

Everyday Racism in Black Mothers' Lives: Implications for Social Work

–Crystal M. Hayes*, W. J. Casstevens***

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the impact of everyday racism on seven African American mothers, and how these experiences informed maternal parenting practices. It aims to give Black mothers a voice (seldom heard) in the literature on racism and parenting, by directly consulting them about what they do and why they do it. The first author is a Black woman and the second a White woman; both are mothers and social workers in the United States. Black mothers were asked to look at choices and obligations as parents through the lens of “everyday racism,” to add to social workers’ understanding of systemic racism and diversity.

Keywords: *Motherhood, Race, Ethnicity*

INTRODUCTION

Both Black and White scholars have deliberated about the racial meanings of motherhood and/ or the implications of race and class on motherhood. In the late 20th century, Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins noted that inherent in this work is an understanding that “motherhood cannot be analysed in isolation from its context” (Collins, 1999, p. 197). Even so, the experiences of mothers of colour are all too often marginalised in scholarly discourse on motherhood. Until the 1970s “analyses of Black motherhood were largely the province of men, both White and Black, and male perspectives on Black mothers prevailed” (Collins, p. 187).

* Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work, North Carolina State University, USA.

** Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, North Carolina State University, USA. Email: wjcasste@ncsu.edu

Women of colour, and specifically African American women, were under-represented and even misrepresented in discourse on families (St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). The first author of this exploratory study is a Black woman and the second a White woman; both are mothers and social workers. Following St. Jean and Feagin's lead, we use the term "everyday racism" to refer to experiences of routine, daily racism that African Americans can inevitably expect to face when living as persons of colour in the United States.

Motherhood has never been an uncomplicated expectation for most women, with its intersectionality and myriad of double standards. Still, women have found ways to negotiate the double standards this role involves. Some women have even come to accept that motherhood will always be exalted culturally while the actual work of mothering is something altogether different. For African American women, there was never the slightest pretense that their contributions as mothers were seen as something that should be valued in the world (Roberts, 1997). For this reason, it is important to differentiate between social power and racial prejudice.

Experiences of African American mothers can, in part, be understood through the invisibility of motherhood and race in America. Not all racism is visible; African American mothers have had to develop parenting styles and systems that counteract ways racism both disadvantages and devalues them as women and mothers.

To focus on numbers or population statistics decontextualises the experience of motherhood and fails to address the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and motherhood socially, historically and politically. How motherhood and society interact with one another is inextricably linked to how America organises itself around issues relating to race and by extension class. Twentieth century Black and White scholars examining the racial meanings of motherhood and/or the implications of race and class on motherhood (e.g., Collins, 1990; Davis, 1983; Edin, 1997; Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Roberts, 1997) made it clear that the construct of motherhood has never been "devoid of racial meaning" (Feldstein, 2000, p. 5). One inference that can be drawn from this is that motherhood is not an apolitical experience, and should not be treated as such.

In the late 20th century, higher education in the United States started to include and explore mothering, its meaning and/or lives of mothers (Apple & Golden, 1997). Within this burgeoning discourse, Collins (1999) observed that feminist theorising routinely minimised the importance of

race and class; Collins drew particular attention to this in the context of motherhood. St. Jean and Feagin (1998) stated more specifically “that contemporary Black women are often misrepresented, mischaracterised, and misrecognised in public and private discourse. Indeed they are burdened with a negative reputation shaped in part by social science publications since at least the early nineteenth century” (p. 5).

This study contributes to addressing such negative constructions, by sensitively exploring the depth and breadth of seven African American women’s mothering experiences. It further aims to (a) identify implications of everyday racism for these mothers, and (b) initiate dialog on how everyday racism might continue to inform the way that African American women understand roles, responsibilities and goals as parents. This qualitative exploration provides data that shed light on complicated and often untold stories. These stories tell of ways mothers of colour conscientiously parent and invisibly organise networks of support specifically attuned to historical patterns of racism still deeply embedded in American society. Study results inform social work practice on both micro and macro levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While there is relatively little post-Civil Rights era literature that addresses the ongoing and enduring legacy of racism in American society and its relationship to everyday experiences of people of colour, events in Ferguson, Missouri and elsewhere make it clear that racism is alive and existing in the United States. Brown, Carnoy, Currie, Duster, Oppenheimer, Schultz, and Wellman (2003) identify and challenge the dominant American ideologies that suggest: (a) there is not only an equal playing field – White Americans are now disadvantaged; (b) but for poor individual choices and/ or lack of personal accountability, racial inequality would not persist; and perhaps most powerful, (c) America is a colour-blind society. Issues of race and racism remain powerful in American society in large part because of such “colour blindness” which functions to maintain historical systems of White privilege and racial inequality rather than to challenge them.

Racism is intrinsic but often invisible within American culture, operating to a great extent silently and with profound social and political implications. Metaphorically speaking, racism is in the very air we breathe. If racism is “the smog in the air” (Tatum, 2004, p. 126), it is sometimes

visible and at other times invisible, but always present. Collins (1998) defined racism as “a system of unequal power and privilege in which human beings are divided into groups or races, with social rewards being unevenly distributed to groups based on their racial classification” (p. 280) and considered segregation to be “a fundamental organising principle of racism” (p. 280) in the United States. In other words, racism is not simply racial prejudice – racism also involves inequitable social systems of power and privilege that translate into institutional practices that advantage Whites over people of colour. Thus, racism can be considered routine in the United States, rather than something that happens only outside a context of good faith or good will (Brown *et al.*, 2003). This spills over into the social work practice arena. Jones, Hopson, and Gomes (2012), for example, link risk factors for negative mental health (and health) outcomes among African Americans with ongoing experiences of racial discrimination.

Race matters for women of colour in both Europe and the United States of America (Essed, 1991), and the work of feminist scholars of colour has supported this (e.g., Collins, 1999; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). African American children in America face the choice of either culturally assimilating in the dominant culture to the extent this is possible, or accepting the dominant group’s negative and stereotypical construct of themselves. In order to absorb enough of the dominant culture to successfully assimilate, children of colour have to reject much of their own cultural identity – something that is not a requirement for their White counterparts. Unfortunately, doing this can contribute to rejecting mothers of colour. This estrangement process between mother and child has gone unnoticed by much of society, is rarely talked about and generally neither understood nor addressed. Mothers of colour have developed, with varying degrees of success, strategies to help their children protect as much of their cultural identity as possible. Preserving some pieces of cultural identity is an important part of defending against the psychological violence of racism, and African American women have a special knowledge of racism to inform their efforts. They navigate and negotiate racism in ways that can appear subtle to outsiders, but are nonetheless visible in their interior lives as parents.

It can be argued that the way women of colour are impacted by race in their experiences as parents directly relates to the way American family life is shaped by the social value placed on traditional nuclear families. This model has long been outdated and does little to empower

most mothers (e.g., Abramovitz, 1988; Hareven, 1987; Masnick & Bane, 1980). Regardless of family type, parents have a defined role and/or set of responsibilities and goals that are important to parenting successfully. Bornstein (2001) identifies the high costs of inadequate parenting: “Children lacking appropriate care are exposed more frequently to illness, poor nutrition, stress, and unstimulating environments. The long-term costs can be measured in terms of school drop-outs, unemployment, delinquency, and the intergenerational perpetuation of poverty and low self-esteem” (p. 13). And while it is important to acknowledge cultural variations, aspects of parenting can be considered universal. Despite the diversity within the United States, dominant cultural values emphasize the individual. This is reflected in the expectation that children will learn to make their own decisions and that this, and the ability to establish separate individual existences, are important parenting outcomes. The nuclear family model can be considered an example of the American emphasis on individual over extended community or group. Mothers continue to absorb most of the daily responsibilities of parenting in this arena (Bornstein, 2001).

Contemporary mothers continue to parent under extreme pressures, with little evidence that they have been liberated from an idealised perfect mother construct that has no American parallel for fathers (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). This idealised standard of motherhood, while harmful for most women, nonetheless has privileged some – that is, White middle-class heterosexual mothers – over others (Birns & Hay, 1988). Twentieth century Black mothers were not used to extol virtues of family and motherhood in American culture (Roberts, 1997), which historically led to very different experiences for Black mothers and families, and required a different set of beliefs, instincts and goals (Billingsley, 1992). The American economic system has roots in slavery that have meant race, gender and class are inextricably linked for Black women with children. Lopez (1996) argued that law creates race and legal privilege in the context of citizenship. Historically in America throughout the twentieth century, anti-poverty programmes have privileged White over African American women (Piven, 2003). This legacy of slavery continues to structure how race privileges family and motherhood.

Black feminist scholars began to deconstruct dominant cultural family norms: Mullings (1997), for example, wrote: “Conceptualisations of family are at the core of conservative ideologies about culture, society, and domination as the Right seeks to establish hegemony over our

understanding of what the family is and its relationship to society” (p. 72). Privileges have been granted or denied to families based on whether they fit within certain mainstream norms that can be difficult for most families to maintain regardless of race (Coontz, 1993). Motherhood and maternity in America continue to be organised around a set of socio-political institutions, practices and principles linked to socio-cultural capital. Any discussion of institutional racism inevitably leads to conversation about social and cultural capital, which in turn has required conversation about race and the history of racial and gender oppression in the United States (Massey & Denton, 1993). Avoiding this conversation contributes to continuation of the deeply embedded institutional racism and sexism permeating the lives of single Black working mothers. Omolade’s (1986) summary remains relevant:

[I]n attempting to separate racial from economic inequality and blaming family pathology for Black people’s condition, current ideology obscures the system’s inability to provide jobs, decent wages, and adequate public services for the Black poor. And in a racist-patriarchal society, the effects of the system’s weaknesses fall most heavily on Black women and children (p. 3).

The experiences of African American mothers are tied to stratified social status along racial and gender lines, and parenting thus becomes an intensified mixture of love, will and endurance.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study developed to address the following research question: What are the implications of everyday racism in the lives of Black mothers? Data collection for this Institutional Review Board approved project occurred in partial fulfillment of the first author’s graduate degree; the study used a flexible research design to inform and guide the participant interview process (Hayes, 2006). A face-to-face meeting obtained demographic, quantitative participant information. An unstructured interview followed. Participants were asked: (a) to describe their daily or weekly schedule of activities involving their lives as parents, and (b) in these daily or weekly routines, if they had to pinpoint how issues of racism factor in, how would they say this happens and why? Subsequent exploratory prompts included the following questions: (a) where is racism the greatest problem?, (b) where is racism the least problem?, and (c) what are your strategies to manage these issues? An additional question

that developed was: If you had to describe other experiences of everyday racism in your life as a parent, how would you describe it? This portion of the interview was audio-taped. Audio-tapes were transcribed and then coded based on relevant terms and concepts from the literature. A content analysis was completed to identify themes.

SAMPLE

The seven women who participated in this study self-identified as African American, but because of the rich, broad racial and ethnic backgrounds of many African American women they may also have considered themselves of mixed race with one or more racial/ethnic groups within the African Diaspora spectrum (Hayes, 2006; Okpewho, Davies, & Mazrui, 1999). African American women were selected as a focus for research because (a) they offer a vantage point from which to talk about racism that speaks directly to an historical experience of racism in the United States and its ongoing social policies and programmes, and (b) African American mothers continue to be the “face” of the image used to justify the political Right’s attacks on social welfare programmes which have sweeping consequences for women and children generally.

To be eligible for this study, participants had to: (a) identify as Black or African American and be over 18 years of age, and (b) have biological children/ infants who either lived with the participant, or who had lived with the participant through the course of their childhood. Participants consisted of a snowball sample from the Pioneer Valley region of western Massachusetts recruited through flyers, academic email list-serves, and word-of-mouth. The goal was to recruit participants from diverse socio-economic strata and the women participating in the study came from backgrounds that ranged from poor working class to upper middle class.

Participants ranged in age between late twenties and late forties, with a mean age of 39.1 years. In total, they had twelve children, eight boys and four girls; each family had between one and three children. Children ranged in age between three and twenty-three years old, with a mean age of 12.5 years. Four of the mothers reported all their children lived with them full-time. One mother reported her child lived with her three-fourth of the time; one mother reported two of her three children lived with her full-time, while the other was at college out of state; and one mother reported none of her children had lived with her full-time for the past two years, instead they were living with their father (her ex-husband)

and visiting her on weekends. Five of the seven participants graduated from college, one participant had some college, and one did not. Of the five who graduated from college, one had a doctorate degree, two had master's degrees, and another two were enrolled in either a graduate or doctoral programme. Overall, participants' total average annual income was 45,900 dollars. Two of the seven participants did not have regular incomes, and one of these received public assistance intermittently.

Unanticipated difficulties were encountered with recruitment of participants from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Although the interviewer/first author is an African American woman, potential participants appeared reluctant and/or suspicious about her level of education and role as researcher. These individuals asked questions about the interviewer's age, whether or not she lived "in the neighborhood," etc. The interviewer responded to questions with careful and thorough transparency, in order to assuage fears and address confidentiality concerns. Two mothers with low-incomes agreed to participate in the study and two did not.

RESULTS

The multiple within group identities that were encountered served as powerful reminders that in some instances it was class more than race that represented privilege, power and authority. Nonetheless, all participants spoke towards how racism not only impacts the way they parent, it also impacts how they understand and meet their obligations as parents. When asked whether "before this study, have you ever contemplated issues of racism in your life as an African American mother" one participant, a mother of three boys, responded:

I definitely have, because I have three sons, and so raising African American boys in America you contemplate racism a lot. I think that there were definitely other experiences in my life with racism, but they became more intense as I became a mother and more and more about those issues with the police, with the teacher-my sons go to mixed school, I am always concerned about whether or not the teachers were being fair. They have very few African-American or other teachers of colour, so I would say that I did and still do.

Participants all expressed their awareness that issues of racism cannot be overlooked when parenting Black children in America.

Mothers spoke candidly about what it means to be a mother of colour and how racial identity, as impacted by racism, can in turn impact parenting styles and experiences. They described their concerns for their children in several ways, including (a) their own internalised racism, (b) the American myth of equality, (c) issues with safety, (d) institutional racism, (e) appearance and respectability, and (f) the importance of renewal and self-care. One mother initially rejected the idea that race or racism was a consideration, stating “No [race doesn’t matter] I am going to stand my ground; wherever I go I am going to stand my ground, with my kids or without them. I really don’t worry about it too much.” This same mother subsequently described a meeting with her son’s school bus driver, the school principal, and another school staff member, after her son alleged that he was hit by the driver. Shortly thereafter, her son was abruptly removed from the bus route, forcing the mother to live apart from her son so that he could be within walking distance of school:

So I went to the school and had a meeting with these three White people; three White people [principal, safety officer, and bus driver] and just me. They were like “well do you think your son fabricated the story a little bit?” and I was like “no he wouldn’t, that’s not like him to lie, especially as serious as something like that. He knows how serious that is and he’s not going to lie” and they were like “well we had an incident one time where the kid was crying and lying to his mother and when we all sat down it was different” and I said “this is not that incident, and I believe everything my son said. Obviously my son felt like he got hurt if he comes home telling me that he got pushed and it hurt, so she did something to him.” So now they say he is not supposed to be on the bus because he lives 2.5 miles away from the school, so he’s a walker, so that whole year my son had to walk. I had to let him stay with my mom so he could walk to school, because my mom lives closer to school.

This mother’s initial rejection of racism being a consideration might possibly be understood through deconstructing the intersections of race and class. This low income, working-class mother may have less of an internalised sense of entitlement than her middle-class counterparts – who also struggle with entitlement, but are able to compensate for this through their class privileges.

A middle-class participant, when asked if she thought about or contemplated issues of racism prior to participating in this study, responded:

I think that Black women are not exalted in motherhood. So really the question is asking me what does it mean to me to be a Black woman in

this culture. I think we are complicated and complex individuals, because we have to juggle and assimilate so many disparate truths and realities. We walk the line in so many different areas of having to create a sense of hopefulness about ourselves, and so this deep legacy of faith that is our culture help me and I think many of the other Black women that I am inspired by and that I work with all the time. And we live with the reality that life is an unjust and unequal playing field/laboratory. So to me the challenge is how to stay hopeful, how to create choice. I always go back to the Eleanor Roosevelt quote about how no one can make you inferior without your consent. So the notion of consent and choice and access and taking risks to live outside of boxes is part courage and acting in the face of fear. I think that Black women in this country are courageous beings, and the fact that we act on our own behalf to a large extent, independent of a lot of resources speaks to our resilience and our resourcefulness. It's parenting out of the box.

All participants echoed, directly and indirectly, fears regarding what messages and/or belief systems they might have internalised about being a person of colour and how this may have translated into a lack of entitlement.

Participants spoke about how these internalised messages might impact their ability to parent. For example, one mother of a daughter expressed that: ... as a Black parent, feeling entitled enough to stand up for her or advocate for her in any instances that she might need it with the educational system here in the United States, that has raised for me questions of race and racism, and I have wondered to myself what I would do if something happened to her, how I would stand up for her, how I would address that, how I would fight on her behalf.

This mother added, when asked if she believed that being a mother of colour or a Black mother left her more vulnerable to feeling insecure about her ability to advocate, "... absolutely, before now I don't think I consciously thought about this, but now I am realising that it's true." She was ambivalent when asked about whether class mitigated this somewhat for her, as a professional woman with an advanced degree:

I would say yes and no. Yes, in the sense of the way that I have internalised not enough of a sense of entitlement. I worry that I will feel more cautious about advocating on her behalf or fighting for her, but I also have an immigrant mother who fought very hard for me and always made sure I was in the right school, and people treated me well-me and my sister-and so in a way that is a very high standard to live up to, and

so I have some internal question about whether I am going to be able to advocate for my daughter that well. That is the “yes” part in terms of me worrying. The “no” part is that what I have to balance is that I have a class position, which I think enables me to place her in schools in which she might have less trouble, it gives me a certain authority as a professor, so it gives me an immediate status and authority that I can kind of ride off of in the interaction with the teacher in a way that I might not be able to if I had another occupation. So in that sense I think I don't worry as much.

Implicit here is the idea that internalised racism is not simply an external threat – it has the potential to be passed down inter-generationally. Yet another participant, aware of the burdens of internalised racism and how important it was to monitor her own behaviours around her son, stated “... I want to make sure that I am not taking away from who he can be or not [by] adding my own insecurities in.”

Mothers were very aware of and sensitive to societal stereotypes and social pressures that involved Blackness. One mother spoke candidly about what she had done to fight back these challenges:

I think it's sort of hard because you sort of do what you do. You take the actions that you feel are necessary to strengthen your child or support your child. And a lot of it is because of the system that we live under. So part of that was also about literature and reading. When she was little I had a good collection of stories that had strong characters that were female and had children of colour-characters that were African-American and were strong central characters. You have to look for that.

For these Black mothers, one of the most insidious aspects of racism that they confronted as parents was having to teach their children that there is a painfully unequal playing field that rewards Blacks and Whites differentially. The participant who was a professor stated:

It's terribly hard knowing that you have to constantly have to teach in this dichotomous way, i.e. teach him that he can have anything, do anything, you are valuable and worthwhile, if you work hard and apply yourself, you know, that's the American myth; but then I have to couch that with people are not going to treat you fairly, you will be dealing with people's bias, you will have to learn how to respond effectively to those biases and not internalise that, etc. So the biggest threat is to his sense of self, his self-perception, and his sense of self-worth. For people of colour in this country, the internal struggle of having to feel worthwhile is the biggest struggle and threat.

This mother went on to note that “... for people of colour the limits that people impose upon you are much more restrictive, more painful,

more insidious, and more confining, so I don't have a strategy for that yet except to talk about it."

These mothers consciously and deliberately examined issues of racism and helped their children learn to look at these analytically. The following two quotes exemplify this:

I think it's not hard to contemplate issues of racism as a woman of colour as an African-American woman, and certainly as a mother you look out for your kids; you are trying to protect and at the same time educate them about what this power structure will do to them without stealing their childhood. ...you know you can't walk around a store without somebody following you and thinking you are going to steal. I told my children when you walk into a store if anyone makes you feel uncomfortable you don't have to spend your money there, you have some autonomy over what you do for your own life. And you can't make that contingent on society, because society is not changing fast enough.

Nonetheless, participants were also very aware of the pain they experienced when their children were impacted in a personal way and hurt by the cruel reality of American racism. A middle-class mother shared:

Oh, I felt rage! I was enraged! I was angry often and for a long time, and that anger is something really hard to sit with, because it was just like a fist in my stomach that was clenched, and I was sick with rage and felt like I couldn't do anything about it at that stage of the game...

The mothers struggled with their own feelings. Three participants spoke directly about how they practice self-care, which ranged from spiritual practices to the use of their community for emotional and psychological support.

Safety and the necessity of learning to read the environment, was yet another racism-related issue these mothers raised:

You have to recognise where you are, what you are dealing with, when you need to keep your mouth shut, and when it is important to take a stand, because it's not always important that you be doing it your entire life every day. It's too much on the psyche.

Each mother had her own way of thinking through ways to teach this knowledge so that their children are empowered with the tools necessary to protect themselves. Some mothers used examples experienced together as a family. One mother pointed out to her children why it was important for them to behave well in public and the dangers they might face if they were not careful. All mothers gently taught their children ways to safely negotiate power and/or authority, when messages in society encourage

[White] youth to question power—a middle class value that rewards critical thinking—while at the same time Black and Brown youth are disproportionately arrested, incarcerated, and sentenced to longer prison terms than their White counterparts. Too many Black mothers do not get to see their son's twentieth birthday. Parental responsibilities in response to the harsh realities of racism cannot be overstated. The Black mothers in this study all said that it was imperative their children carefully appear acceptable to the public because anything less could risk their physical safety, as well as their opportunities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Experiences of everyday racism informed these seven African American women's understanding of roles, responsibilities and goals as parents. It is unlikely that this is unique to these women. Rather, it seems likely that mothers of colour in America commonly organise social and familial networks of support as they face patterns of racism still present in American society. Mothers in this study reflect openly about concerns relating to internalised racism, America's myth of equality and its conflict with racial reality, and safety issues. Safety issues include navigating the immediate environment, as well as legal and educational systems. Presenting an appearance of respectability for themselves and their children, along with nurturing self-care, can help mothers manage these issues.

Black mothers' continuing experiences of racism are linked with how they interpret and manage the roles, responsibilities and obligations of parenting and motherhood. Study participants spoke from a range of perspectives on relationships between internalised racism and parenting, and coping responses. It is important to hear these mothers' voices—because in America, race still matters. As Ella Baker said in 1964, “Until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons, becomes as important to the rest of the country as the killing of white mothers' sons, we who believe in freedom cannot rest.” Twenty-first century events across the United States and the “Black Lives Matter” movement demonstrate that Baker's Civil Rights era words remain relevant.

What do these narratives mean to us as social workers and for social work practice? Some social workers have lived experience that resonates with these mothers' stories. Other social workers do not. It is vital that social work professionals delve beneath the surface of social stereotypes surrounding Black motherhood in order to understand the potential impact

and accompanying dehumanisation these stereotypes embody, for both client and colleagues.

Black mothers are often negatively perceived by society and its institutions. These include the mental health, child welfare, legal and educational systems within which social workers practice. Mindrup, Spray and Lamberghini-West (2011) note that social work students report higher levels of racial and/or ethnic exposure than do their clinical psychology counterparts. The narratives previously discussed can contribute to further increasing this exposure, and assist with developing students' ability to empathise with and advocate for clients. At a macro level of practice, advocacy efforts can help to shift stereotypical, stigmatising boundaries and their perceptual underpinnings.

The stories shared by these seven women can also help inform micro level practitioners about how to more compassionately support Black mothers in their parenting efforts. In clinical practice, one important way social workers can do this is by becoming active listeners, thereby engaging in genuinely client-centred and client-driven practice. African American mothers negotiate with, and struggle against, systemic pressures not always easily recognised or identified by those outside this constituency. A willingness to explore these pressures, combined with a careful understanding of the complexities of racism and its intersectionality across gender, class, and community, is needed. The authors hope this exploratory study contributes to social worker understanding of and sensitivity to intersectionality by promoting Black mothers as experts on their own lived experience, in order to increase practitioner understanding of racism and diversity in America.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks go to Fred Newdom, and posthumously to Murial Poulin, as well as to the women who shared their stories.

REFERENCES

- Abramovitz, M. (1988). *Regulating the lives of women: Social welfare policy from colonial times to the present*. Boston: South End Press.
- Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W., Castaneda, C., Hackman, H. W... & Zuniga, X. (Eds). *Readings for diversity and social justice* (3rd ed). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Apple, R. D., & Golden, J. (1997). *Mothers and motherhood: Readings in American history*. Ohio: Ohio State University Press.
- Billingsley, A. (1992). *Climbing Jacob's ladder: The enduring legacy of African-American families*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Birns, B., & Hay, D. F. (1988). *The different faces of motherhood*. New York: Plenum.
- Bornstien, M. H. (2001). Refocusing on parenthood. In J. C. Westman (Ed.), *Parenthood in America*. (5-19). Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Brown, M. K., Carnoy, M., Currie, E., Duster, T., Oppenheimer, D., Schultz, M., & Wellman, D. (2003). *Whitewashing race: The myth of a color-blind society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Collins, P. H. (1990). Black women and motherhood. In *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment. Perspectives on Gender, Volume II*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, Inc.
- Collins, P. H. (1998). *Fighting words: Black women and the search for justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Collins, P. H. (1999). Will the "Real" [sic] mother please stand up?: The logic of eugenics and American national family planning. In A. E. Clarke & V. L. Olesen (Eds.), *Revisioning women, health, and healing: Feminist, cultural, and technoscience perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Coontz, S. (1993). *The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap*. New York: Basic Books.
- Davis, A. Y. (1983). *Women, race, and class*. New York: Random House.
- Douglas, S. J., & Michaels, M. W. (2004). *The mommy myth: The idealization of motherhood and how it has undermined women*. New York: Free Press.
- Edin, K. (1997). *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low wage work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Edin, K., & Kefalas, M. (2005). *Promises I can keep: Why poor women put motherhood before marriage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Essed, P. (1991). *Understanding everyday racism: An interdisciplinary theory*. London: Sage Publications.
- Feldstein, R. (2000). *Motherhood in Black and White: Race and sex in American liberalism, 1930-1965*. New York: Cornell University Press.

- Hareven, T. K. (1987). Historical analysis of the family. In M. B. Sussman & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.) *Handbook of marriage and the family*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Hayes. (2006). *Everyday racism in the lives of Black mothers: Implications for clinical social work*. Northhamptom, MA: Smith College School of Social Work.
- Jones, L. V., Hopson, L. M., & Gomes, A. (2012). Intervening with African-Americans: Culturally specific practice considerations. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity*, 21(1), 37-54. DOI:10.1080/015313204.2012.647389
- Klein, D. M., & White, J. M. (1996). *Family theories an introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lopez, I. H. (1996). *White by law: The legal construction of race*. New York: New York University Press.
- Masnick, G., & Bane, M. J. (1980). *The nation's families: 1960-1990*. Boston: Auburn House.
- Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mindrup, R. M., Spray, B. J., & Lamberghini-West, A. (2011). White privilege and multicultural counseling competence: The influence of field of study, sex, and racial/ethnic exposure. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 20(1), 20-38, DOI:10.1080/15313204.2011.545942
- Moraga, C., & Anzaldúa, G. (Eds.)(1981). *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color*. New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.
- Mullings, L. (1997). Perspectives on the American family. In *On Our Own Terms: Race, Class, and Gender in the Lives of African American Women*. (72). New York: Routledge.
- Okpewho, I., Davies, C. B., & Mazrui, A. A. (Eds.) (1999). *The African diaspora: African origins and new world identities*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Omolade, B. (1986). *It's a family affair: The real lives of Black single mothers*. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press.
- Piven, F. F. (2003). Why welfare is racist. In S. F. Schram, J. Soss, R. C. Fording (Eds.) *Race and the politics of welfare reform*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- Roberts, D. (1997). *Killing the Black body: Race, reproduction, and the meaning of liberty*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- St. Jean, Y., & Feagin, J. R. (1998). *Double Burden: Black women and everyday racism*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Tatum, B. (1997). Defining racism: Can we talk. In *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* (pp.3-14). NY: Basicbooks.