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Adapt and Serve the Community!: Voices of Families of Youth of Color in Predominantly White, Rural Communities

Carie Ruggiano
University of Massachusetts Amherst, cruggiano@umass.edu

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Currently, there is limited research that centers the voices of youth of Color and their families living and attending school in rural communities in the United States. This lack of representation is even more prominent among rural youth who identify in culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse ways and who reside and attend schools in predominantly white contexts. This qualitative case study sought to explore the experiences of parents of children who identify as youth of Color and who reside or attend school in predominantly white, rural settings. Drawing from in-depth interviews with five parents from four families, findings reveal that same-race biological parents and transracial adoptive (TRA) parents enact multiple forms of cultural capital as they navigate their communities and their children's schooling experiences within a broader culture and climate of onlyness. Additional findings indicate the critical need for culturally competent and sustaining practices in predominantly white, rural schools

Jeanne

School system's in denial about racism

Kids don't have anybody they can sit
and look at, and say,
Hey, I can identify with you, *with your struggle.*

Principal segregates him
as punishment.
No teachers.
He was by himself.

You're running a racist operation here.
I was standing my ground.
And for him to use the words
You people
You're too hostile

There's a school to prison pipeline
and you're punishing kids of Color harder.
It's ridiculous.

Oh well, I'm sorry if I make you feel
uncomfortable

You can't force a kid to apologize when he's
feeling humiliated
When he doesn't feel he's in the wrong.

Black History Month.

We're going to talk about how everybody is the
same

Except he feels like he and another friend are
being followed
in the morning
and not allowed to go into the bathrooms.

You can't tell kids they cannot go to the
bathroom in the morning.
More so because they're kids of Color.

Explaining the same thing
over
and over
and over.

It's exhausting.

I'm voicing my opinion,
I'm standing up for my kids.
If I was white, I could say this.
Nobody would bat an eye.

I don't want special privilege,
or to be treated differently.
Just an even playing field for my kids.
To acknowledge,
respect the way I feel,
my kids' feeling

This found poem incorporates Jeanne's original words, taken from interview transcripts and rearranged to communicate the powerful and haunting story that emerged from the data. Woven throughout this poem is a sample of the multiple meanings that participants make across varying social

identities about their lived experiences, parenting experiences, and as witnesses and advocates of their children's schooling experiences. Engaging with their words and perspectives in this way ultimately afforded me a vehicle to center and amplify their voice and provided space to wrestle with the "magnitude of entanglement" (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2018, p.4) that I often feel as a parent, community member, researcher, and educator. As a white adoptive parent in a transracial family, my two children identify as African American and Puerto Rican, respectively; they both live in a predominantly white, rural community and have attended predominantly white, rural schools. These personal experiences have often been complex and painful; they have also allowed me to straddle an insider/outsider status and forge meaningful connections to the families in this study, as well as to their children. My hope is that the poem above, as well as the subsequent findings and discussion, respectfully convey, honor, and amplify their knowledge and voice.

Educational Issue

There is limited research that centers and amplifies the voices, experiences, and perceptions of youth and their families living and attending school in rural communities in the United States (Crockett, et al., 2016; Gagnon & Mattingly, 2018; Gurley, 2016; Saenz, 2012; Schafft, 2016; Wake, 2012). This lack of representation in the academic literature is even more prominent among rural youth who identify in culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse ways and who reside and attend schools in predominantly white contexts (Byun et. al, 2012; Crockett & Carlo, 2016; Irvin, et al., 2012; Peralta, 2013; Saenz, 2012). Additionally, challenges to arrive at consistent definitions of rurality further obscure our ability to identify and understand precisely who and what constitutes rural communities, or to understand their variations.

Definitions and Characteristics of Rurality

Definitions of rurality vary, and geographical statistics have been divided into binary categories of *urban* and *rural* for over a century (John & Ford, 2017). The U.S. Census Bureau (2017) defines rural as "what is not urban," and often classifies significant portions of suburban areas into rural definitions. The USDA defines rural, or nonmetropolitan areas, as areas possessing combinations of three primary

characteristics which include: "open countryside, rural towns (places with fewer than 2,500 people), and urban areas with populations ranging from 2,500 to 49,999 that are not part of larger labor market areas (metropolitan areas)" (2000; 2018). Finally, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classifies rural schools and communities based on their distance from a town or a city and breaks them into subcategories which include: Rural fringe, distant, and remote.

Rural schools and communities embody unique characteristics that differ significantly from suburban and urban contexts. First, Peralta (2013) posits that in rural communities, due to lack of exposure (or lack of connection to others), environments of intolerance toward outsiders often exist. Second, due to their geography, rural schools tend to be culturally and racially isolated, and much like their urban counterparts, are "typically characterized by concentrations of poverty and race that are not found in the more heterogeneous populations of suburban America" (Lipke & Manaseri, 2019, p. 27). Third, schools act as places where social interaction and community converge and where much of youth's social lives and identities are influenced and constructed. In rural communities, schools often act as "the centers of community" and "impart a strong sense of local identity and shared purpose" (Scafft, 2016, p. 139). Finally, within this context, school-community relationships have been found to be complex, often divided along lines of social class and values, and where consolidations of power within certain social groups may influence school decision-making (Lipke & Manaseri, 2019). Researchers must consider how characteristics unique to white, rural contexts might reflect or shape the climate and culture of the school and broader community, as well as the development, experiences, and trajectories of culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse youth in these environments.

Deficit Approaches to Research in Rural Communities and Communities of Color

Of the limited body of research that exists, much of it examines rural youth, families, and communities through a deficit lens, indicating in part, what White & Corbett (2016) call an "urgent need to unpack the unexamined dominance of research methodologies as mainly metropolitan" (p.1) which frequently situate the rural in the deficit rather than as different. This deficit approach has examined such phenomena as

rural "brain drain" (Petrin et al., 2014), which refers to young adults who leave rural communities to attend college and do not return, in part, due to a lack of employment opportunities. Other studies have examined low(er) levels of educational aspiration and attainment of rural youth and their parents, students' lack of academic preparation or access to advising, and low expectations from teachers. Geographic isolation and/or distance between home and school, sometimes coupled with students' reluctance to leave their families or communities have also been discussed in the extant literature (Byun et al., 2012; Irvin et al., 2012; Means, 2019; Schmitt-Wilson et al., 2018). Finally, Burke et al. (2015) refer to the concept of *undermatching*, where "rural youth who are academically eligible to attend a more selective institution choose instead to attend an institution that does not match their academic qualifications" (p. 2). Though important, such notions do not adequately consider the reasons that rural youth might opt to attend such institutions—or not—nor do they account for rural students' values and social supports and connections, or how both influence their educational and career expectations (Schmitt-Wilson et al., 2018).

In addition to deficit approaches applied to rurality, approaches to schooling and research that marginalize and frame communities of Color in the deficit while positioning white, middle-class culture as the standard have a long, well-documented history (Jones & Nichols, 2014; Leonardo, 2009; Moore et al., 2017; Paris, 2012; Yosso, 2005). Such approaches have neglected to recognize, consider, or invite the many assets and forms of knowledge cultivated within communities of Color. In the context of modern-day schooling, these deficit perspectives often fault culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse students and families for poor academic performance, positing that: (a) students enter school without the necessary (normative) cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child's education. Such perspectives are rooted in long histories of valuing and privileging dominant forms of knowledge (Yosso, 2005). These types of schooling and research practices, situated within the historical and sociocultural context of the United States, have served to perpetuate pervasive deficit thinking about both rural youth and communities of Color. Considering these disproportionate deficit-based approaches, coupled with limited representation in the research, it is fair to conclude that rural youth of Color and their families are at greater risk of

inequitable consideration and/or lack of understanding in the contexts of research and schooling.

(Rural) Youth of Color in Predominantly White Contexts

Within the small body of research pertaining to rural youth of Color, most examines the experiences of youth residing in majority communities of Color, typically in or near the southern U.S. (Means, 2019; Means et al., 2016; Philipsen, 1993; Smokowski et al., 2014). Studies that explore the experiences of youth and young adults of Color in predominantly white *rural* contexts are scant and situated outside of the U.S. (e.g., Myers & Bhopal 2017; O'Connell, 2010). Research that examines experiences in predominantly white spaces is not as scant, however, most is situated in elite, independent and/or suburban contexts, or in the context of higher education. Many of these studies identify the importance and complexities of same-race peer connections for adolescents and young adults of Color (Carter, 2007; Datnow & Cooper, 1997; Hamm & Coleman, 2001; Solorzano et al., 2000; Tatum, 1987) as they navigate the important and uniquely challenging journey of developing a positive racial and academic identity (Carter, 2009; Ogbu, 2003; Peralta, 2013; Tatum 2017; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991) and sense of belonging (Horvat & Antonio, 1999).

Onlyness

Onlyness refers to feeling alone, or feeling like one of few, and centers around a heightened awareness of the self in relation to one's surroundings. Hall (2017) refers to onlyness in a study which explores factors that contribute to academic persistence among African American and Latinx undergraduates at predominantly white colleges. Additionally, bodies of literature examining the opportunity gap and underrepresentation of youth of Color in advanced classes highlight the challenges felt by young people who often find themselves as the only student of Color, or one of a very small number, placed in advanced classes and/or gifted and talented programs. Lee-Heart (2019) gives voice to her high school experiences as she reflects on the impact of being the only Black student in an honors course. Similarly, Taliaferro and DeCuir-Gunby's (2008) case study with African American educators reveals the challenges of cultivating a much-needed sense of belonging integral to academic success for

African American youth in advanced high school courses. This study sheds light on how the phenomenon of onlyness (Hall, 2017; Lee-Heart, 2019; Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008; Tatum, 1987) plays out in white rural contexts with youth of Color and their families. One unique characteristic of white, rural contexts is that people do not have access to the same options to leave these predominantly white environments and return to communities where their racial identities are reflected, as might be the case for youth attending predominantly white elite boarding schools or institutes of higher education. For youth of Color and families residing in white rural contexts, onlying experiences in schools and the broader community are more likely an everyday reality.

Young people's lived experiences are significantly influenced by several factors, such as: perceived identity, personal and cultural wealth, connections to others, and perceived barriers (Butler-Sweet, 2011; Irvin et al., 2012; Means et.al., 2016; Peralta, 2013; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Therefore, focused, asset-based approaches to research that amplify voices of rural youth of Color and their families in predominately white communities, would improve our understanding, serve to honor and represent their lived experiences, strengths, and forms of knowledge, and lessen their overall dearth in the literature. Research in these areas can also contribute to our understanding of rurality overall, as well as to the diversity that exists specifically within predominantly white, rural contexts. For these purposes, this research study was guided by the following research questions: (a) How do youth of Color and their families experience community and PK-12 schooling in predominantly white rural contexts? (b) To what extent do participants utilize cultural capital to navigate community and schooling experiences?

Theoretical Framework

This research foregrounds an asset approach, and in the background, what Tuck (2009) identifies as a *desire-based* approach to research that "account[s] for loss and despair, but also hope, vision, and wisdom of lived lives and communities" (p. 417). *Desire-based* approaches recognize and interrogate the systems and practices that inflict harm; however, they also honor and center the strengths and complexity of participants in the face of such systems and practices. With this aim in mind, results from this study were analyzed through a theoretical lens grounded in theories of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) and cultural competence (Jones & Nichols, 2014; Nieto, 2017; Vonk, 2001). These theories shed light on the varying forms of cultural capital which are acquired in different ways and for different purposes, and which are unique to both communities of Color and to white communities. Community Cultural Wealth is possessed and nurtured within communities of Color, whereas cultural competence *can* be learned and cultivated in white communities in order to parent and educate in culturally sustaining ways. Though both forms of cultural capital stem from different sources, they share the connection of evolving, in part, in response to the imposed demands and realities of navigating a racialized society. Both are at the heart of the forms of knowledge that parents in this study enact. It is important to note the varying ways in which white people can arrive at forms of cultural competence. For example, the transracial (TRA) adoptive parents in this study who identify as gay men may come to their cultural competence and enact knowledges acquired as the result of formal learning, as well as that of their own embodied lived experience as members of a marginalized group. They may also arrive at cultural competence more intuitively, perhaps, than another white person who has not had to navigate oppressive systems that openly target their identities. Though participants come to these source(s) of knowledge(s) in differing ways, results reveal that the ways in which they enact them are very similar. *Figure 1* provides a visual representation of this framework.

Community Cultural Wealth

Tara Yosso's (2005) theory of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) employs an asset-approach to highlight the forms of knowledge, abilities, skills, and networks cultivated in people and communities of Color and enacted to survive and thrive in racialized societies. CCW identifies six forms of cultural capital (or wealth) nurtured in communities of Color. These forms of capital are not static, mutually exclusive, or operationalized in isolation of each other. Most often, they are comprised of "dynamic processes" (p. 77) that build and inform one another. These forms of capital are outlined and defined in Table 1. This study considers how two Black parents navigate school and community
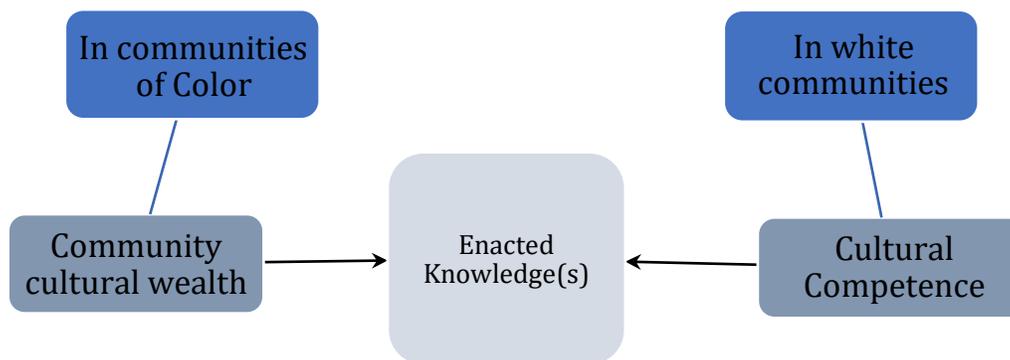
Figure 1 Sources of cultural capital which inform enacted knowledge(s)

experiences by focusing on two forms of capital: *navigational* and *resistant*. The other four forms of capital are outside the scope of this project. Findings from this study will show the varying ways that parents of Color enact these two forms of cultural wealth, specifically with regard to their approaches to parenting and advocacy.

Cultural Competence

Over the last two decades, in an effort to help practitioners work more effectively with culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse individuals and families, strategies for implementing culturally competent approaches have been suggested and adopted within the fields of health care, social work, and education (Jones & Nichols, 2014; Vonk, 2001). Across these varying fields, researchers contend that the development and practice of specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes are critical to implementing culturally competent approaches. Though these skills

vary by field and discipline, at the heart of cultural competence lies the need for practitioners to understand and transform cultural bias and deficit views long tied to oppressive histories and systems.

Cultural Competence in Education

In her groundbreaking work, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) a proposed culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) aimed at the reformation of teacher education, specifically with regard to preparing teachers to successfully and effectively teach African American students. Rather than requiring or expecting students to "fit" into dominant, hegemonic structures and norms of knowledge, CRP outlines foundational tenets of academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness to help develop critically conscious teachers who value the strengths, forms of knowledge, and ways of being that students from marginalized groups possess. Paris (2012), and Paris and Alim (2014), extend Ladson-Billings' work in their conception of culturally

Table 1
Six forms of capital, as defined by Yosso, 2005, pp.77-81.

Term	Definition
Aspirational	The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, in the face of real and perceived barriers.
Linguistic	The intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.
Familial	Cultural knowledges nurtured among family that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition.
Social	Networks of people and community resources; peer and social contacts that provide emotional support to navigate through institutions.
Navigational	The skill of maneuvering through social institutions…not created with Communities of Color in mind.
Resistant	Knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.

sustaining pedagogy (CSP), which seeks "to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate and cultural pluralisms as part of the democratic process of schooling" (p. 95). CRP is nested in and serves as the foundation for CSP; however, the latter has evolved - with Gloria Ladson-Billings' endorsement (2014) - to also include consideration of the skills, knowledges, and ways of being needed for success in the present and future to ensure (all) students' access and opportunity in an ever-changing society (Paris & Alim, 2016). Doing so requires that teachers commit to developing knowledge(s) beyond their own, while simultaneously engaging in a practice of critical self-reflection - characteristics inherent in notions of cultural competence (Morales et.al., 2020).

Similarly, critical multicultural scholars (e.g., Nieto, Irvine, Gay, and Sleeter) have outlined the importance of teachers' development of cultural competence. Nieto (2017) identifies effective, culturally competent teachers as "sociocultural mediators," able to critically reflect on their own knowledge, perceptions, and biases about their students and adjust their practice in a way that reflects a more equitable approach; they also exercise the desire and practice of learning, honoring, and affirming the students' sociocultural strengths. Finally, Nieto looks to the institutions of schooling to be adjusted to make these characteristics and practices possible.

Jones and Nichols (2014) build from these intersecting bodies of work to define cultural competence as "the acceptance of the significance of sociopolitical, economic and historical experiences of different racial, ethnic, and gender subgroups that have a profound influence on how people learn and achieve inside and outside of formal and informal education settings" (pp. 8-9). They assert that there is often a "culturally competent disconnect between school systems and the students and communities they are charged to serve" (p. 12). This disconnect,

they argue, often leads to misunderstandings and practices that may lead to miseducation. Similarly, Milner (2012) refers to these encounters as cultural conflicts which can significantly limit students' learning opportunities. To address this, Jones and Nichols (2014) offer an *ecosystem leadership* framework as a model for professional development and training that includes and extends beyond the classroom to address areas of needed change pertaining to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of educational staff and leaders. Though this framework is aimed at addressing the needs of urban schools with majority of students of Color, it provides implications and a potential path forward for the implementation of culturally competent approaches in predominantly white, rural schools. It also provides a helpful lens for examining the schooling interactions and experiences that participants in this study discussed.

Cultural Competence in TRA Parenting

TRA families are characterized by cultural or racial difference across parent and child lines. In other words, TRA adoptive families, parents and children do not share the same race or ethnicity. At the center of decades of debate pertaining to TRA adoption is the concern that white parents, especially, cannot adequately parent or prepare a child of differing race. Supporters and critics of TRA adoption agree that "(TRA) parents need to acquire the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable them to help their children develop positive racial identities and survival skills for life in a racist society" (Vonk, 2001, p.246). Vonk (2001) outlines a framework for these attitudes, skills, and knowledge(s) that TRA parents can acquire in an effort to nurture, guide, support, and advocate for their children in culturally competent ways. Specifically, racial awareness, multicultural planning, and survival skills are identified as critical components for TRA parents and are defined in Table 2.

Table 2

Components of culturally competent framework, as defined by Vonk, 2001, pp.249-250.

Characteristic	Definition
Racial awareness	A person's awareness of how race, ethnicity, culture, language, and related power status operate in one's own and other's lives.
Multicultural planning	Efforts on the part of TRA parents to create opportunities and paths for their child(ren) to learn about and participate in their culture of origin and which range from cognitive to experiential.
Survival skills	The recognition of the need and ability of parents to prepare their children of Color to cope with racism and discrimination.

Given the lack of experience for many TRA parents outside of dominant culture, consciousness of (their own) racial identity has been identified as a challenge (Vonk, 2001). This lack of consciousness of one's own racial identity often translates to a lack of consciousness—or colorblindness—about the racial identity of people with differing backgrounds. Because "TRA parents who are sensitive to and aware of race, ethnicity, and culture are thought to be more able to help their children cope successfully with related issues" (p. 250), specific forms of training are recommended and available to parents and families.

Like racial awareness and multicultural planning, knowing how to impart survival skills can be challenging for white adoptive parents who have not experienced racism directed at them in ways that people of Color have. However, Ausbrooks and Russell (2001) found that, "gay and lesbian parents, white and of Color, employ similar skill sets to negotiate identity in a society that oppresses differences" (p. 206); in turn, they may possess skills acquired as the result of their lived experiences with discrimination and oppression and thus may be more sensitive and better equipped than heterosexual parents to understand and empathize with the realities that their children will face. In an effort to apply an asset lens this study examined displays of cultural competence among white, TRA parents.

Methods

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological case study approach (Rossman & Rallis, 2017) in an effort to understand how parents of youth of Color experience, perceive, make meaning, and understand their experiences within a predominantly white, predominantly rural community. It also sought to understand and illuminate the forms of strength that families and youth draw on to navigate their experiences. Part of a broader study, this portion invited four families to explore and share their experiences and perceptions of their community in which they reside and in which their child(ren) attend school. Flexible methods sought to elicit participant identification of systems of support and strength and included two open-ended, semi-structured interviews, and demographic questionnaires. Additionally, it aimed to consider and empower participants by centering their voices and experiences and soliciting their feedback in both study design and interview topics.

Context and Participants

The five participants included in this portion of the study reside in New England towns and communities that match characteristics outlined in the USDA, US Census, and NCES definitions for rural. Determined by their classification as "rural," the two counties in which participants reside qualify for rural health aid (Health Resources & Service Administration), and both encompass towns that qualified for priority rural education aid in FY19 (U.S. Department of Education, 2018); three of the four families reside in the most rural county in the state. Inclusive of single- and two-parent households, biological and adoptive families, monoracial and multiracial families, as well as same- and differing-sex parents, this sample is representative of the diversity that exists within families of youth of Color in this context. Specifically, children of Color in the families included in this study identify as Black/African American or biracial (Black/African American and white). Participant-selected pseudonyms are used for all. Though three of the four families included in this study identify as two-parent households, Hank and Francis were the only two spouses to participate together and thus, are both named throughout. Participant and familial sociodemographic characteristics are represented in Table 3.

Gaining Entry and Informed Consent

As a result of shared personal and professional connections, I held a strong rapport with participants before this study began. I first contacted them by phone or in person to broadly explain the purpose of the study and invite their consideration to participate. All were eager and provided email addresses for future communication. Next, I shared details of the study in person and via email, and informed participants of the intended timeline and format. University IRB procedures were followed, and all participants received, reviewed, signed, and retained a copy of an IRB-approved informed consent form prior to the commencement of the study.

Table 3
Parent Sociodemographic Information

Name/age	Family Make-up	Self-identification	Context	Educational Attainment
Mary (49)	Biological (6 children; 3 Black female; 2 Black male; 1 biracial (B/W) male).	(F) Black; heterosexual; married	"Distant town" (NCES); Pop = 4,124 (87% white, 5.8% Hispanic or Latinx, 4% Multiracial, 2.3% Black or African American, .8% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and .1% Asian (U.S. Census).	Bachelor's degree in Rehabilitative Counseling
Jeanne (47)	Biological (5 children; Black males).	(F) Black; heterosexual; unmarried	"Distant town" (NCES); Pop = 17,474 and was reported as 87% white, 7% Hispanic or Latinx, 3% multiracial, 2% Black or African American, and 1% Asian (U.S. Census).	LPN in progress
Hank (45) and Francis (55)	Adoptive family (1 child, Black male).	(M/M) white; gay; married	"Distant town" (NCES); Pop = 17,474 and was reported as 87% white, 7% Hispanic or Latinx, 3% multiracial, 2% Black or African American, and 1% Asian (U.S. Census).	Completed coursework in vocal performance and filmmaking; certified yoga training program; Ed.D in Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies
Michelle (44)	Blended family: biological, adoptive, foster (9 children; 3 white females; 3 white males; 3 Black male; 1 Black female; 1 biracial (B/W) female; 1 biracial (B/W), male).	(F) white; heterosexual; married	"Rural distant" (NCES); Pop = 3,169 and was reported to be 98.4 white, 1.4% Hispanic or Latinx, and .2% Black or African American (U.S. Census).	Bachelor's degree in Social Work

Data Collection

Open-ended, semi-structured interview protocols made the gathering of unique and nuanced information from participants possible and allowed space in the interviews for them to introduce or expand ideas or topics of interest. Data collection consisted of email and text communication, demographic questionnaires, and six interviews, which ranged from 60-90 minutes each and which were designed and modeled after Seidman's (2006) phenomenological in-depth interviewing protocol (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). Due to time limitations, rather than three interviews, as Seidman recommends, I combined several objectives of his protocol into two interviews. Topics covered in the first set of interviews included reflections of community experiences and experiences pertaining to their children's schooling and aimed to address the first research question. In the second, participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of these experiences. Each interview lasted between sixty and ninety minutes and was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Finally, I relied heavily on field notes to capture my initial thoughts and reactions, any details in the audio recordings that were inaudible or omitted due to technical issues with the audio recording device, or to locate ideas that I wanted to clarify or follow up on with participants.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I utilized line-by-line open and axial coding methods

to organize data from the interview transcripts into initial codes. Codes were then further analyzed and organized into thematic categories (Charmaz, 2014; Galman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Rossman & Rallis, 2017). While analyzing data and developing categories, I referenced field notes to ensure that my questions, initial reactions, and interpretations were captured, followed up on, or marked for later analysis. I also engaged in regular analytic memo writing to make sense of, synthesize, and discover and formulate the categories and their dimensions and properties (Charmaz, 2014). During this process, I compared the data and observed unique similarities and differences between participants (Charmaz, 2014), noting how they have persisted through challenging events and experiences in their individual and parenting lives.

Findings

Through a grounded theory approach that sought to understand the experiences and strengths of participants, two categories emerged from the data. The first category, *experiences of onlyness* emerged as an en vivo code and conveys the significance and frequency with which participants' reference notions of being "the only." This category is broken down into two subcategories: *Naming onlyness* and *imposed onlyness*. Specific characteristics and dimensions of this phenomenon will be briefly outlined in the next section to illustrate its critical relation to the second category but illuminating findings for onlyness is beyond the scope of this article. Broadly, the concept of onlyness deeply addresses the first research question. The participants who comprise these four families simultaneously experience onlyness *and* enact various forms of

knowledge(s) in order to navigate their lives and support, nurture, and advocate for their children. The second and central category of this study, *enacted knowledges,* is broken down into subcategories entitled: *Community cultural wealth* and *cultural capital* and addresses the second research question. Specific characteristics and dimensions of this category will also be explained in a subsequent section.

It was important that the individual experiences and humanity of each family be represented as fully as possible. Their stories represent distinct patches of a narrative quilt, which, when stitched together reveal patterns of undeniable harm *and* extraordinary wisdom, knowledge, and strength. For this reason, I have chosen to arrange the results section as individual portraits to illustrate families' unique individuality within a larger collective whole. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between these emergent categories and subcategories.

Experiences of Onlyness

In the context of this study, o*nlyness* refers to participants' explicit naming of being "the only." Most often, onlyness refers to participants' experience of being one of, or the only person or family with a marked difference that sets them apart from the dominant, normative group. It is both a feeling that comes from within and one imposed on youth and families by members of the surrounding (dominant) culture. Participants repeatedly invoked the term "only" when naming the experiences of their children, themselves, or their family. At times, they did not use the term directly, but the experiences imposed on them and/or their children resulted in a
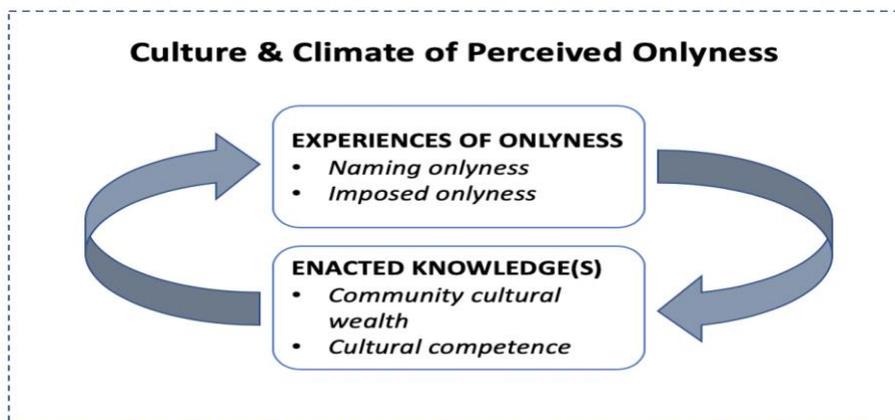

Figure 2 Enacted knowledges within a larger culture/climate of onlyness.

sense of onlyness, isolation, or hypervisibility based on racial differences, differences in sexual orientation, or family type (e.g., adoptive, foster, biological) in ways that were perceived by participants or this researcher as "onlying."

Enactments of Knowledge(s)

Participants' experiences of onlyness are dynamically and bilaterally connected to their enactments of various knowledges. That is, as participants experience onlyness, they draw on and enact multiple forms of knowledge These enacted knowledges are tied to their cultural competence and/or to various forms of cultural wealth and are the result of lived experiences and/or formally acquired knowledge. Data from this section addresses the second research question, which aimed to explore the extent to which participants utilized cultural capital to navigate (often isolating and painful) personal and academic experiences. The following results will be broken into two subgroups to illustrate how parents' forms of *Community Cultural Wealth* and *cultural competence* serve as a strong foundation for the robust pool of cultural capital that they possess and draw from.

Demonstrations of Community Cultural Wealth

Part of Yosso's (2005) definition of *resistant* capital includes the characteristic of transformative resistant capital, which she defines as, "cultural knowledge of the structures of racism and motivation to transform such oppressive structures" (p. 81). In the examples that follow, this form of cultural capital is coupled with *navigational* capital, specifically as it pertains to community and the social institution of school.

Mary. During our interview, Mary described the personal circumstances that led to her relocating from Florida more than twenty years ago to her current community as a young mother, seeking safety, shelter, and connection to her brothers who lived in the area. At the time of this study, Mary was finishing her bachelor's degree and working full-time as Director for a nearby women's shelter. Mary describes herself as a "resilient Black woman" and "active mother and grandmother" who spends most of her time outside of work and school with family.

Mary identified her family as the only place she feels "safe and a source of comfort" and to Mary, "my community is my family." Throughout our

interviews, we discussed her feelings about her community and what it has been like to raise her six children here. Specifically, Mary recalled recognizing the moment when she needed to have "the talk" with her youngest son. Whitaker and Snell (2016) describe "The Talk" (capitalized in original) as a painful part of the process of racial socialization in many African American families, aimed to prepare children to "take responsibility for the actions of adults [they] may encounter" (p. 304). Essentially, these authors posit that this conversation is about teaching children to avoid the "perception of criminal behavior" that is often the result of bias of people who hold positions of authority. Additionally, they state that, "what is consistently true for African American parents is that the same rules that apply to [w]hite children do not apply to their children" (pp. 304-305).

Mary explained that her youngest son was having "a hard time" in school. According to her, these challenges were "not because of academics," but because of "situations that happened there." Mary shared that her son frequently reported being reprimanded for "disruptive behaviors," but his white peers, who were also involved, often were not. Regarding this moment in her parenting, Mary shared:

Unfortunately, that's when I had to start talking to him about the color of his skin and to be aware that because you could be behaving the same way as a white kid, they're not going to see the white kid. They're gonna see you. So unfortunately, you can't do those things that you see the white kid doing, and I know it feels unfair, and it is unfair. I instinctively knew that [he] would not have all of the issues that his brothers had because his skin isn't as dark as his brothers'…he's had some issues but not, like, constant.

Mary said that most of her children "hated school" and added that:

They don't feel safe and …you have to equip your children with things that are going to happen in life and things that are going to be unfair in life. And I've always told them, you're Black, this is how people are going to see you. No, it's not your fault… that's just the way the world is. You have to work twice as hard too— and that's not fair. That's a lot, that's a lot for a kid to have to be like, Damn I gotta' work twice as hard ?...And I don't know if that was too much for them...if this is my own perception of internalized racism. I think every Black person

has it, unfortunately, because of the way that the world is.

Here, Mary enacts and reflects on her own navigational capital and considers the impact of imparting it to her son. This knowledge stems from the wisdom acquired as the result of navigating a racialized society as a person of Color. It also takes into account the burden and emotional toll that such acquisitions of knowledge entail.

After repeated incidents such as those outlined above, in conversation and agreement with her son, she opted to send him to another district. When describing what ultimately led to this decision, Mary said:

> He asked me. He begged me. And I felt the angst coming from him, like I can't go back to that school. 'Mom I can't do it'.… So, when he said it that way, I had to listen to him.

To this end, Mary resisted accepting the school's inability to help her son feel safe and opted to send him to a school of his choice where she hoped he would have more positive schooling and hopefully, a connection and sense of solidarity with more students of Color. Of his new school placement, Mary shared:

> More people of Color have moved to the area and … I would hope that … they're adapting more to the community that they're serving, which is what a lot of places need to do instead of serving up this plate of white rice...I can say it's less stressful, less racial incidents, however they're not nonexistent. He told me just the other day he felt like he was racially profiled by a teacher. Him and a friend were walking to the bathroom—wo kids of Color—and the teacher who was walking by them in the opposite direction asked the [football] coach, 'Hey go check on those boys. See what they're doing.' Coach told them when he got into the bathroom, 'I was asked to come check on you.' [My son] said, 'I was racially profiled,' which he was. They're just going to the bathroom. Two boys of Color can't walk together without you thinking that they're going to do something?

Mary's last statement is further evidence of her navigational capital. Her reference to "white rice," illuminates her recognition of the pervasive nature of whiteness that often leads to bias in the form of profiling. It also reflects the set of skills that Yosso (2005) outlines in her CCW framework regarding knowledge about systems "not designed with Communities of Color in mind" (p. 80). Finally, of an incident with her daughter being threatened with law enforcement if she did not comply with a teacher's request to move her seat to the back of the room, Mary explained that:

> I had a meeting with the principal…trying to explain that she's a person, she's a Black girl, and you telling her to move to the back of the class. Do you not understand the implications of that statement? And then you're telling her that if she doesn't do that then you have the right to call the police?...Training for teachers needs to be different especially if you're going to be the principal or the superintendent, you need to know how to direct your staff. You need to be able to see when there's a faculty member who's not acting right, who's showing their bias.

She concluded that:

> If you don't fight for your children, no one else is going to do it. And it took me a lot to learn that… I didn't know that…I was gonna be…charged with making sure that they're not treated like shit… making sure that they feel safe…making sure they were treated fairly. Making sure they were seen as little Black kids who need to be treated the same as your little white child.

Mary's recognition of the importance of teacher training and anti-bias training, coupled with the notion of having to "fight" and advocate for her children, demonstrates her navigational and resistant capital in response to behaviors and practices steeped in inequality and domination. Her resistance to police presence in school and for relegating one of the only students of Color to the back of the room has larger sociocultural and historical implications of subjugation, of which she is keenly aware — implications that she wants school leadership to consider. Mary resisted this punitive approach by trying to humanize her daughter and explain her unique lived experience in the context and histories associated with this interaction.

Jeanne. Jeanne came to the area as an infant when she was adopted by an all-white family and has lived in two different neighboring towns in the area for her entire life. Having lived in the area for so long has provided her with a unique perspective and experience, especially when it comes to parenting her children. At the time of this study, Jeanne was attending school full-time and working as a Patient Care Assistant. In addition to her role as a highly

involved parent, Jeanne is also a proud grandmother to four grandchildren.

Like Mary, Jeanne also shared examples of resistant and navigational capital in response to what she perceived as harmful disciplinary practices in her son's school. She described her ongoing conversation with school staff about her discomfort with elements of a teacher's approach after her son reported that the teacher would often stand behind him and assume or anticipate his involvement in negative behaviors happening inside the classroom. On at least one occasion he reported being yelled at and feeling shamed in front of the entire class. After a prolonged period of reporting that he felt overly surveilled, he was suspended after muttering what another student reported as, "he wanted to beat her [the teacher] up" under his breath. This response was perceived as a threat, rather than a response to the situation and circumstances that led to this form of what Yosso (2005) identifies as "oppositional" resistance and ultimately, his suspension. Upon returning, Jeanne discovered that they had "segregated" her son away from classrooms and staff and relocated him near the gym with a science book from the library that did not coincide with the 7th grade curriculum. She resisted this form of punishment through sustained conversation with school administration. During this conversation, she drew on her knowledge of oppressive schooling practices when she said:

> [H]e had the nerve to tell me that [he] liked it and wanted it to be like that. He was just like, You're too hostile…when I'm bringing all these issues up and he just didn't want to hear it. You know, it's like you need to hear it because my child is not the only child in this school. And for you to be a principal of a school and not think that there's a school to prison pipeline and you're punishing kids of Color harder is ridiculous.

Regarding Jeanne's six-year-old son, whom she perceived was having difficulty "in white spaces," Jeanne initiated multiple meetings with his teacher to try to communicate his feelings and share her concerns about how he perceived he was being treated by his white classmates. When reflecting on her son's brave and honest disclosure to his first-grade classmates, which took place during Black History Month, Jeanne recounted:

> He told his class how some kids are mean to him and won't play with him because he's Black…it's been a challenging year...He really shouldn't have had to be open about this and honestly, I wish it wasn't an issue…at this point in time,

Black history should be about all of the great things we as a people have done to advance society, not just the continuing struggle.

These ongoing conversations are examples of Jeanne's positive resistance to harmful, onlying school practices, and are evident of the resistant capital that she possesses—capital that is rooted in a clear knowledge and understanding of schooling practices that have historically excluded strength-based counternarratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Jeanne recognized the unfair burden placed on her six-year-old son, and simultaneously identified the shortcomings of curriculum and approaches to teaching regarding how people of Color are frequently (under) represented. Furthermore, her son's ability to openly express his thoughts and feelings to his classmates illustrate what Yosso (2005) outlines as the acquisition of resistant capital passed down from parents of Color to their children to engage in behaviors that "challenge the status quo" (p. 81). In a follow-up communication, Jeanne stated that, "If you are not familiar with the system you don't know how to help your kids and they can be left behind, and no one thinks twice about it." Here, Jeanne's knowledge of the system serves as an important component of her navigational capital. Both Mary and Jeanne demonstrate how they draw on *navigational* and *resistant* capital as they navigate their role as advocates for their children, while also preparing them to navigate complex and painful schooling experiences.

Demonstrations of Cultural Competence

Like the parents of Color in this study, white parents also resist and navigate, but the source(s) of their knowledge can be attributed in part, to their cultural competence (Jones & Nichols, 2014; Nieto, 2017; Vonk, 2011), enacted as a set of skills, attitudes, and practices that they have acquired through formal and experiential learning and which they enact in their efforts to nurture and support their child(ren) of Color.

Hank and Francis. Hank and Francis adopted their son, Gabriel, when he was an infant and have lived in the same white rural community for the past eighteen years. Francis is a yoga instructor and performing artist and is currently writing what he intends to become a Broadway musical. Hank is a lifelong educator who has served as both a teacher and now, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction for a

large public school in the area. As two white men, Hank and Francis have not and do not experience or navigate their community in the ways that Jeanne and Mary, two Black women, do. Rather, the marked differences they personally experience in their white rural community are connected to their perceived status as the only gay parents of their adopted Black son.

Hank and Francis demonstrate their parental cultural competence in a multitude of ways. Their racial awareness provides them with the knowledge to resist harmful, colorblind schooling practices and to recognize the complexities of identity development for their son. Hank and Francis described the conversation that ensued after following up with their son's first-grade teacher regarding the *Skin I'm in* project—a paper doll project, which was part of a broader identity unit. Upon viewing the display, they shared their surprise that their son had been given the same light beige colored paper that his white classmates used, especially as it pertained to an assignment about identity:

> [The teacher] said they didn't have any brown construction paper…and then we spoke to another teacher who's like, no, in the cabinet down the hall there's all kinds of different colors of construction [paper].

When they asked their son why he didn't ask his teacher for brown paper, their son said, "you don't ask her for anything. You just take what she gives you and you do it and you shut up." Here, Gabriel's response to harm is evident. He does not question or challenge, but instead, internalizes his feelings and shares them in the safety of his home and with his fathers.

Francis also reflected on an experience with a paraprofessional in Gabriel's elementary school who he felt, "seemed to have it out for Gabriel." Francis reported that this particular staff person had shared that she really liked their son, but "he was getting into so much conflict with her." In response to this conflict, Francis made five requests for a meeting with the paraprofessional and the principal over the course of the year. Each time, only the principal attended. When asked to describe the types of conflict that had transpired that year, Hank and Francis shared the following painful experience:

> He asked a friend if he could have a French fry, the friend said sure, he took the French fry…she made him spit it out. 'You don't eat off somebody else's plate! That's against the rules here! I want that food out of your mouth!" And

he said, you know I've already half chewed it. "Don't you dare swallow that!" She made him spit it out …and put it back on the kid's tray.

In response to this exchange, Gabriel became upset. Hank recalled that the paraprofessional then "question[ed] his manliness because she berated him to the point where he cried and she said, "Boys don't cry…you shouldn't be crying."

Hank and Francis described another experience when their son was mistaken for the only other student of Color in his grade and escorted to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons:

> The principal walks into the lunchroom and she points to Gabriel, and she says, Come with me now. Bring your lunchbox. She berates him and marches him down to the office, telling him all the things he did wrong…and when they finally get to the office, she goes, Wait, you're not Elijah, who we found out was in her office daily for issues in the classroom.

Prior to this experience, Gabriel had not been sent to the office or in trouble for behavioral concerns. When he came home from school that day, Hank and Francis shared that he said, "I think I got in trouble today, but I'm not sure." Francis described feeling "incensed" over the principal's treatment of Gabriel and the subsequent lack of communication with the family following this case of 'mistaken identity.' Francis insisted on meeting with school staff in an attempt to understand and prevent what he perceived as harm to his son. This insistence ultimately reveals Francis's active resistance. Though the principal apologized and explained that she "wasn't thinking" and was "in a hurry," Francis was unsettled by this experience, especially since, "She was the one who was so eager to get us into that school because she was … looking to increase diversity, and I'm like, well you're getting double whammy here."

Shortly after this experience, Hank and Francis pulled their son out of school for the remainder of the year. Francis no longer felt that the school environment was safe. Though Gabriel returned the following year for fifth grade, Hank and Francis opted to home-school for the entirety of his sixth-grade year. They described this decision as an overwhelmingly positive time where they were able to individualize their son's learning and discover and nurture his academic strengths. Their choice to remove Gabriel from an environment that they recognized as not promoting healthy growth for him, can be viewed as the ultimate act of resistance. Like

Mary and Jeanne, Hank and Francis are vocal and supportive of their son; they recognize his needs and the challenges inherent in his schooling experiences and through deliberate communication resist the onlying experiences imposed on him, ultimately, with the decision to alter his school placement.

Finally, Hank and Francis engage in frequent conversations with their now thirteen-year-old son round topics of race, adoption, and identity. Of these conversations, Hank shared that:

> He doesn't like to talk about it always, but I make sure time doesn't go by without us talking about who he is, how he sees himself, how he feels about himself, how he sees other people… If he sees his blackness as something not good, if he sees his being as adopted as something not good…the more you think you're not good, the more likely you are to self-harm.

Not only do Hank and Francis recognize the complicated nature of identity development for their son, they also recognize the importance of combatting negative messages or "single stories" (Adichie, 2009) that he might receive or feel about his identity. Hank said:

> He's so uncomfortable with his identity...and he has so many really wrong messages about who he thinks he's supposed to be… he really just thinks that… definitely the gangster stereotype is the most authentic way to be Black and having white parents isn't a way to be Black.

Hank recognized that their son was grappling with what it meant to be a young Black male. And in their ongoing conversations with him, both parents have tried to communicate the message that, "You don't have to try to be Black, you just are. And there's as many ways to be Black as there are people who are Black." Hank and Francis frequently seek out and maintain connections to other people of Color, in part to facilitate positive, same-race connections for their son that combat single stories about men of Color. These connections reflect their competence in the important areas of racial awareness, multicultural planning, and survival skills.

Michelle. Michelle and her husband have lived in the same white rural community for the last twenty years and both grew up in nearby communities. As a result, Michelle is familiar with the culture and history of the area. In addition to her parenting responsibilities, Michelle also works as a social worker and early childhood educational consultant. She is an advocate for youth in foster care and

facilitates strong connections among foster and adoptive networks. As a large blended, foster, and transracial adoptive family, Michelle identified feelings of onlyness in connection with these marked differences. Like Hank and Francis, Michelle enacts cultural competence in a variety of ways.

Prior to our second interview, Michelle had reached out to a support group which she described as "an empowerment program that …provides mentors and other opportunities to [women] of Color." Initiating connections such as these have become a regular practice for Michelle, one that she recognizes is critical for helping her children explore, connect with, and learn from others beyond their predominantly white community. She recognizes the importance of learning from people and communities of Color and building connections for her children of Color. Many of the connections she has facilitated for her children come through foster and adoptive communities. These enactments of cultural competence (Vonk, 2011) demonstrate Michelle's sense of racial awareness, multicultural planning, and knowledge about the need for her children to develop survival skills in the form of empowerment.

Michelle described an incident of racist tagging that had occurred at the elementary school and the subsequent lack of response or communication to families. "They dropped it," Michelle said, "not a memo or a phone call." When probed to discuss why she thought the school would choose not to communicate with families about such an incident, Michelle said:

> Probably several things. Some was probably to keep media out of it, and you know, negative attention towards the district and the school. I'm sure because that…they're often trying to do that. And… it's the same that principal…that said… 'we don't see color' and so, he obviously has his own personal view on color and racism and what that means so, I'm sure that has something to do with his...[response]. It's only speculation but I don't know that it would have raised a huge amount of concern.

Given her experience as parent, social worker, and early childhood educator, Michelle has developed forms of knowledge that allow her to recognize that approaches to teaching and learning that intentionally consider the "whole child" are critical. Michelle stated:

> We have to do better with teachers and with trainings… because [children] just need different perspectives…I think we've done the cookie

cutter model for far too long and…we think, these are the kids, and this is where they come from, this is who they are, and we're going to teach all the kids in the same way… and we're not seeing them as a person… They're a whole person, they're a whole being… it makes me crazy when they try to compartmentalize the kids into this area and this area and this area. They're all one. And you're not going to [learn] math, you know—at all—if you've got other stuff going on.

Michelle expressed her concern over the lack of inclusive curriculum and social and emotional curriculum. She lamented that, "athletics is always on their radar... they can find time to let kids out early [for] basketball championship games and…do fan buses, but we don't have social and emotional curriculum." In her recognition of her son's identity and experience as "the only" Black boy in his previous school, as well as the needs of her other children who she perceives as having unique social and emotional needs resulting from early trauma prior to adoption, Michelle has advocated for more inclusive curriculum and approaches to better nurture students' social and emotional growth. This advocacy, rooted in her parental cultural competence, resists practices and curriculum the reproduce hegemonic forms of knowledge and programs that disproportionately favor athletics over content.

Finally, regarding an incident where her daughter, Allie—one of the only students of Color and the only adoptee in her class—came home from school reporting that after complaining about having "the worst day" in class, another student said, "I'd imagine the day your mom gave you up for adoption was the worst day." Michelle's active response included the following:

We contacted the school and I said, 'Can we come in and do a little talk about foster care adoption?'...At first, Allie didn't want to be a part of it, but then she stood up at the podium with me and we talked about kids…coming into care and what that was like and what adoption was and how families are created through adoption.

Michelle has presented to schools about foster care and adoption several times throughout her children's schooling experiences. Like other acts of resistance, rooted in Michelle's cultural competence, this choice was precipitated by a harmful experience. Unlike many of the other participants who straddle additional minoritized identities pertaining to race

and sexual orientation, it is important to note that this act of resistance was received and supported by school staff. Michelle's resistance often comes in the form of proposing or *being* the change to curriculum, maintaining active involvement in parent-school committees, and like the other parents in this study, advocating and seeking out support and recognition of her children in their school communities.

Conclusion and Implications

The participants in this study represent a small, but important sample of the diversity that exists in predominantly white, rural spaces and among families of youth of Color. Applying a desire-based approach (Tuck, 2009), this study intends to add their collective voices and presence often missing from the extant literature. With this approach, it was my goal to explicitly name—not exploit or exoticize –the harm that participants experience while simultaneously centering their individual and collective wisdom. Furthermore, I draw on the spirit of Giroux et al. (1988) and Arenowitz and Giroux's (1993) radical theory of resistance, which outlines the need for a language of critique, coupled with a language of hope. My hope and desire as a researcher is that school staff and researchers might apply lessons learned from these participants who are courageous enough to share their painful stories and their intrinsic wisdom. I envision the application of these lessons as being potentially enacted through many of the avenues outlined in Jones and Nichols (2014) ecosystem framework.

First, as the findings demonstrate, parents frequently enact multiple forms of knowledge and cultural capital rooted in sources of Community Cultural Wealth and cultural competence. Often these enactments occur as parents voice their awareness, recognition, and support of their children. The findings included in this study are merely a fraction of the numerous incidents of harm that parents in this study reported enduring throughout their community and schooling experiences. However, rather than a sense of despair, participants reveal their capacities to engage in caring, consistent, knowledgeable, and pragmatic advocacy and support, while navigating experiences which often occur within a broader culture of perceived onlyness. These strengths illustrate the extraordinary "vision and wisdom of lived lives and communities" that Tuck (2009) names.

Next, parents in this study advocate and engage in repeated and often similar conversations in an effort to draw attention to a lack of cultural competence on the part of school personnel which often results in harmful and marginalizing practices within school settings. With regard to this point, school staff sometimes seem able to validate the perspectives and forms of knowledge that parents have, but in conversations about perceived racism, appear less able or willing. Results reveal that many of these interactions with school staff directly inflict harm on children—often in the form of humiliation. At other times, staff seem unable to recognize the intellectual and academic strengths of youth of Color.

Finally, Jeanne's youngest son offers an important example of how a lack of culturally competent faculty and staff, coupled with his position as the only student of Color in his class, leave little room for the burden of teaching and learning about racism to be shifted onto the shoulders of others who can empathize and understand his unique experiences. This potentially and unfairly places the burden on a child with the courage and wisdom to speak about his racialized experiences to be further only-ed in his position at the center of conversations about race. In his classroom and among his peers, this young boy, grappling with his own developing awareness of racialized differences, becomes the sole source of representation of the lived experiences of people of Color within this school context. This experience draws attention to the imminent need for adults to support youth of Color in educational spaces, in part, by sharing in the burden of unpacking the complexities of a racialized world.

Implications from this study invite further analysis pertaining to how youth of Color and their families navigate personal identity and experiences amidst the complexities of communities and schools with few reflections of themselves. Like the parents in Beverly Tatum's (1997) study, parents in this study are "concern[ed] with racism within the community…and cannot evaluate their child's academic experience without also considering their child's social experience in any particular school setting, and that both require the parents' careful monitoring" (p. 70). Additionally, Michelle, Hank, and Francis shed light on how, for (TRA) adoptees, identity development may be even more nuanced as they straddle multiple categories of onlyness. Finally, it highlights the need for more culturally competent practices in white, rural educational settings and the importance of recruitment and retainment of staff of Color.

Due to the small number of culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse students and families in predominantly white, rural communities, undue pressure is placed on families to advocate for their children and shed light on their exclusion and the symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1979) enacted on them. At times, this symbolic violence is related to a lack of cultural and racial awareness; other times, as the result of attitudes about normative family structures. Jeanne describes the frequent conversations around schooling as "exhausting," yet she and the other parents in this study persist. Unlike suburban or urban contexts where families of young people of Color may be more abundant, in the rural communities included in this study, a collective voice is not perceived or felt by parents and school staff. In turn, opportunities to invite and learn from the unique individual and collective Community Cultural Wealth and cultural competence are at greater risk of being missed—or worse, deemed inconsequential. Thus, incidents like those put forth in this study risk being relegated back to the margins and dismissed as a handful of parents who are being "hostile" or overreacting. Participants in Tatum's (1987) study echo this experience. This study intends to pull these stories together and amplify the collective knowledges woven throughout, in part, to reveal that these incidents are neither isolated nor infrequent.

Given the frequency of encounters rooted in cultural conflict (Milner, 2012), findings also reveal a dire need to increase positive schooling experiences for youth of Color, reduce the negative, and invite consideration about the extent to which early negative and marginalizing experiences in school carry over into middle and high school as young people attempt to navigate critical, formative identity years. For youth of Color, it is important to consider how these cumulative experiences influence their personal and academic identity—revealed through this study's participants as an already complex process—or serve to reinforce negative messages and experiences that students and their families have had in the past. Continued efforts to practice asset-based research that centers the voices of rural youth of Color would contribute to a broader understanding of their experiences in their schools and communities. Further implications underscore the importance of culturally competent and culturally responsive approaches to teaching and learning that seek to build

connection, deepen awareness, and reduce cultural conflict.

Finally, given the racial and cultural isolation prevalent in predominantly white, rural communities, the risk of whiteness being further centered, reinforced, reproduced, and empowered as the norm is plausible. Coupled with a small percentage of white families and families of Color willing and able to enact cultural competence and Community Cultural Wealth around the need for racial awareness and multicultural planning, school leaders willing to adopt culturally competent frameworks within their schools would lessen the burden on students of Color and their families, while also working to prepare majority-white students with attitudes, skills, and practices they will undoubtedly need to participate in a growingly diverse society and global community. Given that "the teacher workforce in…rural schools may lack the cultural knowledge to connect with and support the needs of … shifting and increasingly diverse student population[s]" (Peralta, 2013, p.229),

further research that examines efforts to integrate culturally competent practices in predominantly white school settings would greatly influence our understanding of how such frameworks are implemented and sustained. Part of this integration requires a much-needed commitment to understanding, considering, and inviting—rather than dismissing or resisting—the robust funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2013) and familial capital evidenced in this study as critical sites of cultural knowledge and strength that youth of Color and their families possess. To this aim, such efforts can provide insight into the possibilities of transformative school-community partnerships. Further research that also applies critical rural theory and theories of place-based identity and knowledges holds the potential to reveal how distinct individual and/or collective rural identity influences both the development and enactment of Community Cultural Wealth and cultural competence in predominantly white, rural contexts.

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About the Author:

Carie Ruggiano is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Contact: cruggiano@umass.edu

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