately after all primary interviews the researcher gave each participant a blank, bound journal in which to write personal reflections. Participants were asked to write about feelings, thoughts, and memories arising from conversations and interpersonal experiences while participating in the study. However, only three participants submitted journals. When queried about their reasons for not using the journals, most (82%) indicated that they felt the interviews with the researcher provided ample opportunity to convey their experiences and feelings. Journals may be a more successful technique in studies where researcher-participant contact is more limited than was the case of the present investigation.

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[8] The family focus group was intended to comprise female family members or other members of a participant's personal network identified as central to her experience as a daughter. This setting would have provided a forum for exchange and discussion of thoughts about and interpretations of shared experiences from multiple perspectives of familiar individuals. I believe family focus groups proved unsuccessful for two primary reasons. First, many of the female family members lived in locations distant from the study site, and second there appeared to be a general discomfort on the part of the family members to participate in interviews on such a sensitive topic that would be conducted by an unknown, white researcher.

Triangulation

Two means of triangulation were applied in order to secure rigor and accuracy during data collection and analysis: 1) triangulation of methods and 2) triangulation of sources (Patton, 1990). Triangulation of methods is the use of multiple data collection methods to access the same phenomenon; this technique allows the researcher to check data consistency for individual participants across methods. This requirement was satisfied by the use of a questionnaire and multiple interviews with individual participants. Triangulation of sources is the process of checking data consistency between sources within each data collection method; this requirement was satisfied by conducting individual interviews with Group B participants, daughter-mother interviews from Group C participants, and focus group interviews.

Analytical Technique

Phenomenological Inquiry

Phenomenological inquiry is a qualitative research technique that identifies essential definitions and interpretations of shared experiences by systematically isolating the multiple layers of socio-cultural influences in narrative data (Kocklemans, 1994, Husserl, 1994/1928; Karlsson, 1993). Phenomenological inquiry requires that the researcher look both inward and outward in order to identify possible biases that could influence or shape data collection and analysis. Accordingly, it was a recursive process whose influence permeated research design, data collection and analysis.

Phenomenological inquiry is comprised of three components: epoche, phenomenological reduction, and structural synthesis.

Epoche. Epoche is a constant self-reflective process during which the researcher identifies personal biases and opinions toward all elements of the research study. This process is one of the most difficult components of engaging in true phenomenological research because it requires, if done honestly, that the researcher wrangle through and explicitly identify private, sometimes deeply rooted assumptions about the topic at hand and her motivation for conducting such research. The goal of epoche for the researcher to be able to recognize and include as part of the analysis, when appropriate, the interpretative contributions she makes to the research process. See Appendix D for a sample journal entry.

Phenomenological reduction. This is the act of identifying biases that exist outside the researcher. Such biases may include disciplinary, social, and cultural perspectives that influence the way in which phenomena are investigated and interpreted. Phenomenological reduction occurs much like epoch and may often be intertwined within personal journal entries. For this project, notations and reflections about potential outside influences were recorded in a separate notebook and incorporated primarily into Chapters 1, 2, and 5. See Appendix D for a sample journal entry.

Structural synthesis. Structural synthesis occurs only after the various layers of biases impacting the data are identified. Phenomonological researchers assume that once biases are located and named, they can also be used to form a more sophisticated, less monocular understanding of the phenomena of interest. Structural synthesis is the act of examining data–by abducting, deducting, and inducting (Nix, 1998)--for core, essential patterns shared by individuals both in and out of socially constructed interpretative structures.

In sum, pheonomenological inquiry is a powerful analytical tool because it is an explicit process of reflection about the researcher's and participants' subjective and intersubjective interpretation of experience. As a result, this approach offers an opportunity to uncover a rich picture of the various layers of meaning inherent in all socially and psychologically structured experiences (Marshall and Rossman, 1995; Husserl, 1994/1928; Kocklemans, 1994; Karlsson, 1993; Patton, 1990).

Narrative Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed according to the following procedure:

1. Each daughter interview was read completely to get a sense of the whole.

2. Each daughter interview was reread and compared with the matching participant's questionnaire data to check for consistency between data methods. If data between methods were consistent, then no other action with questionnaire data was taken. If inconsistencies appeared, questionnaire data were appended to the interview transcript, which was then treated as a whole during subsequent analysis.

3. Each daughter interview was reread and divided into units denoted by a change in subject matter or a change in activities being described.

4. Individual units from each daughter interview were coded using analytical labels, which continued until all data were classified.

5. Units were reread and interpretative analytical notes appended to each unit.

6. Mother-daughter interviews were then appended to the matching daughter interviews, and steps one through five were repeated.

7. Analytical notations across matching units were evaluated, merged, and summarized to reflect core substantive patterns.

8. Data from Focus Group interviews were compared with substantive patterns emerging from compiled daughter data and analytical notations made as necessary. Examples of a portion of the analytical procedure are presented in Appendix E.

Role of Researcher in Study

I assumed the role of both participant and non-participant observer in this study. I was a full participant during the research interviews. My goal was to learn to see these women as they wanted to be seen, not as I preconceived them to be. This necessitated that I avoid simply presenting a question and accepting a reply without deeper consideration and personal involvement. As a result, the interviews more often than not became bidirectional conversations. Yet, there were some elements of this process in which I could not participate–I am not an age-peer or of the same ethnic background as the majority of the women in this study. For most instances I belong to the same generation as their mothers, and I am white. However, we shared an identity as daughters, women, and southerners, which proved enough to begin.

I understood from the beginning that my identity and status as a white woman had the potential to deny me full admittance and acceptance into the research setting. Fortunately, I was met with enthusiastic interest in the topic and candor about the personal experiences and thoughts of the college-aged participants. This response led me to believe that entrance into the research setting depended less, at least for this generation, on my race or ethnicity than my willingness to engage fully in an honest exploration of the topic. While trust is an important component of any research endeavor, it is necessarily essential in a qualitative study where the line between researcher and participant often blurs. I believe that open communication emerged during this study because trusting relationships were built through honest dialogue.

Too often culture remains "invisible" in research. I wanted to bring culture forward and examine intimately its role and impact in the lives of my participants. Harkness and Super (1995) remind their readers that all people come equipped with culture, not just those "out there" (p. 211). This admonition is particularly relevant here. During this study I had to be constantly aware of my culture, our shared culture, and a culture unique to my participants. Often the lines between these areas blurred, and I had difficulty separating myself. At other times I saw little connection between my experiences and those of my participants–mostly in those times I just saw my age. In the end, it was in the discovery of the "other" that I learned how to best see myself. In gaining greater insight into my own beliefs and practices I believe that I was also able to see and understand those characteristics and processes in the women whose lives I encountered for this research. In sum, I believe that my difference was a research advantage: southern Black culture is simultaneously familiar and foreign, a duality of which I am constantly aware.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter is divided into two sections. Questionnaire data were analyzed to determine if selection bias was evident for participants according to their level of involvement in study tasks; these results are presented first. Next, findings from narrative data are presented in five subsections. Daughters' self-definitions formed the foundation from which all interviews were launched. Therefore, portions of their self-definitions are presented as backdrop for their experiences of identity development, racism, and dating relationships. Next, definitions of family and family relationships are presented, followed by examination of mother-daughter relationships. The fourth subsection details experiences of motherhood, participants' views toward marriage and fathers; and it identifies the roles of motherhood, important lessons from mothers, and the effects of racism on parenting. Together, these first four subsections provide the foundation for the fifth and concluding section that presents the essential assumptions shaping women's experience.

Section 1. Questionnaire Data

Comparisons were made between participant groups to determine whether they differed on composite scores for the three central constructs of mother-daughter relationship, perceived social support, or satisfaction with family relations. Data from Groups B and D were combined during analysis because their study tasks were nearly identical. A one-way ANOVA was calculated for each construct and no significant between-group differences were found. Mean values and standard errors are presented in Table 3. Results suggest that sample selection bias was negligible between participants who elected not to be interviewed and those who volunteered to be interviewed. Likewise, no differences appeared between participants who did and did not interview their mothers.

Section 2. Narrative Data

Narrative data were collected from daughter participants in Groups B and D and mother-daughter participants in Group C. Data were analyzed following the steps outlined previously. Narratives were organized into twelve primary unit headings reflecting major substantive topics. Data within each unit were recoded using subheadings. Unit and subunit headings are presented in Tables 4 and 5. Interpretative notes were appended to each subunit. Subunits and interpretative notations across matching categories were collated, reevaluated and summarized to reflect substantive data patterns.

Self Definition

Personal narrative is a deliberate action with an end goal in mind even before the story begins. Lives are composed of a collection of sensations, feelings, thoughts, and events. It is through the selection, organization, and disclosing of these components that the narrators engage in the process of interpreting themselves and constructing meaning of their experiences–both for themselves and for their audience (Chase, 1995; Mkhonza, 1995; Ben-Ari, 1995; Widdershoven, 1993). Important to understanding the nature of experience and personal relationships is locating first the individual context of the narrator. Too often research de-emphasizes the individuality and personhood of study participants, which in qualitative research lessens the richness of meaning that is later derived from narrative analysis. The following sections contain substantial quotations

Table 3. Group mean comparisons for mother-daughter relationship (MDR), social support (PSR), and family satisfaction (KPSS)

Construct	Group A (n = 57)	Group B & D (n = 28)	Group C (n = 18)
MDR	73.71 (0.51)	73.13 (0.64)	73.78 (0.78)
PSR	33.31 (0.46)	32.13 (0.87)	34.55 (0.44)
KPSS	15.44 (0.48)	14.86 (0.80)	15.66 (1.09)

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Group A is questionnaire only. Group B is questionnaire and interview. Group D is questionnaire and focus group interview. Group C is questionnaire, interview, and m-d interview.

Table 4. Narrative Data Unit Headings

- Self Definitions
- Family Descriptions
- Mother-Daughter Relationship
- Women's Relationships
- Father-Daughter Relationship
- Religion
- Sexuality
- Ethnicity and Race
- Community
- Parenting
- Education
- Gender and Womanhood

Table 5. Narrative Data Subunit Headings

- Daughters
  - Self Definition
  - Ethnicity
  - Racism
  - Colorism
  - Values
- Family
  - Definitions of Family
  - Membership
  - Categories of Membership
- Motherhood & Parenting
  - Role 1: Emotional Support
  - Role 2: Discipline
  - Role 3: Spiritual Guidance
  - Role 4: Financial Providing
  - Values & Essential Lessons
  - Effects of Racism
- Women's Relationships
  - Mother-daughter
  - Other Women
  - Male Partners

from participants' narrative in order to retain an awareness of the diversity of participants while also deepening the contextualization of subsequent analyses. In order to emphasize recurring themes of interest, qualitative analysis requires pieces of narrative to be extracted and reorganized often quite different than the original data. When possible, reorganization, especially of quotations[9], was minimal. If substantial reorganization was necessary, it was noted accordingly.

All primary interviews began by the researcher asking daughter participants to define themselves. These excerpts represent the first responses from daughter participants to this question. Twelve excerpts were randomly selected from daughters in Groups B and C (six from each).

> I like to be around my friends, I run track, and I love competing in track. Sometimes I like to be by myself, too, so I can write or just read magazines and think about things. I love to be with my family because I have a really close family...I like to be with them all of the time. (9)

> I define myself as a young, intelligent, beautiful, Black, woman. Spiritually bound and always looking for more answers in life to better myself. I follow the Baptist Christian faith, and I totally believe in God and the miracles and his blessings. I grew up in a family that was always made to go to church on Sundays, attend summer bible schools, vacation bible schools, and Sunday schools. And it is still basically like that now. I am encouraged to attend church as often now so I can move on in life a better way, in a more positive way. It is like the saying, "all things are possible [through God]." Even with my mom, she will, from time to time, give me words of encouragement using God and [scripture]. As a Black woman, sometimes I just sit around and think about...I compare myself to another individual, regardless of whether she is Black or of another race, I notice differences in the values that we have. [I see] different values in terms of just the way of cleaning up your house or a way of talking to people or a way of [defining] family, and foods...just different lifestyles all together. I take pride in being a Black woman, and I

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[9] All excerpts from interviews were minimally edited to enhance readability, primarily removing the excessive use of the colloquialisms "like" and "you know" as sentence fillers.

don’t regret it. I never think, “Oh, I wish I could have been of another race so things would be easier for me.” I feel strong. I love who I am, and I wouldn’t change it for anybody. I think about these things because it helps me move on, to find someone significant in my life, or to interact better with my mother and my family members. It helps me relate more with my friends and with other individuals, period. I really didn’t start thinking about this stuff until I was older. I began realizing what the important things were in my life–like, “finding yourself,” knowing who you are and your purpose. I haven’t found these yet, but I am searching. (24)

Well, I define myself as a Black woman...it's something like an identity but maybe a little broader. [My best traits] are...my family. Most definitely the love that I have for my family. I’m very honest, very open. Very patient, which I think is unique. I don't get mad often. I’m just an all around friendly person, I believe. My worst traits...mum...I like order and just dislike things being out of order, out of context. Ignorance. I have a low tolerance for ignorance. There are many things I am patient about but many things that I am very impatient about, which is real funny and I really can't explain it. I miss my family everyday. They are really important to me and a really big part of my life. When I first got up here, I struggled. I didn’t believe that I could stay. I had to do a whole lot of praying and soul searching for me to stay here at the university. A lot of my family opposed me coming all the way up here because it was so far away, everybody except for my mom. She thought that it was time for me to grow up and move away from the family while I was getting my education. Education is very important to her because she is the only one in her generation that ever made it out of high school and went to college. So it is very important to her. Also, being at such a prestigious university...that was a big thing, too. She said that it was a blessing for me to get accepted and have a chance to come here, so she didn’t want me to give up this opportunity. Education is important to my family in general, but it's like on another level with my mom. My family thought that I should go to school, but not so far away. They told me that I needed to stay close to my family...anywhere would have been fine as long as I was at home, close to them. (7)

I think I’m very strong-willed. I’m really stubborn in my beliefs about anything in general. As a woman....that’s a hard question (laughs). You want to look at what women are looked upon as...being caring, kind considerate, passionate and all those type things...and I guess I am, but there also are negative characteristics, like, being overly sensitive and all the bad things. I’m sensitive in a sense. I guess most of your basic [traits], not so much stereotypes. But what you think of as a woman, it’s basically what I'd think I am also. I'm caring, I'm sensitive, I'm passionate, but then I'm friendly, outgoing...just a regular person in general. The things I value most about myself are probably my morals and my values and my beliefs, and being able to uphold those things and show others that I'm not scared to be the person that I am. I think that is one thing I really value about myself -- I'm ME, I'm not afraid to be me, I don't try to be somebody else, and if people don't like that then, oh well. (11)

I define myself as a young Black woman who's intelligent, smart, caring, loving. I enjoy life itself. I enjoy having a good time, and I enjoy being happy. I do whatever it takes to achieve those goals. I was a cheerleader for four years at my high school. I also have become involved with a lot of people here, meeting a lot of friends. We've had our difficulties, but you know, sometimes you work it out, and sometimes you don't. I enjoy going to sports activities, hanging around, going out to clubs, and just having a good time in general. Just enjoying life, and living it to the fullest. Academics have always been my niche. I've set my goals, and I've reached most of them, and I'm just the type person who doesn't let anything overtake me. If I set my mind to something, I'm going to get it no matter what. (6)

Just being a Black woman, I think, is really hard. In terms of how everybody sees you, including our own Black men. I feel like we have no respect. We don't get any [respect] from the majority of White people, we don't get any from our own Black men. I'm just so tired of all these negative images, names being called about us, about our men. I'm just tired of the negative remarks...everything that comes along with being a Black woman. I'm tired of the negative Black women who perpetrate the stereotype by being ignorant and not respecting themselves. I don't know. Being a Black woman...a lot comes along with it. A lot. I don't think people understand how hard it is to be a teenager. Period. And being a Black female teenager is just so much harder. (3)

My major is mathematics, but I am really not sure if I want to pursue that major. I am the conservative one in my family. I am kind of quiet and shy. It depends on whether or not I am comfortable or not...if I will open up. I never really thought about being a woman that deeply. I haven't been confronted with too many adult issues just yet. In my spare time I listen to music and sometimes I write in my journal–when I have the time. I really haven't had a chance to write and describe my college life and everything. I sometimes write a little poetry. I watch a little TV, not much, mostly music videos. I really don't go out and party; I am not the party-type of person. I went to a party one time, and I just stood there. It wasn't my type of atmosphere or environment. I'm kind of shy so I don't dance in front of other people. I was not one to just go out there and start dancing like other people would. Well, I guess they are more extroverted than I am. But I do like to socialize, and I go to events such as the step shows. I wanted to go to the crossings [show], but I wasn't able to. (12)

I don’t really think of myself as being a Black woman, I just think of myself as really a young lady right now. I am just still kind of overwhelmed with issues that are coming up, responsibilities and things like that. But right now my main goal is school, and I’m just getting that feeling of responsibility now because I have moved off campus, and now I have bills and things and things like that, adult issues that I am really not too used to. But that is where mom and dad come in because anytime I need something I can ask. I am not a type of person that likes to ask for something, so if I ask I really need it. I depend on myself. I started working when I was 15--the day I turned 15, actually, I went looking for a job. It was at Taco Bell. It was my first job. I stayed there until I was about 17 and then I moved on to clothing retail. That is what I had been doing up until I came to school. My first year here I didn’t work, and this is my second year in school, and now I have an on-campus job where I work at the vet school. It is different. It is different. It is not what I would like to do for the rest of my life. Actually I don’t know what I would like to do for the rest of my life. Right now my major is Psychology, and I am not sure where I want to go with that. And I am not sure when I will know where I want to go with that. But that is my major. Basically school is my life right now. (17)

Physically I am an African American female. I am 20 years old, and I am an average-sized person. As far as my personality and who I am, I really feel like I am a very diverse person. I am the type of person that anybody can come up and tell just about anything. A friend of mine just told me that one thing about me is that I don’t make any judgements [against others] hardly at all. And even if I do, it would probably come along after I have known the person for awhile, and I would not hold it against them. So I guess a lot of people come up to me and talk about things with me. One thing that I am not, which I know a lot of people in my family are and a lot of my friends are, is opinionated. I don’t know if that is a negative or a positive aspect. Sometimes I feel it is negative because, I guess, when you are sitting in a group of people talking and this one person just voiced their opinion and this other person pipes in. You are sitting there in the middle seeming like you are not that intelligent and you have nothing to say. When in fact you know you have just listened to both arguments. I am kind of soft spoken, so I don’t really speak up when I have to or always when I think it is necessary. I think that I am a really kind person.

I do think about other people's feelings, and I am not the type of person who just knocks somebody out of the way when I am walking fast. So generally I do think that I am a kind person. Also, I am down to earth, I would say. As you can see, this is what I wear everyday. This is what I used to wear in high school, so it is not just a change since college. (28)

Well, I come from a small town, or at least what I think is small. I have two siblings and my mother and father recently divorced, like 3 years ago. I was a pretty boring kid. I didn't like to go outside and play. I liked to read books all of the time, and so my parents basically had to push me towards having a social life, which I really don't have much of still. I am pretty much a quiet person, to-myself type of person, which I think had a kind of negative impact on me growing up because now I am kind of anti-social. I'm not quick to go and jump into the social crowds. Communication is a hard thing for me, to tell how I feel. I keep a lot of things just bottled up until I am just ready to explode. I'm very bashful. I am always smiling, and I believe I am a pretty honest person. I mean, we all tell little white lies, but other than that I'm a pretty honest person. I like to be on time; I am like a schedule-type person. I like to see things laid out. Order is very important to me, to keep things in order. I like to help people. I have always done community service even when I was not required. In college you have to do it, but I did it throughout high school. I get self-fulfillment in doing things like that. I never really think about my background [being Black]. It was never a big emphasis in my home. I know that some families are more focused on the [African] art and everything like that, but it wasn't really like that in my family. I believe my family tried to steer me away from that and get me to be diverse as a young kid. My parents sent me to schools far away from my house so that I could go to school with a largely mixed population. My schools were not predominately Black or White, and I think that had a great impact on the way I view my ethnicity. I just don't really pay it attention. As far as that affirmative action thing goes, we were in a debate once about that. I said that I didn't think we need it. I was in a room full of African Americans, and they were looking at me [like I was crazy]...it was a long debate. But I guess because my family didn't focus on things like that as much I don't define myself by my color. (33)

I am a young, college student. I am struggling to find out where my place is and what I think my career should be, because everybody is telling me that this is my priority right now. And then I have these little love relationships on the side that are, just, well...[giggling]. I guess I am unique, and my characteristics are that I am usually happy most of the time even though right now I in a rough spot. For example everything is going wrong, but that is okay. I am kind of lazy. I will say that work is

> not my favorite thing in the world. I am pretty smart, I can make good grades without trying, which is bad. It is like a handicap because if I don't have to try then I don't. I have a lot of friends because I think friends are really important because [college] is when you are really struggling and they are the ones that help you, and your family as well, of course. (20)
>
> I define myself as quiet, but I can be loud at the same time. I will choose which situations I want to be quiet in and which situations I want to feel loose or whatever. A lot of people see me as a mother figure, even though I am not a mother, because I like to take care of my friends. I like to make sure they are okay, that everybody I know is okay and fine. I can be spoiled. I was an only child, yeah, I am slightly spoiled. I'm used to having my own way, so being at college and sharing a room with people is different, but I'm dealing with it. I like to succeed. I have a hard time failing at things. I'm getting used to it because now I get a bad grade every so often, which never used to happen to me before. So, I like to succeed. I have a problem with negative criticisms. Everybody tells me that. If they try to tell me something [I don't want to hear] I'll be offensive really fast, which isn't always good but that's just how I am. I like to lead but sometimes it's just better for me to follow. I'm not a big partygoer, go-out-all-night-every-night kind of gal. I do go out every so often. Sometimes I have a good time sitting by myself, watching a movie or reading a book, or just being in bed. And then other times I'm okay with being with other people, it's just not an all-the-time kind of thing with me. I think I'm nice. I'm really caring, overly sensitive, yes. I'm very sensitive, very emotional. I'm funny; I can be funny, yeah. (15)

Daughters' self definitions reflected a wide variety of personality styles, social and political views. However, even in their diversity, important shared experience was evident and will be explored in subsequent sections.

Identity Development. Identity development is the process during which individuals investigate and adopt the goals and values that give meaning and purpose in their lives (Erikson, 1980). It was posited that one advantage of using young adult women as primary informants was that they would be engaged in the process of identity formation as part of their natural developmental shift from adolescence to adulthood, thereby giving more direct access to implicit value and belief systems. Support for this thesis was apparent in daughter participants' narratives. Daughters had well formed systems of personal values that they could readily enumerate. For example, daughters indicated they valued: being achievement oriented, being financially independent, having a good education, being family centered, being a spiritual person, caring for others and performing community service. Daughters also valued having a sense of themselves as personally strong individuals. Perceptions of personal strength were explicitly indicated in self definitions, frequently as brief but direct statements, “I consider myself to be a strong person” (10). Further, independence was an unanimously recurring theme in all daughters’ narratives. Being independent was defined as being able to resist peer pressure, making one’s own decisions, speaking one’s opinion, being a leader, and being self-sufficient. A summary of daughters’ values is presented in Table 6.

Daughters represented a variable range in maturity when describing themselves as women. For example, one daughter was just beginning to think about herself as a young adult, “Right now I’m having a problem defining myself. I guess before now I defined myself as a child. I defined myself strictly through my family...mainly as someone’s child” (8). But many were actively thinking about what being a woman meant to them as captured by this daughter’s reflections, “I don't really see myself as a woman yet. I don't see myself on the same level as my mother. I see people that are women, and they know exactly who they are. They can define themselves really good, and I can't do that so I don't think I am a woman yet” (9). Other daughters equated womanhood with assuming responsibility for self maintenance and readily identified themselves as women, “I didn’t realize I was a woman until last year. I was responsible for myself. Moving off campus. I had to cook for myself, I had to clean for myself. I had to do a lot of things for myself, which made me transcend from a girl to a woman.” (16). Understanding and caring for

Table 6. Values Identified by Daughters in Self Definitions

Achievement orientation
Personal strength
Personal independence
Financial independence
High quality education
Family centered
Spirituality
Caring for others
Performing community service

oneself were important criteria for achieving womanhood. These criteria were closely linked with being ready to care for a family.

Two additional indicators of developmental transition were evident in daughters' narratives. First, daughters were engaged with negotiating larger and often unfamiliar social environments while striving to form adult friendships and romantic relationships. Second, daughters described working to achieve a balance between developing personal independence from their families and maintaining meaningful and close familial relationships.

Related to the process of defining themselves as individuals with unique desires, goals, and tastes, daughters were also engaged with developing a sense of themselves as a member of an ethnic group.

Development of Ethnic Identity. When asked how they defined their race and ethnicity to others, either formally or informally, all daughters responded that they labeled themselves either as "Black," "Black American," or "African American." Eighty-seven percent of all daughters described their consanguine heritage as a combination of more than one of the following broadly defined ethnic groupings: African, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Native American. The remaining 13 percent said that they did not know about any ancestors other than those of African heritage. Of the former group, all claimed Caucasian (specifically, White Euro-American) ancestory and were able to identify by both name and relation the White individual(s) in their family history. Many participants in this group also identified Asian and Native American ancestory. Regardless of their ancestral diversity, none chose to identify themselves as multiracial. When asked about this response, one daughter commented "...to Whites, black is black no matter how white you look" (14), a sentiment shared by all daughters.

The impetus for thinking about race and ethnicity often was in response to personal experience with discrimination and racism. For example, when asked to define herself, Tameka replied without hesitation, “I prefer to be called Black American rather than African American. ...Because to me, African American means that you’ve come straight from Africa, and you’ve become an American. I’ve never been to Africa, my ancestors have” (13). Tameka explained that ethnicity had become an issue for her when she arrived at college.

> I went to an all-black high school in my home town. There were only two White people in the whole school. So coming here was totally different. I mean, I’m still in culture shock. That’s what caused me to think about a lot of things, think about what I believe in, and how I think about different things. That’s why I’ve pretty much thought about it for a while, because I’ve been sheltered, and there are things now that I’m learning. For example, being the only Black person in most of my classes here. Um...the bus is interesting. I’ll be sitting on the bus and people would rather be standing up than sit next to me. A lot of Black people that I’ve spoken with have had some of the same experiences. I was kinda surprised, in this day and age, that people my age still do that; that’s been an experience that occurs everyday. (13)

Tameka grew-up in a moderately large nearby suburban area, lived in an integrated but majority Black neighborhood, and went to public schools. Prior to arriving at college Tameka’s primary social environment consisted of interactions with her family, neighbors, and school mates, the majority of whom were of the same ethnic background as she. Living in this environment, Tameka described her life as one in which race and ethnicity were rarely discussed. Conflicts surrounding race and ethnicity were topics covered in social science and history classes and rarely had strong personal connection with Tameka’s immediate life. The move to college placed Tameka in a predominately white environment where her sense of belonging was threatened by the scarcity of peers with her ethnic background and negative interactions with Whites.

Andrea exemplified how being a member of the non-dominant group in a majority White environment affected women's sense of belonging and increased their feelings of isolation, "I don't get to see myself as just a woman; it is always as a Black woman, an African American woman, a minority woman. So instead of being able to identify with women as a whole, I have to separate myself and only identify with these particular women" (18). Like many daughters, Andrea felt that others did not always recognize and respond to her as an individual. She described her frustration in the following passage.

> I hate that feeling that people don't look at me and see me. It drives me insane. And sometimes I wish I could just be a fly on the wall. Or maybe I could be white for like 5 minutes so I could experience it. But it is like "people, yes, I am black and I am glad that you recognize that, but that is not all of me. That is not who I am totally. I am so many other things. If you would just take the time to see them. I notice that people seem to feel different around me, and I wonder if it is because I am Black or is it because I am me. I get very confused about that, but I know there is something not the same there. People ask me odd questions like "How often do you wash your hair?" or stuff like that. And for some reason a lot of Whites think that I'm supposed to speak like Ebonics. They say things like, "Oh, you are not really Black" or "Why do you talk like that?" What are they expecting? This is not "Boyz-in-the-Hood." I was raised in the suburbs just like them. It is just little things like that that make me think they are responding to me being Black rather than as a person. (18)

In this excerpt, Andrea described a web of complex feelings and experiences common among daughter participants. She felt excluded from both the larger community of women and legitimate candidacy in the middle class. She expressed uncertainty about the underlying perceptions of and assumptions made about her by Whites during interactions. Later in her narrative Andrea reported frequently feeling heightened anxiety about how others respond to her and feeling the need to be extra cautious during interactions with Whites. Finally, Andrea described a situation in which she felt a reduction in her interpersonal privilege, defined as the felt power or ability to control public disclosure of private and intimate information about yourself, because she felt required to explain to questioning others her personal grooming habits, speech patterns, and noted later in her narrative, to endure racist jokes made in her presence.

Developing a positive ethnic identity proved difficult for many daughters. Some daughters, like Kim, sought to minimize the amount of time they focused on race. In the end, however, all expressed a sense that it was an influence that they would inevitability have to face.

> I am trying harder and harder to not think of myself as a Black person. I am tired of thinking about race all the time. I am tired of making that as my decision. But some things just make you realize that no matter how hard you try other people are going to look at you like that, and there is nothing that you can do about it. It is going to be there. (17)

While some daughters chose not to think about ethnicity because it was tiring, others felt little reason to think about it. For example, Anne remarked that while she did identify with Black women, she never had cause to think about her ethnicity as more than an incidental fact. Anne explained why she thought this was true for her.

> I grew up in an integrated neighborhood, and I went to mixed schools. I had more White friends than Black friends, and that's the funny thing. I had Black friends that I would talk to and we would go outside and play, but I never would never spend the night at their houses and our families would never get together and do things. I always ended up doing that with my White friends. I had three or four girl friends and we would always spend the night at each other's houses. Their families took me in, and my family took them in. We were equals. I never felt any differences. We always went roller skating, went to the movies, to the mall. You know, we just did everything together, and we were best friends. We even had best friends charm necklaces. Even in other activities I did, dancing, ballet, tap and jazz, I was usually the only Black girl in my class, and that was okay–that's me. We were just doing it, and I never had reason to feel like I was treated differently. I've always had a conglomeration of different environments and experiences with Whites. I've just always been in the mix. (11)

Anne's background is distinguished from the daughters discussed previously only by the increased amount of positive exposure and interactions with Whites. Anne's family had always lived in predominantly White neighborhoods, and she had attended majority White schools. But Anne's environment and positive experiences with Whites did not eliminate conflict arising around her ethnicity. She felt alienated somewhat from other Black women and, while getting along well with Whites, indicated earlier in her narrative that she was careful around both groups. Annie felt that she fit somewhere in-between but not squarely in one group or the other.

> I think that because of my upbringing and my background, it's easier for me to go back and forth, because that's how it's always been. I've grown up being around White women, being in their homes and around their families and that type thing, more so than I have being around Black women. I can relate to Black women because I understand the things that we've gone through and the things that we're going through. But sometimes I do feel more comfortable introducing myself to a White woman, just because Black women tend to give off that assertiveness that we have. I can't really describe it, but it really is there. Sometimes they [author's emphasis] tend to be unpersonable and really unapproachable. (11)

Anne's experiences were typical for daughters who had more positive exposure to and involvement with Whites. In these instances, the nature of identity conflict for daughters began shifting from intergroup to intragroup interactions. The preeminence of intragroup conflict was central in daughters' narratives and presented in a variety of ways. Most often conflict arose over what kinds of personal choices and behaviors were accepted by others in their same ethnic group.

Daughters identified three types of intragroup experiences that led to ethnic identity conflict: selection of friends, being criticized for "acting white," and colorism. First, many daughters experienced strong peer pressure to form friendships along color lines, especially in predominantly White environments. Laura's experience was typical.

> I basically only have Black friends here because it is acceptable for you to be hanging out with Black people, but it is not acceptable for you to hang out with a lot of White people. I don't know how to explain that to you.

> We are such a minority here that people feel like they have to stick together and just be completely us. I understand where the concept comes from, but I really don't think it has to be that defined and that different. I am having a few problems with that. (20)

The composition of friendships was linked to the second form of intragroup conflict identified by daughters, "acting white." "Acting white" is a derogatory charge leveled at individuals who exhibit behaviors typically believed characteristic of the dominant White culture. For example, daughters listed the following as common behaviors depicted as "white": styles of dress (eg. "preppy"), getting good grades, and speaking standard American English and not using slang. For example, Kiera first faced the conflict of "acting white" because of her speech patterns.

> I lived in the suburbs, which was predominantly white. I went to a white elementary school. I didn't get much exposure to race relations until I reached middle school. That was when I went to a gifted program that was on the other side of town, which was like the predominately black side of town. That was when I started to have experiences with race. I wasn't too bothered by being around mostly whites. In fact, it bothered me more to be around a lot of African Americans because I got a lot of criticism about how I talk, what I do, how I act–that kind of thing. (15)

Kiera described being puzzled by this criticism because she spoke the same way as others in her family, all of whom were Black and from Alabama. She explained her perceived difference simply as differences between families, not between Blacks and Whites. In contrast, Kirsha found being the target of criticism aggravating and felt that these sort of statements were demeaning to all Blacks.

> People say things to me like, "Why do you talk like that? You just act so white." I get so frustrated by that. I respond to them by asking, "Well, what is "talking white"? Please explain it to me." They say that talking properly is talking white. Are they trying to tell me that Black people don't talk like this? Well, I'm Black, and I talk like this, so therefore I am talking Black. (9)

Shelly described how she resolved her discomfort with being called “white” through cognitive repackaging of its negative message.

> After talking with my mom about it I thought about it differently. I was not trying to be White, and I was not acting like I was White. I was just trying to act proper, which is what my mother sat me down and told me–that is the difference. They are talking about acting rude and disrespectful as opposed to being respectful and proper. Mom said that they were different things, and you were not acting white or black. I was acting proper and respectful. Once I got that through my mind, if that is the way that they feel, that is just the way they feel. Me, I am just acting properly. That is what my response would be. It was derogatory in the way that it was thrown at me. But, once my mother sat me down and explained the difference, it was like “Well, that is fine if that is the way that you think about it.” I don’t anymore. (28)

However, daughters found that one strategy to reduce charges of “acting white” was taking care to include Black peers as friends. A well chosen social group reinforced unity among peers while allowing daughters to retain some individual preferences and behaviors.

Finally, colorism is defined as intraracial color discrimination among Blacks. While colorism primarily references differences in skin color, the concept also includes biased attitudes toward certain hair textures and facial features (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). Daughters described skin color, hair texture, and facial features as sensitive topics affecting all Black women. The conflict arises over which physical characteristics are valued and not. Regardless of preferences, all daughters described dealing with colorism as one of their most difficult and conflicting challenges as they develop their self perceptions. The stories of three daughters, Debbie, a dark-skinned woman, Tashia, a medium-light-skinned woman, and Lizz, a very light-skinned women, epitomized how complex the issue of colorism was in their lives.

Debbie's story:

> Hair has always been a real issue with African American women, in terms of the degree -- if you've got White blood in you and it's straighter or it's not straighter, and I know that that's a point of contention for many women, and that is something that probably White people, in general, don't understand. They don't understand why its an issue. Some of my friends are obsessed with hair texture. Like Jackie, she'll only talk to a guy with a light complexion and "pretty hair," as she puts it. I've asked her what makes a light-skinned male different from a darker-skinned male with, well "ugly hair"...there's no such thing as good hair to me, what can his hair do for you anyway? Her response is "Well, you know, if we have a child, then my child has an 80 percent chance of having pretty hair because I have pretty hair." What does hair have to do with it...what will hair do for you? ...I just notice that lighter-complexioned girls are considered more attractive than darker girls, especially by other Blacks. What I get a lot is, "Oh, you're cute for a dark-skinned woman." There have been times when I've been attracted to a guy, and he'll tell me, "You're okay. You're gonna be my first dark-skinned girlfriend" or a guy will tell me, "I'm not usually attracted to dark-skinned women." That's okay, I don't want to be their token. And then, on the other hand, you have the guys who are obsessed with dark-skin. Its usually the lighter [skinned] guys who are obsessed with dark-skinned women. It's annoying. You can tell, because they say things like, "Yeah, get over here with your chocolate self." What!?! I tell them to get away from me. There's something's wrong with them. I'm ashamed that I have to be a certain complexion to be cute in someone else's eyes. A guy friend of mine told me that guys think that light-skinned girls are prettier and easier, but then I've also heard that dark-skinned girls are easy. So I want to do my own little research in that department. What am I facing everyday? When I go out, why do certain guys approach me and certain other guys don't? My friend, Victoria, told me about (she's dark-skinned) how growing up it was always the light-skinned girls who got played with the most, and got chased for tag and stuff. I still don't know what the big deal is....lighter complexioned women are considered closer to White women, so maybe that's what it is. I don't know what it is. I just know that a girl who's not considered to be attractive, but she's light with pretty hair, then she'll be accepted more so than a darker girl who might be cuter. It's just her complexion and her hair that's getting her by. It's the same with certain [Black] sororities. If you have a certain hair texture or a certain complexion, they're more accepting of you. I chalk it up to people being ignorant, and I just try to overlook it. (16)

Tashia’s story:

> I grew up mostly around white people, everywhere I went. I always got the feeling they [parents] were comfortable living in white neighborhoods, but at the same time they still had that feeling in the back [of their minds] that “we’re different.” But they really didn’t have much of a choice about where we lived. They had to do that because of my dad’s job. I felt like my parents expected a double standard of me. Like, we lived in a white community, yet they expected me to hang around with Black kids. It didn’t really make any sense because the white kids were the ones I related to, they were the ones that I lived near. Pretty much the only time I saw Black kids was when I was with my [extended] family, or when we went to church. But even then, those people didn’t really live near me, so it was kinda’ hard to relate to them. My parents never minded me having white friends. But if you took it a step further and said I was going to date a white guy, it would be a problem. And, I used to go to bed with my hair however, and my mom would say, “You’re not white, you can’t wear your hair like that.” Stuff like that, and I would get resentful of her, because I didn’t understand. It was like a double standard to me, because she expected me to understand this, yet these were the people I was around all the time. ...It was just easier to hang out with white people. Middle school and high school were hard because I looked different to the other Black kids. I had really long hair, and my hair has a different feel. They used to call me mixed and always asked me questions like, “What are you?” I’ve gotten that all my life. I remember going home complaining to my mom, I’d be so upset, “Mom, all the kids, they don’t understand, they ask me what I am.” And my mom’s said, “Just tell them that you’re mom’s Black and your dad’s Black. You’re fine, don’t worry about it.” I never got that from white people. Most white people were just like, “You’re Black” (laughs). I was around white kids most of the time. I’m sure if I’d had more Black friends it would have been different. They wouldn’t have questioned so much. ...I was so caught up in softball, and I used to model, and really, I have no idea what the Black kids at my school were doing at that time. I played softball, and that was where my friends came from. I was always like the only Black kid playing softball, too, in high school. I played on our team, and I traveled around a lot, and I was usually the only Black kid on the team. In high school, there weren’t that many Black kids. But most of them came from the same financial background, they moved around a lot, they had the same interests as my family. They had similar interests, they played on rec leagues and stuff, but they never played with me. It was almost like there was two different groups of Black kids at school. But, you were expected to hang out with the Black kids. Everyone was pretty much nice to everybody. ...I had a friend in 9th grade, and she was called white all the time, and others too

> who were called white, because they didn't hang out with the Black kids. The Black kids would say things about the clothes my friend wore. She had penny loafers on one time, and they were like "Black kids don't wear that." They would also say stuff about how she talked. That used to really, really bother me. I was not really used to having black friends, but it forced me to get some, because I didn't want to get talked bad about (laughing). (14)

Lizz's Story:

> As fair skinned as I am, of course there have always been jokes. There are still jokes, like now people will be like "Look at her White ass." or "Oh, you will get the job. You look about like them anyway." Things like that. And, you know, I just take that as a joke or whatever. It used to bother me when I was younger, when people treated me differently because I was different. You cannot get anymore fair skinned than this and be Black, totally Black and I am totally Black. Besides, it is way back in the line where I get my light skin. People always ask me, "Are you mixed?" I remember a situation when I was in the 7th grade. We used to watch this show called Channel 1 in the Morning, its like a news program for teens and you watched it in class every morning. And we were watching one day, and they had a program on about biracial children. When Channel 1 went off the teacher began talking about what was on the news. And then she turned to me and said, "Lizz, which one of your parents is white?" She just assumed it–all this time I had been in her class, it was toward the end of the year. I looked at her and told her, "Both of my parents are Black." I just looked at her. She was like, "Oh." Then she just moved on. I kept thinking about it; she had been thinking all this time that I was mixed when I am just Black. You know? She did not treat me any differently, and she did not say anything else about it. It was just the fact that she had assumed that I was mixed and I wasn't. Some Black people will just come out and ask, "Are you Black? What are you?" They will just ask you. I guess because they were just wondering. I always say "I am Black. Can't you tell by my hair?" You know, I just don't have good hair. Most mixed people have that fine hair and things like that. They also ask me, "How you got to be so light?" Yeah, people always make little jokes. But... I used to make jokes back at them. If someone said "you are so White!" I would be like "Well, when you and I go to get that job, I will get it. So keep on talking about things like that." They thought I would, too, "Yeah, you will get it." And some people will be like "Oh your complexion is so pretty." You know, you just have different people. But all of my friends, they basically joke about it. They don't care about it, and they know I am Black. But when you are young...you like to find things to pick at people about. I don't let that bother me at all. People

> that don’t know me ask if I’m Black. They won't just ask you right then. It will be a couple of months after they know you, if they have never met your parents. Then they will finally ask. Or when they meet my parents, and they see both of them, they will ask, “Are both of those your real parents?” They are my real parents. My dad is real dark skinned and, my mama, she is darker than I am, but because of sunning. I just came out like I came out. Most of the Black people that ask ask because they just want to know whether I am mixed and wonder why I am hanging with them. And then the White people that ask, I don’t know if they are trying to see if I have something in common with them, which makes them feel better that they are friends with me. Maybe people are just interested. You know, if I see somebody that...I don’t ask if people are mixed because I know better...but, you know, when you look at someone, you will think about their race for some reason, just through their looks and features. I do that, but I have common sense, know enough, to know not to walk up to someone and ask, “Are you just white or are you mixed?” But people do that. They don’t even think about it. I don’t know if they think about it once they say it. They probably do know that they shouldn’t have said that, but they want to know. (17)

The effect of colorism in the lives of daughters was complex and extensive, as demonstrated in the above narrative excerpts. Regardless of their personal appearance, all daughters were able to identify readily which characteristics were valued most by other members in their ethnic group. Daughters felt that Black Americans, in general, preferred lighter-skin, straighter hair, more European facial features, green or blue eye color, and lower body weight. While colorism was believed (by daughters) to affect all women, the nature of that experience differed most notably by darkness of skin. In particular, the issue of ethnicity was affected by skin color. For dark-skinned women, ethnicity was never questioned by others, Black or White, regardless of hair texture or physical features. In contrast, light-skinned women felt that their ethnicity was constantly under question by other Blacks and sometimes by Whites. Daughters’ experiences reflected a felt increase in social pressure to project a more definitive ethnic identity according to lightness of skin color. Light-skinned daughters described instances in which they felt a need to form friendships with darker-skinned Blacks in order to provide some protection from accusations of “being White.” Constantly having to define and justify their ethnic heritage to others was exhausting and led to feelings of isolation. In many cases it proved easier for light-skinned daughters to form friendships exclusively with Whites rather than face the constant question “What are you?”

Color preferences also impacted daughters perceived opportunities for and experiences of positive social interactions. Daughters frequently described instances from childhood wherein they or someone they knew was excluded from an activity or group because of being dark-skinned. As young adults, Debbie’s experiences with dating were common for women with darker skin and European facial features. She was considered by Black men as very attractive “...for a dark-skinned woman. (16)” Having heard this type of color-coded qualifier about her appearance many times, Debbie became wary of the underlying motivations of potential dating partners. In contrast, compliments about light-skinned daughters’ appearances were never described as referencing skin color–they were “just prettier.”

Finally, daughters believed that skin color afforded privilege to individuals with light-skinned, as Debbie described above. The pervasiveness of this belief was demonstrated by Lizz when she used this expectation–that she would benefit from her light skin in the job market–as a defense mechanism when having to defend her ethnicity. However, light-skinned daughters also described feeling pressure to fit seamlessly into two worlds, which proved difficult. Being expected to adopt behaviors and values from the dominant White society while retaining a preference and affinity for remaining in Black society caused daughters to feel a conflict between their sense of reality and outside expectations of them. One strategy to reduce this conflict was to actively choose to live in a White world rather than expend the energy and face the difficulties of justifying oneself as a legitimate member of the Black community.

Experience of Racism. Many participants often first denied having experienced racism directly; nonetheless, their narratives revealed a different reality. Daughters demonstrated knowledge about the types of racism experienced by their family elders and other Blacks. From this knowledge, they understood racism to be blatant acts of hatred and oppression, which they rarely had experienced. Accordingly, few readily applied the term "racism" to encounters in their personal lives; instead, these were treated more as acts of prejudice or discrimination. Notwithstanding, daughters gave vivid accounts of encounters and behaviors directed toward them that were in response to their race. A sample of daughters experiences are listed in Table 7.

When confronted with instances of discrimination and racism daughters tended to respond intellectually. Daughters rejected personal responsibility for others' racist beliefs and behaviors and attributed racism to ignorance taught intergenerationally. Daughters located the origins of peers' racism with the older generation, which would be the generation that most offended their parents.

> They were raised like that, and when your parents raise you to be that way it is kind of hard....they instill things in you...I blame it a lot on the parents because you shouldn't raise your children to be racist, and some people raise their children like that. The kids really don't have the will power to change because they may be scared that their parents might not accept them. And I can understand wanting approval from your parents. (17)

Table 7: Examples of Racism Experienced by Daughters

White students on campus preferring to stand on a crowded bus rather than sit next to a Black person

White students on campus using racial slurs causally and openly near participants

White woman locking her car door (in parking lot) as participant approached her own car that was parked nearby

Being followed in stores more closely than was necessary for the clerk to provide shopping assistance

Hesitation by Whites to enter elevator when participant is the only one inside elevator

Feeling pressure to “represent” all Black people in public places, classrooms, and social settings

White people making rude, intrusive, and insulting comments to participants about personal behaviors, ie. speech, hair and cleanliness

Parents of White friend expressing fear that their daughter’s association with participant might “contaminate” friend by exposing her to “Blacks and the way they do things” and “that her friend might be tempted to start dating black boys.”

Individuals whose ethnicity is ambiguous automatically assumed to be Black

Further, daughters exhibited a genuine effort to be understanding and forgiving toward the offender, often placing blame on other forces than simply the individual.

> If you basically tell me the reason you are doing something for, I will think long and hard and try to put myself in that same situation and be like "Well, yeah, I can see where you might have got that from or something like that." So that is the reason why, when I talk about people that are racist, I think about how they may have got that from their parents. I think about everything that goes along with it. (7)
>
> I don't have a perception that White people are bad because I have a whole bunch of friends that are White and I have favorite teachers that are White. But at the same time, there are others who were just really, really mean to me for no apparent reason. So I think I've seen both sides, and I've come to realize that it's not everybody. It's not just a race thing, it's a person thing. I can't do anything about it. Somebody taught them to be that way, and the person taught them that way, somebody taught them. I don't think I can be the one to break that cycle for that person. Let them have their opinion, and I'll have mine. I know I'm opinionated, and I hate for people to force their opinion on me, so I'm not going to do it to them. So if they feel that way, that's fine. We just move on from it. (15)

Seeking to understand the underlying motivation for racist and discriminatory behaviors helped daughters distance their personal identities from a stereotyped group identity.

While approaching racism and discrimination analytically helped reduce conflict between personal and group identity, it did little to bolster feelings of trust, "I'm always thinking, "What if deep-down inside they are racist. How do they really feel about me? You just always have these doubts" (6). Lack of trust in response to both inter- and intragroup discrimination was apparent in daughters' narratives. When asked how experiences of discrimination affected daughters, Anna offered this explanation:

> I think that it takes a lot for us just to trust people just because how we've been treated in the past and different things that have happened, and we are really skeptical of everyone, especially the Whites, and I think that plays a major role in how we react to each other, how we react to different people. (4)

Participants' descriptions of intergroup discrimination frequently conflated sexism with racism. Daughters believed that their experiences of intergroup discrimination primarily were in response to race; hence, gender rarely was treated by participants as a separate form of discrimination in these instances. In contrast, distinctions between gender and ethnicity were relevant in daughters' descriptions of intragroup discrimination.

Dating Relationships. Daughters defined their potential mate pool as consisting of Black men only. Daughters indicated that they preferred Black men to men from other ethnic groups and, further, that their families would certainly disapprove of an interracial romantic relationship. However, daughters' indicated that Black men's sexist attitudes and behaviors directed toward them, and their mothers, were a primary source of conflict in dating and marital relationships. Daughters expressed concern about finding a compatible dating or marriage partner, citing the "lack of good" men as one reason for their concern, frequently specifically linking their definition of "good men" to individuals who treated them respectfully. Daughters were optimistic that they would eventually find a suitable marriage partner, but felt that it would be difficult.

Definition of Family

To develop insight into the values and belief systems that influence parenting in southern Black American families, daughters were asked 1) to describe the composition of their households and 2) to define what family meant to them.

The majority of daughter participants in Groups B and C lived in household units comprised of their biological mother and a combination of full and half siblings. One daughter participant lived with her maternal grandmother and never with her biological mother. An adult male spouse and father-figure was also present in 55 percent (n=22) of the households. Grandmothers lived in 1 percent (n=4) of households, one in a two-parent household and three in single-parent households.

Daughters defined family as individuals connected by the presence of interpersonal relationships wherein mutual regard, obligation and reciprocity of social, emotional, and material resources existed.

> Many people tend to associate family with blood, those biologically related to them. However, a family doesn't have to be limited to only those related biologically. A family includes anyone whom you respect, care for, and love. Family are those who make you whole and who leave an empty hole when gone. My family consists of those who support me, give me unconditional love, and who are there for me through thick and thin. (46)

> I think family should be there for each other no matter what. If you don't have anyone else to turn to, I believe you should have your family to turn to. I think that your family should be very supportive in all of your endeavors or whatever you decide to do in life. You should be able to turn to family in all situations, and I think you should be able to have an open line of communication within your family. This is what I think is a good family structure–just a group of people that is going to be there for you regardless, no matter what. Including friends, too. (26)

Daughters also described their families as possessing a strong sense of collective action toward improving quality of life for the group.

> Family works as a group of people to approach achievement, grief, tribulations, challenges, and good times as a whole, as one. Your problems are my problems, if I have food, then you have food. (45)

> Family is not about individual success, if one succeeds all succeeds. And you help each other every step of the way. (7)

Further, participants characterized their family's focus on interpersonal relationships and exchange of resources as an adaptive response to past social and economic hardships.

> I believe that African American families, whether good or bad, near or far away from each other, they are going to stick together. I know that if you are in school and one cousin sees this other cousin fighting, he's going to jump right in and help the other cousin. I've seen that with most of the Black families that I know of. Loyalty is important...because...it goes back to history and the struggles that many of us have gone through. That is all we had to rely on, our family. You can't really depend on anybody

> out in the real world but your family–they will always be there. They will always be a part of you. (7)

While many participants first began by listing a large inclusive family definition, when probed about the types of family membership and obligations, participants made distinctions between family members in terms of hierarchal groups of individuals who were ranked by degrees of interaction, familiarity and relatedness. Participants divided these groups in order of importance as follows: core family, primary extended family, and secondary extended family.

Core Family. Inclusion in the category of core family was determined by the high quality of affective relationships between family members rather than simply household composition. When asked to identify their core family, daughters included household members and other important, emotionally close individuals who did not live inside the household unit, "I include my mother, older sister, brother, grandparents, two aunts and uncles, close cousins, nephew, father, best friend, and stepfather as my immediate and true family" (46). The nature of these relationships was reflected by this daughter's definition.

> [Core family] would include people who support you emotionally, financially and academically. Somebody who is always by your side no matter what. You have a close, close relationship with this person. You can develop a family by meeting someone and that person becomes a part of your family. They don't need to be in the same house with you, but they're a big part of your life. Someone who cares. Just cares for you and nurtures you in your growing-up process. And teaches you important values in life and different morals that are important to them and will also hopefully be important to you. (24)

Primary Extended Family. Primary extended family was defined as a network of individuals who were not included in the core family, but with whom daughters were emotionally close and interacted regularly. The primary extended family served the important role of providing a foundation for daughters' opportunities for friendship and experience of their immediate community. Tamyra's experience was typical of most daughters. For her, primary extended family members served multiple social roles, as playmates, schoolmates, best friends, and neighbors.

> I have always spent more time with family than outside friends. It was always encouraged by my mom and dad. When I had free time on the weekends, it was always something for family, and vacations during the summer was to visit family, and holidays was always with family. Whatever friends I had were in the family, a cousin or something. My mother and her sisters always had their kids together, maybe a few months apart, so whether you had a brother or sister your age you always had also a first cousin that was in your class and your age to be your best friend. Like my best friend is my first cousin. My sister's best friend is a first cousin, and for my brothers, too. It just goes on and on. (23)

Secondary Extended Family. Secondary extended family were those individuals who could be identified as related by some connecting factor, a status that afforded recognition of shared relation, respect, and frequently acts of assistance. Most often this connector was described as blood or marital relations, but relatively unfamiliar non-kin individuals were included as members of the secondary extended family as well.

> When I think of my distant family, I just think of the people you know. It doesn't matter how far down the line, it's the people that you know and the people that you can call and count on. They don't even necessarily have to be blood-related. They just have to be related in some way. (13)

As with the core and primary extended family, consanguine relatedness was not a qualifier to be in the secondary extended family group. Further, lack of familiarity did not eliminate inclusion of those individuals as family from the viewpoint of participants. Once a relational connection was established, the unfamiliar individual was welcomed to family activities and extended needed assistance from a sense of familial obligation to provide for family no matter what the quality of those relationships were.

In short, all forms of family were determined chiefly by the nature and closeness of social and affective relationships. At the level of secondary extended family many different family collectives formed reciprocal social connections that together created the social matrix of their local community. Interestingly, participants rarely invoked the abstract concept of "a Black Community" outside the boundaries of their family relations as being very important for the way that they thought about their place within the larger world. From their viewpoint, family was community and community was family.

Mother-Daughter Relationships

The warmth and power of daughters' feelings toward family became more intense when participants began discussing their mother-daughter relationships. Daughters became reflective and their voices often lowered and softened as they provided details about the intimate nature of their relationships. Their voices were filled with respect as they expressed deep admiration for the type of mother and woman they believed their mothers to be. Such admiration and respect appeared to result from high quality interactions between mothers and daughters, as demonstrated by daughters frequently characterizing their relationships as "extremely close" and their mothers as their "best friend." More than two thirds (78 percent) of all women interviewed spontaneously used this term as they initiated their descriptions.

Of the daughters who did not label their mothers as best friends, two daughters described positive, open, and loving relations with their mothers but reserved the status of friend for peers. Shandra explained her feelings:

> We are extremely close, but I don't want to say that my mother and I are exactly like friends, and we can go out to a party and things like that, because it is not like that at all. She is my mother. But she is the main person I go to whenever I just need to talk (28)

Five daughters variously described conflicted relations with their mothers, often vehemently disagreeing with their mothers' parenting rules and practices. Yet, they, too, spoke of their mothers respectfully and expressed a desire and expectation that their relations would improve as they got older. Further, these daughters held a strong conviction that they were well loved by their mothers.

In all cases daughters identified with the lives of their mothers, often so much as to feel that they were capable of and responsible for correcting past opportunities missed. This sense of connection was eloquently voiced by Andrea, "I see myself as an extension of my mother...I see myself as her hope. Everything she didn't do I get to do for her. And so I see myself as a way [for her] to experience life again, but to make up for the mistakes that she made...so I won't make them" (18).

Further, daughters describing feeling emotionally close to their mothers even when they described their mothers as "stern." Sternness by mothers was described as tempered by a warmth of exchange between mothers and daughters; the words may have been stern, but the affect underlying them was loving.

Relationships are not static entities, and daughters described their relationships as actively evolving from a child-parent relationship to a more equitable adult daughter-mother partnership. Daughters located the onset of this change as occurring during their late adolescent years–years that were often characterized by bouts of intense conflict.

> ...I mean we had arguments too, yeah whew! [laughing] When I was like fifteen or sixteen, it got to a point where my dad had to yell at both of us, "You all need to stop arguing." We would argue over nothing. I don't know what was wrong with me at all, but I am glad those years are over because now we are really good friends. (15)

Both daughters and mothers valued a close adult relationship. However, maintaining positive relationships during adolescence was not always easy for either. Most often the agent of change was just gaining maturity by the daughters.

> I think my mom was always there and always wanted that kind [close and friend-like] of relationship, but I didn't necessarily or maybe I wasn't mature enough to have that kind of relationship. But the fact that I'm accepting it now, that's why it's grown so much. Since I've been at away

> at college, if something's bothering her, I always want to know what's wrong. I don't know that I ever paid as much attention when I was in high school to what was bothering her. But if I talk to her on the phone, I can now tell if something's wrong, and she'll tell me if I ask her. (14)

Other times there were life-changing experiences, often of loss, that triggered a revised attitude by the daughter.

> A lot changed after Mom's mother died, my grandmother. I think that my grandmother's death opened me up to her, because I think about what I would do if my mom was gone, you know? I would just go crazy. So I'm trying to live as many positive moments with her as I can. (1)

Experience of Motherhood

Mothering was described as a dynamic, communal activity that frequently involved multiple women providing different resources to meet the varied needs of both mothers and their children. The women who provided these resources were members of a stable, close-knit network of women surrounding mothers. This network centrally was comprised of matrilineally related women–mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, and cousins, but also often included women related by their mother's current or former marriage and her close friends. The women's network functioned along side other family relationships, and in most cases was viewed as more reliable. Women's relationships were a central theme that permeated the narratives of all participants, mothers and daughters, and more than one woman served the role of mother for daughters in this study. Yet, while mothers were given assistance with rearing their children by family and members of the women's network, mothers always retained an unique and key place in the lives of their children.

Becoming a mother was an important and anticipated life event for participating mothers. Motherhood was viewed as exciting, challenging, and a highly valued life activity, as epitomized by Jan's comments.

> The most important experience for me as a woman was having a baby. I mean, that was the most rewarding and exciting time for me. Becoming a mother was an experience that I wanted to have basically all of my life, so when I became pregnant I was very, very happy. It has been most rewarding. (13m)

Mothers described learning how to parent from reflections on their own childhood experiences, asking advice from their parents, other family members and friends, taking parenting classes, and through experience.

> I'm not sure that anyone can teach you how to be a parent. I think that it is something that you learn as time goes on. I'm still not through learning how to be a parent. It comes with experience. Of course, I got some ideas of parenting from my mother, even though she was a single parent and she was a hard working parent. Parenting is something that you have to constantly work at. I'm still working at it. Your father helped a lot; when I needed help with you, it was your father no doubt about it. I also took parenting classes. I did, and I prayed a lot and got a lot of divine inspiration. I talked a lot with my mother, sister, and friends. When you're a parent, you have to get advice from just about everybody. Parenting isn't easy. They told me to be patient. They listened, which was very important. Your father was a lot of help too, even after we were divorced. He was there to take care of you at times when I needed help. They all were there for me when I needed them. (13m)

> I don't know that I was really taught how to be a mother by anybody. I had role models, my own mother, my grandmother. I think parenting is the sort of thing where it is hands-on learning as you go. And it has just been a matter of finding what works and going with it and adjusting what does not work. It's an evolving experience. I cannot say I was taught by anyone, I just simply followed my role models. I have an extended family a very loving family. I have my sisters, my own mother, cousins, and they have always been there; it has been quite a blessing. The most important assistance they gave me was being there, being there for all occasions. They have just been there to show support at every step. (2m)

> My parents taught me about being a good parent. After going to college, I guess I learned some other things that I needed to do. But my parents were the first ones who were role models for me. They were a good, loving family, and they raised us, I thought, to be pretty good kids. We all strayed away a little bit, but we came back pretty much. So my parents were my models. I always felt that they would be there for me. They were always there for me when I was growing up, and so I always knew

> that they would be there for me any other time. And my mother-in-law was always there, too. I knew she would help me if I really needed help. And in college, majoring in psychology, I learned some things that I needed to do, too. (9m)

Even when mothers described their childhoods and own mother-daughter relationships as strained and difficult, participating mothers valued whatever parenting advice and support that their mothers could provide.

Marriage and Fathers. While participants preferred to marry and highly valued marriage, marriage and child rearing were viewed and treated as separate life events by both mothers and daughters. To become a mother was not necessarily to tie oneself to the biological father of your children, "I'd pick him any day to be your father, but just not my husband" (36m). This perspective was also reflected by daughters, "Its just not important to marry the father of the child because whose to say that's the guy for you for the rest of your life" (6). Fathers were considered important for the child to know and interact with; however, women viewed marriage to life partners as more important for self-fulfillment.

Four Roles of Mothering. Mothers and daughters described four primary parenting roles they thought were essential to the process: emotional support, discipline, spiritual guidance, and financial providing.

Emotional Support. Emotional support was defined to include both social and affective components. The responsibility of providing emotional support to daughters was shared among women in the women's network. While mothers held the bulk of responsibility, they were not expected to provide this connection alone. All members of the women's network acted to fulfill the social and emotional needs of children. For example, Tara described how her grandmother and aunts provided support during periods when she was uncomfortable talking with her mother.

> I remember growing up, I was afraid to talk to my mom. She always said that I could talk to her about anything but I never felt comfortable when I was around her. Especially when I first started my teen years and going into puberty. I never felt comfortable just coming to her and talking to her about different things like I did with my grandma. She made jokes out of it. She didn't make it seem so bad to talk about. I always thought mom would fuss or think something negative about me. I would always go to my grandma or one of my aunts because they always put humor into it, just helped me know that was a part of life. As I got older, we, me and mom, became very close. I can now talk to her about anything. (7)

Daughters described their mother-daughter relationships during early development as typically dyadic in structure wherein the mother served as the primary source of social guidance and affective interaction for the daughters. As the daughters entered adolescence, mothers began nurturing a more equal-adult relationship. Emotional providing was most frequently described as a bidirectional relationship between mothers and maturing daughters. Mothers began initiating their daughters to a more equal relationship when the daughters were in their early teens; this process continued until daughters graduated from high school, which frequently was seen as the hallmark of adulthood responsibility. The mother-daughter relationship formed the foundation through which maturing daughters were socialized and initiated into the adult women’s social network. In this context, mothers were viewed as both an authority figure and a peer-like woman friend by daughters, a relationship that was rewarded and encouraged by the elder women. Mothers actively sought to act as confidants for their maturing daughters. However, the distinction between mother and friend were clearly recognized and respected by both mother and daughter.

> She’s my best friend, yes. There’s nothing she won’t do for me, but then again, I won’t take advantage of her and she expects me to assume responsibility. She knows when to be the mother and when to be the friend, and when to be the mother again. She doesn’t smother, yet she’s there for me if I need her, yet she doesn’t give too much assistance. We have a very good relationship. (16)

When mothers extended over this boundary too soon, daughters perceived their mothers as childlike and a burden. It was expected that both mother and daughter would contribute to the adult child-parent relationship, and when one partner was not providing the contribution that was perceived appropriate, the other felt burdened.

The women's network was an integral part of daughters' developing environment. Within the women's network, daughters were treated with the respect of friendship and elevated from being simply a child to an important member of the circle. The level of expected imput from and responsibility of the daughter in this circle changed over time in response to increasing maturity. Accordingly, roles were negotiated and renegotiated. As contributing members, daughters felt rewarded and validated by these relations, which in turn acted to support and sustain daughters' valuing relationships with these other women.

Discipline. Mothers served as the primary disciplinarian regardless of family structure or mothers' marital status. Discipline style was characterized by the close monitoring of children's behavior, especially girls, that began early in life and continued into adulthood and the presence of corporal punishment as a common technique of discipline during early childhood. Daughters labeled their mothers' parenting as strict, loving, controlling, and overly protective. A clearer picture of what types of behaviors demonstrated these descriptors were provided in these daughters' narratives.

> It seemed like she was always there, and she would never let me do anything. I thought at the time she was just being mean, she just didn't want me to have any fun, you know. I had to stay in, I couldn't do what everyone else did. My mom would allow me to do things that were structured. If I asked to go to the movies, it was okay. Mom would be fine with that. But, if I were to ask to just go hang out, she wouldn't let me. "Why do you need to hang out? You don't need to do that." She was trying to say that just being idle, not really doing anything, would cause

> trouble, that I would end up in trouble. I couldn't understand why I couldn't just do things sometimes without having to say every detail. She always required that I had a specific place to go and a specific time to be back. I thought she was being mean, but she didn't want me to be like those girls who's parents just let them run rampant. I couldn't understand that then, but I do now. (8)
>
> When I was in the house I used to think that she was too overprotective. But now I think that she gave me just enough space so that when I came to college I wouldn't be wild because I suddenly got freedom. I always I got to do stuff, but she was just careful. Like, I never got to spend the night with my friends unless she knew their parents. She had to talk to them, go over to their houses, meet with them, and know who they were. And if my friend's mom was not there, if it was just her dad, I could not stay. Both of them had to be there before I could spend the night. Also, I always had to be back by a certain time. I could never stay out to an outrageous time or whatever. And the first time I got to go to a club, mom made me take her to the club and let her see it. She called me later just to make sure that there was no alcohol and that it was just for kids. Same thing with dances–she always made sure some adults would be there to watch us. (9)
>
> If I did something wrong my mother was on it like that (snapping her fingers) and made sure that I never did it again. It would just be a very idiotic thing for me to do if I did it again or if I thought about doing it again. (15)

Sara explained why she believed her mother, and others, felt the need to be actively vigilant, "I think Black parents are more sheltering because they have seen what is out there, and they do not want their children to get caught up in bad situations" (26), a sentiment shared by all daughters.

Daughters' transition into adulthood was marked by changing degrees of parental control, which evinced as three developmentally progressive interaction styles beginning in childhood and continuing into young adulthood: control-defiance, control-obedience, and negotiated adulthood. Control-defiance is defined as strict parental control and monitoring of a child's behavior and activities against which the child rebels. This interaction style was described as occurring during early adolescence and episodic.

Defiant behaviors by daughters included “talking back” and disobeying parental rules. Sara and Tameka described their rebellious behaviors.

> Our conflict was about, oh...my boyfriend, basically my boyfriend. Because I thought I was grown, and I thought I wanted to do this and that. And my mom wouldn’t let me, “You can't go out with him...” This and that. I would get upset and sneak out and see him anyway. Then, of course, my mom would find out, and I would get in trouble. (26)
>
> Watch soap operas. Yeah, she doesn’t like that I like them. Oh, she hates that. I watched them for years without her knowing it, I was determined to do it. I’m not a rebellious person by nature, either, because that’s not the way I was raised. I was raised to not be rebellious and to follow directions, but I don’t know, that’s just one thing that I wanted that I was denied, so I did it anyway. Now I see why I should not have done it, because it’s exposed me to things that I probably should not have been exposed too, but it’s too late now. (13)

In no case did daughters describe contemporary instances of behavior that could be described as outright defiance toward their mothers. One daughter described an instance in which she asserted independence by having her tongue pierced, “When I got here I wanted to be an individual. Partly that’s why I got the tongue ring, because I wanted to show my mother that she can't control me, they [parents] can't control me” (3). Although, her seemingly open defiance was tempered by her later admission that all she really wanted to do was shock her mother “a little.” Another participant (16) got a tatoo without her mother’s knowledge also for the shock value. However, daughters unanimously noted that while they may have “talked back” to their mothers or disobeyed household rules, raising their voices to their mothers was unacceptable, “I would never curse at her or yell at her. We argue and everything, but I would never raise my voice because I respect my mother to the utmost” (15)

Common in this sample, but not equally so, were the remaining two interaction styles: control-obedience and negotiated adulthood. Control-obedience (17 percent of sample) was demonstrated by daughters who were expected to and did ask permission from their parents to participate in non-academic, social activities. If permission was denied, daughters accepted their mothers' decision, even if debated, with little protest, "For instance, there's a ball this weekend, the players ball at another school. I want to go, and I can't. I asked, and I cannot go" (13). Even when daughters were openly frustrated by the denial, they honored their mothers' decision. When queried about why they chose to obey rather than secretly attend the forbidden event, daughters responded that they trusted their mothers' wisdom and experience and felt that her decision was correct–they just were not mature enough to understand it yet, "I know she would not tell me something that she wouldn't abide by herself. She has a lot of integrity and I trust her" (16).

The third type of parent-child interaction style was that of negotiated adulthood. Negotiated adulthood was the predominant (83 percent) mother-daughter interaction style in this research sample and represented the final shift toward a mature mother-daughter relationship. In this instance daughters were guardedly treated as independent and separate adults by their mothers. Mothers encouraged and maintained a high degree of interpersonal communication, often talking by telephone with their daughters daily, as a means of staying abreast with the daughters' activities and being available to provide advice if needed, "I am the person she likes talking to the most. So we talk a lot. We talk almost everyday about everything" (14). This daughter expressed best how many mothers navigated the delicate line of the adult mother-daughter relationship, "I think my mom is just by my side. She's not in front of me telling me what to do, and she's not in back of me pushing me. She's just standing by my side reminding me that she's there for me if I need her" (1). However, if daughters transgressed mothers' authority, it was interpreted by mothers as disrespectful, and mothers were quick to respond and demand that daughters demonstrate "proper respect." Kiera described how her mother got her attention, "All she had to do was give me that cocked look that she gets, and I knew that whatever I did was just an inappropriate thing to do. I'd been crazy to do it again." (15). Daughters accepted that mothers should be respected, that they were wrong if they said or did something that offended their mothers, and accepted the resulting punishment. All daughters indicated that this would remain true regardless of their age and was applicable to all elders in their women's network. In this instance, daughters made a spontaneous distinction between receiving discipline from familiar and unfamiliar women. Daughters would accept discipline from and feel comfortable administering discipline to all family members, as defined earlier. However, this acceptance did not generalize to unfamiliar women or individuals.

Spiritual Guidance. Mothers were credited as having the strongest influence in their daughter's attitude toward religion and spirituality. From their mothers, daughters learned to value religion as a defining feature in their own lives, "We always go to church. God is the center of my life, and I speak to him everyday. You know, I'm serious about it" (13). Mothers regularly couched important life lessons in terms of religious beliefs and values, as indicated by these two mothers' lessons to their daughters.

> I'd like for you to know that you are never, never alone in this world. That there is always a higher being to go to and that is God. Also, not to be afraid to ask for help, to ask for advice. Nothing is supposed to be easy, but anything is achievable if you put God first" (13m).
>
> I want my children to learn to always put God first and if they put God first in their life everything else will be all right. Because we know that all things work together for the good of them that love the Lord, and are called according to his purposes. And if they learn nothing else from me I hope they know that they need to love the Lord. (9m)

Regardless of whether mothers exemplified the ideals of the religion, daughters learned the fundamental lessons that were offered and were able to accept the humanity of their mother's lives and spiritual beliefs.

Several women described having a spiritual connection to all the women in their families, dead and alive. This connection included having encounters with the spirits of female ancestors and sharing intuitive links with the living women. For example, Alecia described her connections with other family members.

> Our family, we have a really strong...we get vibes. It's really neat. The women on my mom's side of the family, everybody. We're the type of people that dream something, and it will come true. When I was little, I used to play the piano – I played the piano for ten years – and when I was little, this is like the weirdest story, and I didn't tell my mom about it until I was in high school 'cause I thought she was going to think I was really weird. But when I used to play the piano, I'd see this lady rocking in a rocking chair. It was really weird, and it used to scare me. I would only see her when I was playing the piano. I'd get this really weird feeling and there she was. I told my mom about this when I was in high school, and she asked me, "What does the lady look like?" I described her, and it was my great grandmother. I had never seen a picture of her, but the person I described was, according to my mom, my great grandmother. All the women in my family have this strong mental connection. Definitely. Everybody. I'll call her when something is really bothering her. The other day, I called her, and I didn't know why. I just picked up the phone and called her. As I was dialing, I was thinking to myself, "Why am I calling her?" She was having a really bad day, and when we hung up, she called right back and told me, "This is just like me and aunt T." They do that. If something's bothering the other, they'll just know and call. (14)

Feeling a connection between female family members was very important to all daughters, regardless whether this connection was portrayed as spiritual or intuitive, and supported feelings of closeness between women in the women's network.

Further, daughters believed that a focus on religion strengthened their family's sense of connectedness and provided a means to build positive family traditions. For example, Sydney's family focuses on family connections and spirituality each New Year, "We pray in the New Year, every year. You don't even ask to go out on New Year's Eve because you know where you're going to be" (16).

Financial Providing. Financial providing was defined as a woman working outside the home to earn wages that were used directly to benefit herself and her children. Providing financially for one's children was viewed universally as a means of actively demonstrating caring and love and linked to a personal sense of independence and self-reliance. All participants identified this role as an integral responsibility of mothers and one that did not adjust meaningfully according to family composition or structure. Both married and unmarried mothers, living with or without a partner, were expected to be a significant, if not the primary, financial provider for themselves and their children. This value held true for women living in multigenerational households as well. Financial resources contributed by a spouse, partner, or other family member were viewed as a benefit but did not replace the mother's responsibility to support her children.

Important Lessons for Daughters. Value systems are embedded in daily life events and are taught as a matter of routine activities. Thus, values were identified through three avenues. First, daughters were asked to list the most important life lessons learned from their mothers and provide detailed descriptions of interactions and experiences with their mothers that demonstrated these lessons. Second, mothers were asked to identify the most important life lesson they had taught their daughters. Third, values were reflected in daughters' self definitions as traits and characteristics they personally aspired to embody. Life lessons, and their inherent value systems, emerged as a collection of words and actions from both mothers and daughters and were divided into three domains of social development: personal qualities, family values, and life skills. A summary is provided in Table 8.

Effects of Racism on Parenting. The effects of racism on women's experiences of and decisions they make about parenting were investigated with both mothers and daughters. First, daughters were asked to describe how they believed racism affected their mothers' parenting experience. Second, narrative descriptions of life experiences were elicited from mothers and daughters.

Daughters responded to the above question in one of two ways. First, forty-two percent of daughters explicitly did not believe that racism had affected their mothers' parenting in any recognizable form. Similarly, the remaining 58 percent felt that racism was a relatively minor influence on their mothers' parenting. However, analysis of life experiences revealed that the message conveyed by mothers to daughters was less about actual instances of racism but rather the threat–felt potential–of racism and discrimination. Reactions to this threat was evident most directly in the nature of values mothers believed were important for their daughters' development, especially positive personal values. Through these, mothers provided the mechanisms through which daughters developed skills and belief systems that helped them 1) resist allowing negative portrayals of Black women to seep into their self images and 2) to overcome experiences with discrimination. Occasionally these lessons were taught explicitly, "If you want things to change you have to make it happen yourself, you have to take initiative" (7), but most often were provided by personal examples in their own lives, "I knew about racism. I'd seen it with my mom, but she is such an outspoken person that she didn't stand for it. She's just not going to take it. She dealt with it through the store manager, and that was it" (21).

Essential Assumptions Shaping Women's Experiences

Data analysis revealed three essential assumptions that affected women's experience of womanhood and parenting: 1) a belief that women should be independent and self-reliant, 2) a belief that members of the women's network were the most reliable

Table 8. Important Lessons and Values from Mothers

Personal Qualities:

Always value yourself. You are important.

Be respectful in all situations. Respect yourself, respect others, and they will respect you.

Be personally independent. Make your own decisions and stand by them.

Be honest, kind, dependable, trustworthy, forgiving, and caring of others.

Be outspoken. Say what's on your mind, but always tell the truth and be kind doing so.

Family Values:

Family comes first, always. Family will always be there when you need them, and you must be there for family when they need you.

Women's relationships form the center and strength of family.

Decision-making occurs in the context of family

Marriage is valued but not required for parenting. It is more important to find a supportive life partner who may or may not be father of children.

Be financially independent and able to take care of self and children.

Open communication with children is always important.

Always do what is right in the eyes of God.

Life Skills:

Discrimination is a fact of life. Be prepared to work harder than others to prove self equal and be recognized.

Make a proactive plan for success and be focused on and persistent toward achieving goals.

Education is very important for achieving financial and career success.

First impressions are important. Always be mindful of personal presentation.

sources of social, emotional, and financial resources, and 3) a belief that gender and race discrimination was a fact of life. These assumptions appeared as consistent and repetitive themes underlying narrative descriptions for all participating women. Assumption Three emerged as the most essential assumption affecting how women understood the reality of their lives and served as an organizing framework for socially based experience. This remained true for both inter- and intragroup forms of discrimination. Assumptions One and Two served to counteract women's feelings of vulnerability in response to both types of discrimination. Women believed that being independent and self-reliant created a barrier that protected them from the negative influences of discrimination. Further, the women's network provided a safe and supportive social environment in which exposure to discrimination was minimal. Assumptions One and Two also served to counteract feelings of vulnerability associated with participants' expectations of Black men, particularly as related to the stability and reliability of parenting partnerships.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Successful parenting is a fundamental component of an enduring society. Through the parenting process, social and cultural norms, values, and practices are passed from one generation to the next. These sets of values, beliefs and practices are developed from a collection of fundamental assumptions about the nature of life and social experience. Examining the assumptions that shape behavior can provide greater understanding of how groups of individuals experience their lives and construct meaning from it. It is especially important to investigate families not economically stressed in order to begin to understand the nature of family relations unconfounded by the strains of poverty, which, in turn, yields a clearer view into enduring belief systems of a society (Graham, 1992). Accordingly, a principal goal of this study was to uncover and chronicle the underlying assumptions that informed women's experiences of motherhood and interpretations of those experiences by exploring the process of parenting in Black American families from the perspective of middle class, southern Black women. To accomplish this goal, two primary questions were asked. First, what were the underlying assumptions that structured southern Black women's definitions of motherhood? And, second, how did their assumptions shape their experiences of motherhood and interpretations of those experiences.

Three essential assumptions were identified from narrative data: 1) a belief that women should be independent and self-reliant, 2) a belief that members of the women's network were the most reliable sources of social, emotional, and financial resources, and 3) a belief that gender and race discrimination was a fact of life. Together, these three assumptions shaped how participants conceptualized motherhood, structured interpersonal relationships, and determined the values and life lessons conveyed to daughters.

Participating mothers welcomed the experience of motherhood with happy anticipation and described their experiences of parenting as ones in which constant learning occurred. Feeling positive about motherhood was not diminished by mothers' own negative childhood experiences. Instead, mothers viewed being a parent as a positive opportunity to move beyond past unpleasant experiences. One strategy that mothers believed would enable them to be better parents was having fewer children, thereby allowing them more time, energy, and financial resources to devote to their children. Mothers expected to be a primary caretaker of their children, but motherhood was believed to be a communal activity that involved others. Most often these others were members of the women's network, but fathers, or stepfathers, also were actively involved with child care. Ninety-four percent of participating mothers indicated that they received important child care assistance from their daughters' father or stepfather. A similar percentage (92%) of daughters described feeling that they had an active father-figure, either their own father or a stepfather, in their lives. However, motherhood predominately was contextualized by the presence and active participation of other women, as demonstrated by daughters' descriptions of the roles of motherhood.

The ultimate goal for mothers was to raise daughters who would be independent, respectful and a contributing member of the familial network. A prime instrument through which they accomplished this goal was the important life lessons and values they transmitted to their daughters. Their lessons reflected enduring beliefs about what behaviors and values were important in order to be successful in American society (McAdoo, 1991; Page and Washington, 1987). The lessons and values identified by daughters in this study provide the most comprehensive expression of the personal, family and life values to date and lay the foundation for future research.

Daughters linked the qualities of independence and self-reliance in their narratives, which formed their assumption about the nature of how women should be. These qualities represented an aspired ideal that facilitated a woman becoming a valued and contributing member of the women's network. Further, development of the personal qualitites of independence and self-reliance were believed to foster resilience against discrimination and enabled women to be successful in spite of it.

Embodying these qualities was not interpreted to require that women exist separate and disconnected from others. Women's networks formed an important component of core family, as defined by daughters, and provided a vital context for socializing daughters into their roles as women and mothers. This network was viewed as a resource that promoted independence and self-reliance. The main resources that members of the women's network gained for themselves and provided for others were social and emotional connection and support, a bidirectional relationship that was encouraged and rewarded by all members of the network. Financial support was viewed by participants as a secondary or lessor essential purpose of the network, and while accepted was generally discouraged. Many studies have demonstrated the importance of shared financial resources by members of the women's network for alleviating the negative stress of poverty on mothers (eg. Zollar and Honnold, 1988; McAdoo, 1978; Stack, 1974). Therefore, it may be concluded that the decreasing centrality of financial support between members of the women's networks in this study reflects the increased economic resources available to participants, which permitted more explicit expression of the broadly held value of women's financial independence. These findings support strongly two themes in Collins' (1991) model of Afrocentric motherhood, women-centered child care networks and financial providing as a role of motherhood. Support for the theme of motherhood as a symbol of power was unclear from this dataset and may reflect daughters' current developmental stage. Further, daughters' concepts of family and interpersonal relationships with other Black women suggest that daughters did not embrace the values of "community other-mothers" and social activism oriented toward "uplifting the race." Instead, daughters' narratives indicated that their experiences of "other-mothers" were localized to members of the women's network. Daughters valued community work, but the types of volunteerism they participated in were described in more general terms (eg. helping the elderly).

Participant narratives indicated that Assumption Three was the most central assumption shaping the nature of their social experience. While mothers and daughters often described having little direct experience with overt discrimination, mothers began teaching their daughters early in life that they would face discrimination and have to protect themselves from its negative influences. Localized experience with individual acts of racism or discrimination were unnecessary precursors for mothers feeling the need to prepare their daughters to respond. Rather, the threat of racism and discrimination created a sufficient atmosphere in which caution grew. Participants believed that discrimination against Black women forced them to develop a collection of defense mechanisms to overcome its influence. Data supporting Assumption Three articulate well with Greene's (1994) model of racial-socialization. In this model, Greene identified three strategies that mothers use to strengthen their daughters' sense of self in response to the threat of discrimination: personally modeling appropriate responses to discrimination, teaching daughters analytical strategies for accurately identifying and assessing the scope of discrimination, and preparing daughters for the often conflicting mix of emotional reactions to discrimination. In this sample, for example, mothers taught their daughters that they would need to work harder and perform better than others, specifically Whites, in order to be recognized and perceived as equal. In addition, mothers specifically taught, either through modeling appropriate behaviors or important life lessons, strategies for confronting discriminatory behaviors and attitudes without adopting and internalizing the negative messages that accompanied those experiences. One important coping strategy was teaching daughters how to detach emotionally from a negative situation or interaction and analyze the underlying motivation for and meaning of the other person's remarks or behaviors. This strategy helped daughters to distance their personal identities from a stereotyped group identity and resist adopting negative perceptions of themselves.

One notable finding was how daughters' engagement with issues of ethnicity was related to experiences of discrimination. Specifically, concerns with intragroup identity conflicts arose as important components of this process that affected women's experiences. Slightly more than half (59 percent) of daughters explicitly named ethnicity in their self definitions, yet all felt that ethnicity was an important component in their sense of self. All daughters believed that concepts of and about ethnicity existed in society and carried a weight of influence that permeated their lives and shaped the nature of their personal experiences. This influence was felt most strongly as daughters tried to locate a balance between defining themselves as individuals with unique desires, goals, and tastes while maintaining a positive connection with their ethnic group. This finding supports prior research indicating that Black teens experience difficulty blending mainstream and ethnic-group values during their identity development (Mosley-Howard and Evans, 2001; Phinney and Alipuria, 1990; Phinney, 1996). However, daughters commingled inter- and intragroup acts of discrimination in their narratives and indicated that the formation of a positive ethnic identity was challenged by both inter- and intragroup influences. Daughters described using similar coping strategies in circumstances involving inter- or intragroup discrimination and experiencing a similar type of emotional turmoil in both contexts. For many daughters intragroup discrimination was perceived as having equal, and in some cases more, influence in shaping their self concepts than intergroup discrimination and suggests a shift in the nature of conflicts that middle-class women in this generation may experience during identity development.

Further, many daughters described struggling with feelings of isolation, lack of belonging, anxiety, distrust, and reduced interpersonal power in response to experiences of discrimination. A common concern for daughters was trying to decipher whether negative interactions were truly cases of discrimination based on race prejudice or if they were in response to some personal characteristic of the daughter. This experience, labeled attributional ambiguity, was first identified by Crocker and Major (1989) as one response by individuals experiencing stereotype threat, the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype (Steele, 1997; Steele and Aronson, 1995). Steele and Aronson (1995) found that individuals experiencing attributional ambiguity in response to a stereotype threat often reduced their experienced emotional pain by ceasing to identify with the part of life in which the pain occurs, or disidentification. Evidence supporting these findings for both inter- and intragroup discrimination was present in daughters' narratives.

Daughters' descriptions of the relation between family and community provided a brief glimpse into how society may be changing. Daughters definitions of family indicated that family served in their immediate lives as the center of community life, and community life was directly tied to the extended family. Family centeredness was believed to reduce potential exposure to both inter- and intragroup discrimination. Daughters did not feel a close connection with all members of the Black community, just those who formed their community. Daughters expressed feeling caution with and a degree of distrust of unfamilar individuals, their reactions tied to previous experience with intragroup discrimination. Because intragroup discrimination was identified by daughters as having an increasing influence in their identity development, the nature of intragroup experience warrants further consideration–specifically in terms of conflicts about "acting White" and issues of colorism.

The influence of colorism in southern Black society frequently has presented through the mechanisms of social class distinctions that operate along color lines (Graham, 2000; Gordon, 1995; Russell, et al., 1992). The origins of colorism can be traced to the slavery period during which a system of social differentiation arose on the plantation. In many slave-owner households, the slaves selected for working in the plantation home were skilled Africans, frequently of Arabic descent, and later the progeny of White owners and Black female slaves. As a consequence, house slaves frequently were lighter skinned and had more European, or aquiline, facial features. By virtue of living in close proximity to and participating in the daily lives of slaveowners, houseslaves were afforded access to material goods not typically available to fieldhands. Further, while illegal, many houseslaves learned to read, in part because it benefited the slaveowner in some way. Over time, differences in skin color and facial characteristics appeared between houseslaves and field hands that eventually began to be associated with greater social and economic privilege. This system of privilege was codified through economic and social advantage afforded persons with lighter skin and European characteristics, on and off the plantation, and created a class structure within the Black community (Graham, 2000; Russell, et al., 1992). This system existed parallel to the class systems operating in the White community and interacted to produce a two-pronged system of exclusion exacted most heavily on individuals with darker skin and more

African features. One of the effects of this dual system is that individuals with lighter skin and European features, while still being discriminated against by Whites, were more consistently able to obtain greater access to education and economic resources that would improve their lifestyles. As access to resources increased for select individuals, those not sharing in this access felt even more excluded and growing resentment, this time toward others like them. These feelings are, in part, what the charge of "acting white" described by daughters reference. Upwardly mobile middle and lower class Black Americans who are "acting white" are perceived not just as adopting the values and behaviors of Whites but also of the elite Black upperclass (Graham, 2000).

While every population or group must negotiate and evolve to fit within the particulars of the social plane, the reality of Black American women is at a moment of notable change. Daughters in this sample represented the first generation of Black Americans to benefit fully from legally unrestricted access to social, political, and economic opportunities. Daughter participants are the daughters and granddaughters of the civil rights activists of the sixties–they are the beneficiaries of the social, political and economic progress arising from that volatile historical period. Many of the obstacles that prevented full access to opportunities for success have been reduced, and daughters expressed an expectation that they could pursue any endeavor they chose. However, daughters also are poised at a moment in social existence where assimilation into the dominant White culture can happen. Prior to this generation, the possibility of assimilation for southern Black Americans was not an option. Racism and the legislated prohibitions on the social, economic, and physical realities of Black Americans acted to support acculturation but prevent assimilation (Gordon, 1995). As the pervasive influences of sanctioned intergroup discrimination recede, enabling and reinforcing assimilation, a shift in the importance of intragroup discrimination on personal experience for Black women may be occurring. Implicit and explicit recognition of this division within a society that values communalism over individuality (Gomez` 1995; Jones, 1990) has deep psychological implications for socioemotional development. Disidentification in response to intragroup stereotype threat may represent a particularly alienating effect on women's feelings of belonging in and trust of the larger community of nonfamilial Black women and should be studied further.

Daughters' narratives provided intimate entry into understanding the nature and development of their mother-daughter relationships. Narratives revealed a rich and warm relationship, supported by individuals in the women's network, and operating in the larger context of familial relations. From this avenue, depth was added to understanding how Black women's parenting style, often characterized as authoritarian (eg. Baumrind, 1972), is more complex than this label implies. While daughters described their mothers using language typically interpreted to indicate negative, punitive parenting styles, for example, daughters labeled their mothers as stern, controlling, and overly protective, details about what kinds of behaviors and the context in which they were emitted indicated that these characteristics were tempered by generally warm, loving, and open relationships with mothers. When coupled with data about the affective nature of their relationships and the developmental context in which mothers and daughters were interacting, it becomes clear that mothers were demanding, held high expectations for their daughters, and sought to provide reasoned boundaries for their developing children without being excessively overbearing or intrusive. Viewed in this light, mother's behaviors more closely fit a child-centered and authoritative model of parenting (Baumrind, 1991). This interpretation was supported further by the parental control interaction styles identified by daughters. Mothers worked to engage maturing daughters in reasoned negotiation about selecting behaviors and making personal choices that would promote healthy development into womanhood. These findings support earlier research on parenting styles among Black families of differing sociodemographic backgrounds (Bluestone and Lamis-LeMonda, 1999; Wilson, Kohn, Curry-El, and Hinton, 1995; Kelly, Sanchez-Hucles, and Walker, 1993; Kelly, Power, and Wambush, 1992). These studies were conducted with lower, working, and middle class samples and demonstrated that increased maternal education and financial resources were related to less authoritarian styles of parenting. This study extends these earlier findings by providing details about how women practice and experience parenting in their daily lives and reemphasizes the importance of including non-risk samples in such investigations of within-group variability in parenting styles.

While only one percent of the current sample lived in households that qualified as extended because of the presence of multiple generations in a single dwelling (Billingsly, 1968, Staples, 1972; Wilson, 1986), daughters' definitions of family indicated that the concept of an extended family was not delimited simply by household composition. Instead, family was determined by the degree and quality of interpersonal relationships between individuals, kin and nonkin alike, and emphasized familial collectivity. Family relations were revealed to have a layered interpretation by daughters, their definitions making distinctions between core, primary and secondary extended kin. These distinctions were important because they reflected the underlying affective nature of how family was conceptualized and formed in the lives of participants, a finding that reflects the "feeling" centeredness of Black families (Jones, 1990). As well, this finding emphasizes the continuing supportive function that extended family provides to its members regardless of household composition, reflecting the strength of this adaptive function of family. These results complement the body of literature on extended families (see Wilson, 1986 for a review) and accentuate the importance of viewing Black family structure as a dynamic of relationships rather than static system of coresidence (Kane, 2000; Hatchett, Cochran, and Jackson, 1991).

Finally, while not a central focus of this study, a glimpse into what women expected from their relationships with men as fathers and life partners was demonstrated to be more complex than a simple break down of moral values in the Black family (eg. Moynihan, 1965). Women in this study highly valued marriage and selecting the right man to be the father of their children, but the two were not necessarily linked as necessary co-conditions for parenting. Brief mention was made by daughters that they perceived the availablility of “good men” as limited. However, all daughters felt that marriage was an option for them–they would just have to be selective. There are existing reports indicating that this is a belief common to Black women (eg. Heiss, 1981; see Wilson, 1986, for review), and the implications of this belief should be considered further as it relates to the experience of parenting for middle class women.

Conclusion

This study provides rich detail and new insights into the experience of motherhood and womanhood, and it identifies the underlying assumptions that shape these experiences for middle class southern Black women. Accordingly, these findings complement and extend current knowledge about the experience of family, individual development, motherhood, and value systems in all Black American families. This study was designed to address specific experiences and interpretations of those experiences for a regionally defined population; however, data themes that emerged are concordant with findings from research with more diverse samples (Greene, 1994; McAdoo, 1991; Collins, 1991). Therefore, data themes can be viewed more broadly as indicating fundamental parallels of essential and enduring assumptions underlying Black American women’s interpretations of experience.

Sometimes we do what we do simply because “that’s just the way it is.” Culture is deep and enduring, and because of such we often don’t know the origins of our behaviors outside the explanation “that’s how my mother did it.” It isn’t a conscious decision, it’s a part of our collective unconsciousness, our collective memory. (Author’s epoch journal entry)

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APPENDIX A

Specific Aims

The goals of this study are 1) to discover and chronicle the underlying assumptions that inform the experience of motherhood and interpretations of those experiences that are distinctive to African American women born and living in Georgia and South Carolina and 2) to generate an empirically grounded, culturally relevant theory of African American motherhood. To accomplish these goals two primary questions will be investigated. First, what are the underlying assumptions that structure southern Black women's definitions of motherhood? And, second, how do their assumptions shape their experiences of motherhood and interpretations of those experiences. The central foci are the belief systems that reflect an uniquely African American cultural pattern and the multiple ways in which these belief systems impact participants' definitions of family and familial responsibilities, decisions they make as mothers, and how they feel about motherhood. Because exchanging information about parenting beliefs and practices is a central cohesive link in matrilineal relationships, this study will investigate experiences of motherhood in the context of intergenerational transmission of parenting knowledge in African American mother-daughter relationships. Data will consist of self-report descriptions of daughters' perceptions of their relationships with their mothers, multiple, independent, semi-structured interviews with each mother and daughter, semi-structured focus group interviews, and written diary entries from daughters. The following content areas will be specifically explored from the perspective of both mothers and daughters:

a. Personal experience and definition of the mother-daughter relationship of African American women
b. The development of affective relationships between African American mothers and daughters
c. Reactions to racial oppression as well as how such oppression influences parenting
d. The influence of the majority culture on the development of the African American mother-daughter relationship
e. The influence of African American culture on the development of mother-daughter relationships within that group
f. The role and definition of "mother" and "daughter" in African American families

Presently, no empirical investigations of this topic exist that incorporates both a systematic investigation of African American parenting beliefs and the perspectives unique to Black women. This lack of knowledge about culturally relevant parenting models has resulted in the parenting practices of non-white families being characterized as deficient. For example, minority families are perceived, using the deficiency model, as presenting a higher risk for child maltreatment, single parenthood, and teen parenthood than white families. This characterization is without culturally relevant empirical warrant. Hence, the goal of this research is to provide a systematic and empirically based view into and understanding of African American parenting experiences as interpreted and lived by Black women.

APPENDIX B

Relationship Questionnaire

This questionnaire asks about your relationships with your mother and other members of your family. Please read each statement and circle the answer that **tells how true** the statement is for you now. Thank you.

	Never	**Rarely**	**Some**	**Often**	**Always**
1. My mother respects my feelings	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel my mother does a good job as my mother	1	2	3	4	5
3. I wish I had a different mother	1	2	3	4	5
4. My mother accepts me as I am	1	2	3	4	5
5. I like to get my mother's point of view on things I'm concerned about	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my mother	1	2	3	4	5
7. My mother can tell when I'm upset about something	1	2	3	4	5
8. Talking over my problems with my mother makes me feel ashamed or foolish	1	2	3	4	5
9. My mother expects too much from me	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get upset easily around my mother	1	2	3	4	5
11. I get upset a lot more than my mother knows about	1	2	3	4	5
12. When we discuss things, my mother cares about my point of view	1	2	3	4	5
13. My mother trusts my judgement	1	2	3	4	5
14. My mother has her own problems, so I don't bother her with mine	1	2	3	4	5
15. My mother helps me to understand myself better	1	2	3	4	5
16. I tell my mother about my problems and troubles	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel angry at my mother	1	2	3	4	5
18. I don't get much attention from my mother	1	2	3	4	5
19. My mother helps me talk about my difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
20. My mother understands me	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	**Rarely**	**Some**	**Often**	**Always**
21. When I am angry about something my mother tries to be understanding	1	2	3	4	5
22. I trust my mother	1	2	3	4	5
23. My mother doesn't understand what I'm going through these days	1	2	3	4	5
24. I can count on my mother when I need to get something off my chest	1	2	3	4	5
25. If my mother knows something is bothering me, she asks me about it	1	2	3	4	5
26. When I'm with my family, I feel completely able to relax and be myself	1	2	3	4	5
27. I share the same approach to life that my family does	1	2	3	4	5
28. No matter what happens, I know that my family will always be there for me should I need them	1	2	3	4	5
29. Sometimes I'm not sure if I can completely rely on my family.	1	2	3	4	5
30. My family thinks I'm good at what I do	1	2	3	4	5
31. People in my family have confidence in me	1	2	3	4	5
32. My family lets me know that I'm a worthwhile person	1	2	3	4	5
33. People in my family provide me with help in finding solutions to my problems	1	2	3	4	5
34. I know my family will always stand by me	1	2	3	4	5
35. I am satisfied with my family life	1	2	3	4	5
36. My parents have a satisfying relationship	1	2	3	4	5
37. I am satisfied with my relationship with my parents	1	2	3	4	5
38. I am satisfied with my relationship with my siblings	1	2	3	4	5
39. I feel satisfied with my relationships with others	1	2	3	4	5
40. I feel happy most of the time	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

The following is a list of possible questions and types of questions that were asked of participants. Interviews were conducted so as to follow the lead of the informant while staying within the boundaries of the research topic; therefore, exact sentence wording, question order, or follow-up probes were not predetermined.

Researcher Interview List A

Self:

1. Tell me about who you are
    a. Person
    b. Woman
    c. Black woman
2. What do you value most about yourself
3. What do you value least
4. What sort of stuff do you think about most often when you're alone and having a reflective moment
    a. Why important
5. Why are you volunteering for this study

Family:

1. How would you characterize your relationship with your mother?
    a. 5 adjectives that describe your mother
    b. Specific examples of each
2. How would you characterize your relationship with your father?
    a. 5 adjectives that describe your father
    b. Specific examples of each
3. What is your earliest memory of your mother?
    a. Other women in your life who guided, mothered you
    b. Who was your comfort person when hurt
        –emotionally
        –physically -> injury / illness
        –why
4. How would your describe your family in general?
    a. What are your family "rituals"
    b. What is a typical family gathering like
        1) Who comes, invited and not

        2) Who’s in charge of planning and organization
    c. Who qualifies as family – definition of each member type
    d. Describe the sub-groupings in your family
    e. Gumbo ya ya
    f. Anyone quilt
        1) describe designs, meanings, stories
        2) other artwork a tradition
    g. What are favorite family myths/stories that are always told when together
5. What was the first hard lesson that your mother taught you about life
    a. As a woman
    b. As a Black woman
    c. As a Black person
6. How did that make you feel
    a. What was your reaction
    b. Do you have a different reaction now, as an adult
7. Do you think she was right
    a. Is that same situation true today
    b. Is it a lesson that you will teach your own children
8. What the last hard lesson your mother taught you...
    a. Same probes as for questions 5-7
9. How has racism affected your mother’s beliefs and practices
    a. Did your grandmother experience mothering the same way
    b. Do you believe you will have the same or similar experiences
        1) how will you deal with that situation
    c. Has time passage changed anything
    d. How do you experience racism
        1) specific examples
        2) how do you respond to these events/feelings
10. How do you think that our experiences are the same
    a. Different, but similar
    b. Unique
11. What is the most important thing that you know about being a Black woman, and one day a mother, that you would want me to know about you, or that experience
    a. Why is this the most important
    b. What would be second
    c. Third
12. What is the most powerful characteristic of yourself, your mother, and other Black women that you know
    a. Specific examples of each
    b. What would you like for these characteristics to be
        1) what are you doing to accomplish them
13. What do you hope for the future
    a. What are plans for family
    b. Career

    c. Personal growth
14. What question(s) would you like most to ask me about myself or my experiences
    a. Why

Researcher Interview List B

1. Did you enjoy interviewing your mom
2. What did you learn that you didn't know about her before
3. Was there something that you didn't ask that you wanted to
4. Do you feel or think differently about your mother or her experiences as a woman and mother now as a consequence of your conversation with her
    a. How
    b. What

At this point, specific questions that relate to information provided in the first daughter interview will be integrated and clarified.

Daughter Interview List A

1. Basic demographics
    a. What is your present age?
    b. Describe your marital status – are you married? When & how long? First marriage? Divorced? How long? Widowed? How long?
    c. How many children? What are their (first) names? When were they born?
    d. Describe your household? How many and who lives with you?
    e. Who are the people who are most important to you, and why?
2. Describe your experiences as a mother
    a. How did you feel about becoming a mother? The first time, and each time thereafter?
    b. Who taught you about how to parent? For example, what it means to be a good parent and how to do it?
    c. Who were the people you relied on to help you when you needed extra hands (to help with child rearing) or advice?
    d. What was the most important sort of assistance these people gave you?
    e. Did you feel like you could count on these people to be there for you when you were having a family crisis, big or small? What did they do or say that made you feel this way?
    f. Describe your relationship to your mother (or the primary woman who acted as your mother).
    g. Describe some of the happiest moments you had with your mother.
    h. Describe some of the saddest moments you had with your mother.
    i. If there was one thing that you wished your mother had done with you or told you but she did not, what would that be?

3. What were the most important experiences you have had as a woman? As a Black woman?
4. What is the one single most important life lesson you would like your children to learn from you?

Researcher Interview List C (Focus Group)

Individual Questions:

1. Identify yourself and give a brief definition/description of self.
    - A. How would you characterize your relationship with your mother?
    - B. What are 5 adjectives that would describe your mother?
    - C. Please give examples of each characteristic noted.
    - D. What are some of the common tasks that you routinely do with your mother?
2. What is the most important lesson that your mother taught you?
3. What is the most difficult lesson that your mother taught you?
4. What is/are the most important and powerful characteristic(s) of yourself?
    - A. Why did you develop this(ese) particular characteristic(s)?
5. What is the most important thing about yourself that you want me to know about you?

Group Questions:

1. Define the concept of family.
    - A. Who is included in this definition?
    - B. What are the roles and duties of each member?
        - (1) what is the role of men in the Black family?
        - (2) what is the role of women in the Black family?
2. What does it mean to be a member of "The Black Community?"
    - A. What is the "Black Community?"
        - (1) intragroup recognition and acknowledgement.
    - B. Is there a definable "Black Culture?"
        - (1) if so, what are the characteristics of this culture?
        - (2) if not, why do you think so?
3. Are there any differences between Black and white families?
    - A. If so, what are they?
    - B. If not, why do you think so?
4. Please define what is meant by the term "social class."
    - A. Do you think social class distinctions are a common way of dividing people or groups in the Black community?
5. Do you think of yourself as accurately representative of the typical Black woman?
    - A. Please explain your answer.
    - B. Please describe a prototypical Black woman.
6. Do you think of your family, in terms of both its composition and functioning, as accurately representative of the typical Black family?

7. What is the typical model of parenting in Black families? Please describe all characteristics that you can think of.
8. How does racism affect you?
9. How does sexism affect you?
10. What are the differences, in terms of developmental history and circumstances, between you, as someone who is successful, and someone else who is not successful?
11. Collins (1991;1990) Afrocentric model of motherhood: please respond to each of these
    - A. Women-centered child care networks
    - B. Economic support as part of mothering
    - C. Community othermothers and social activism
    - D. Motherhood as symbol of power

APPENDIX D

Example of Phenomenological Reduction Journal Entry

To write of oneself is to write of the other, especially when the goal is to discover the other and the result is the greater clarity of understanding gained of the self. My original goal was not an exploration of myself, but it ultimately was a necessary part of the completion of this project. To understand what it is that makes one individual different from another, at the level of shared values and experiences, necessitates an investigation of how these same forces, or the hypothesized forces, play out in the only life that I truly know–my own. Knowledge is first and last a subjective proposition, which is then later, and only later, buttressed by the certainty provided by the preponderance of evidence gained from sharing experience and having our experience echoed in the expressions and experiences of others. To utter a word is to give external expression of our internal experience, but that word is the subjective word. As such, our utterances are true windows of our internal word and understandings of our individual experience. To understand the broad meanings that can and are attached to any given word is to understand the experience of the speaker. In the telling of the lives of others, through the interpretative lens of my own experience–before, during, and after the actual experience of collecting the data–is an act that blurs the lines between fact and fiction. Our personal narratives are a combination of descriptions of who we really are, who we think we should be, and what we hope we are and will be. No narrative is absent of these converging forces on self definition. As a scientist, it is incumbent on me to present my data as honestly and unhindered by my personal biases as possible. In part this is the reason for structured, prescribed publication/manuscript format requirements, like the

APA; however, these externally required structures only give the illusion of objectivity. They do not insure objectivity or even any measure of accuracy between raw data and the pared down, filtered presentation of data for the public eye. It could be just the opposite effect than that which is intended–such a formula for presentation makes it easier for scientists to present conclusions in ways that suggest veracity and finality of authority without bearing the soul of the data for the public to see and judge first hand. Perhaps this is the reason that quantitative data is popular; raw and transformed numbers can be easily charted and diagramed, and the interpretation of these data must be accepted as meaning exactly what the author suggests. Indeed, many arguments for the opposing view of this process may be proffered, and while they are important for the larger consideration of data and interpretation, they are not important here. Here, the only problem for consideration is how to convey the personal truth of the narratives in terms of a coherent and meaningful story about Black American women's experience of motherhood.

Example of Epoch Journal Entry

The rudimentary elements comprising my identity--region of origin, ethnicity, class, gender, sex and age--were important for the way in which I engaged with my participants and research topic. As a woman, I am aware of experiences in my life that have been and continue to be shaped by sex and gender. As an older woman, I have experienced the negative imprint of sexism in my daily life for a longer period than they; I have a historical view. I benefit from the privilege that my white-ness regularly affords. However, these characteristics combined introduces a duality into my consciousness. I know fear as a woman because I have experienced male violence. Yet my fear is tempered by the power of my white-ness, and in particular the power of my white, middle-class southern-ness in the Old South. Being a woman makes me vulnerable, but being white offsets some of my disadvantage. Given these relations, Black women are vulnerable on two accounts, being a woman and not being white.

Our shared southern-ness was an important factor for this research. Southern culture has deep historical roots that shape individuals and institutional structures. I am old enough to remember Jim Crow laws and segregationist practices. I saw a cross burning at a KKK meeting, held openly along a major South Carolina highway, in 1970 and then again in a Black family's front yard in 1979 because their son had married a white woman. The courthouse in my hometown still has two sets of women's restrooms and two sets of men's restrooms, each set side by side. I remember two water fountains in the main entrance hallway; discolored paint outlined the places where signs once designated the left fountain for Colored Only and the right for Whites Only. Right for White...this phrase makes me recall the drone of some preacher many years past telling the congregation that the right hand of God is the most favorite spot to be. These experiences shaped my way of understanding the world, and I am sure that similar ones shaped my informants' mothers as well. I am not colorblind, but I am trying to "Get rid of Gloria..."

APPENDIX E

Example of Narrative Data Analysis, Steps 1-6

PARENTING
Caregiving environment & people:

> I: Did she work when you were growing up? P: Yes, she was in school also, and she was working, so when I was at home I was basically with my grandmother [maternal]. She lived with me, and also my aunt [maternal].

Relationship with GM & Aunt:

> I: Are you close with them? P: Yes. My grandmother is like my heart. Yeah, she calls me at least once a week, "I was just calling to check on you."

//role of GM = provided warm emotional environment//

> And my aunt, we're really close b/c when my mom finished school and everything with my [step]father, I was living with my aunt and my grandmother in SC while my mom moved to Charlotte to get a better job and all that kind of stuff, so during that time I was with my aunt and we were close, and I was going to school with my cousins and stuff, so I had that family there until my mom got settled and we moved to Charlotte.

//extended family provides familial grounding - child does not feel abandoned during mother's absence//

//valuing extended family does not depend on physical proximity and mutual residence; network can be extensive and not local and not linked to multigenerational household; also see strong extended family for nuclear families – then, are Black nuclear families the same as White nuclear families? What does the term nuclear mean and imply when applied to family composition and functioning?//

//women value and actively cultivate adult mother-daughter relationships because they no longer have the burden of providing and mothering the child and are freer to cultivate a friendship-type relationship with adult child//

//narratives seem to focus on getting the child into adulthood; moving to college is seen as benchmark of adulthood and independence–daughters are considered to be visitors in household and are expected to be financially independent, but not necessarily emotionally independent//

Example of Narrative Data Analysis, Early Step 7

Changes in M-D Relationship
B2, C1, D5 D24E2 It was probably when I was like 15. We used to have, like it was terrible, just shouting all the time, because I would try to tell her something that I wanted her to do, and she was like, "You can't tell my anything, I'm the mother." So I challenged her authority when I was around that age. And I realized, from the arguments, when I would hurt her feelings, that she did have them, you know, and she would get me back that it was more that I could talk to her and get things across and not always listen. Maybe I more so came into my own person and being able to stand up to her in some things.

//discipline//nature of mother-daughter relationship changing during adolescence// changing perception of mother by daughter//

Parenting Rules
B2, D5 D24E2 It seemed like she was always there, and she would never let me do anything. I thought at the time she was just being mean, she just didn't want me to have any fun, you know. I had to stay in, I couldn't do what everyone else did. My mom would allow me to do things that were structured. If I asked to go to the movies, it was okay. Mom would be fine with that. But, if I were to ask to just go hang out, she wouldn't let me. "Why do you need to hang out? You don't need to do that." She was trying to say that just being idle, not really doing anything would cause trouble, that I would end up in trouble. I couldn't understand why I couldn't just do things sometimes without having to say every detail. She always required that I had a specific place to go and a specific time to be back. I thought she was being mean, but she didn't want me to be like those girls who's parents just let them run rampant. I couldn't understand that then, but I do now.

//discipline=close monitoring of daughter's activities//daughter admits change in understanding of mother's behavior//