Chapter 37

Race, Class, and Community Cultural Wealth:
Impacts on Parental Involvement Among Black Families in K–12 Public Schools

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ABSTRACT

Culture has been established as an integral part of the successful parental involvement of Black parents in K-12 public schools. This chapter explores the implications of institutional racism and classism against Black parents and how schools as social institutions perpetuate discrimination through the hidden curriculum, which often upholds the dominant culture's values, norms, and beliefs. This chapter also investigates how schools operate within the dominant ideology that upholds the White middle-class form of cultural capital as the standard form of capital, thereby devaluing the cultural skills that Black parents use to help children achieve academic success in school. In addition, the literature demonstrates that the unique forms of cultural capital Black parents draw from to help their children succeed in school challenge the dominant ideology that Black parents lack the required capital for school success and are not interested in their children's education.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is an important factor in successful parental involvement among families of Color in K-12 public schools. Research has established the importance of culture to parental involvement of parents of Color in K-12 public schools (Yosso, 2005). Parental involvement is any form of support from parents toward the success of their children's education (Chapman, 2017) In this regard, parental involvement denotes different forms of learned behaviors that parents use to help their children succeed academically. Yosso (2005) confirms that parents of Color utilize culture-related skills for school involvement. Yosso argues that successful parental involvement of parents of Color in school is derived from their cultural assets

(2005). Evidence from literature has shown that religion and other forms of community engagement have been cultural sources for Black parents' involvement in schools as ways to help their children achieve academic success (Billingsley & Caldwell, 1991; Lincoln, 1989; Hamilton, 2014). However, the cultures that parents of Color in general bring to schools are often not recognized in K-12 public schools due to the institutional racism and classism that form the foundation of social institutions like U.S. public schools (Yosso, 2005). The discrimination is more evident among the families of Color of low socioeconomic status, who are assumed to lack the necessary skills for successful school involvement, and who are also assumed to not have interest in their children's education (Chapman & Bhopal, 2013; Fernández, 2002; Lareau, 2000; Vaught, 2008). It has been documented that the discrimination affects Black families more in K-12 public schools because of past slavery; hence, there is a historical record of racial discrimination against Black families in the U.S (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray; Fultz, 1995; Delgado & Stefanicic 2012). Research has identified the stereotypical assumption that low-income Black parents lack skills for school engagement as a racially driven form of cultural discrimination, which uses cultural capital as a means to divide the low-income Black parents and the White middle-class families in K-12 public schools (Yosso, 2005). To these, I need to emphasize that it is important to critically re-assess the issues surrounding cultural capital in parental involvement between Black and White parents, to ascertain their interconnections with racism and classism, and how they lead to cultural distinctions that devalue Blacks in K-12 public schools. This investigation will help to combat cultural bias against Black parents and promote recognition of those undervalued culture-related skills that Black parents of low-socioeconomic status mostly utilize to effectively support their children's education in K-12 public schools.

Contrary to the hegemonic ideologies that Black parents do not have interest in their children's education, nor possess the required cultural capital to academically support their children, it has been established that schools are highly esteemed institutions for many Black parents, who demonstrate a high parental educational yearning for their children (Anderson, 1988; Willie, Garibaldi & Reed, 1990). Education has been at the center of African Americans' desires since emancipation. Research has confirmed that Black parents and their children have endured serious deprivations to achieve educational equity for the education of Black children (Anderson, 1988; Billingsley & Caldwell, 1991). While Black parents have long been at the forefront of their children's education without much success, Yosso (2005) asserts they are capable and have unique forms of cultural capital such as familial, navigational, resistance, social, and linguistic capital with which to support their children academically.

This chapter will examine culture-related oppressions in K-12 public schools using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth, to tease out those power dynamics of oppression that recreate and maintain racism and classism. In addition, the Critical Race Theory analytical frame, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth, and other literature that demonstrate the positive impact of religion through Black churches in providing alternative sources of cultural strength for Black parents' involvement in schools will be used to answer the following question: Given that Black families of low socioeconomic status are not given equal access for involvement as their White middle-class counterparts, what are the ways through which most Black families navigate and withstand institutional racism and classism and successfully assist in their children's education in K-12 public schools? First, this chapter posits there is a strong connection between parental involvement and culture, and that the connection determines the success of low-income Black parents' involvement in K-12 public schools. Second, this chapter shows Black parents are not given equal involvement access in K-12 public schools due to historical institutional racism and classism that exists in the U.S. Third, this chapter posits that K-12 public

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