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An Analysis of YouTube Content on African American Parenting In the Face of Community Violence

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AN ANALYSIS OF YOUTUBE CONTENT ON AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTING IN

THE FACE OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

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Dissertation Approval

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by _La-Rhonda Harmon_

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is

acceptable in both scholarship and literary quality.

Committee Members' Signatures:

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Abstract

This qualitative study analyzed YouTube video content on the discussion about African American parenting in the face of community violence. The study investigated if conversations about African American parenting changed after the killing of Trayvon Martin, which occurred on February 26, 2012. Ten videos recorded before Trayvon Martin's death and 20 after were selected and analyzed. Transcripts were coded for emerging themes using grounded-theory research design. Several themes emerged in the videos recorded before and after Martin's death. Themes related to African American beliefs about parenting and acculturation emerged from the videos recorded before Martin's death. Themes related to African American families and racial discrimination emerged in the videos recorded after Martin's death. Several subthemes emerged and are discussed in the Results and Discussion sections.

Keywords: Trayvon Martin, community violence, parenting, African Americans, children, and adolescents, treatment

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Homicide is an unexpected and unforeseen death that is both violent and devastating (Bucholz, 2002; Rynearson, 1996). The murder of a child is one of the most traumatic events that parents can encounter (Armour, 2003; Lohan & Murphy, 2006). Likewise, losing a child to violence impacts marital, familial, social, and spiritual functioning (Davis, Wortman, Lehman, & Silver, 2000; Murphy, Clark Johnson, & Lohan., 2003). African Americans, in particular, are disproportionately affected by homicide loss (Johnson, 2010; Sanders-Phillips, 1997). However, few studies have investigated surviving mothers' grieving processes (Burke, Neimeyer, & McDevitt-Murphy, 2010; Johnson, 2010). Subsequently, the grieving process of African American parents whose children were violently murdered is not well understood (Bailey, Hannays-King, Clarke, Lester, & Velasco, 2013). In one Canadian study, researchers found that traumatic stress prompted by the loss of a child to gun violence diminished African American parents' resiliency (Bailey, Sharma, & Jubin, 2013). In addition to the vicarious experience or possible threat of losing one's child, African American parents of low socioeconomic status contend with various stressors that interfere with their overall functioning (Son & Bauer, 2010).

Stressors, such as the prevalence of poverty, violent crimes, and financial challenges, compromise African American parents' abilities to ensure their children's overall well-being (Dahl, Ceballo, & Huerta, 2010). Generally, a direct correlation exists between crime and inner-city communities (Boggess & Hipp, 2010; Chamberlain & Hipp, 2015). In reality, many inner-city communities are characterized by escalating unemployment rates, high crime, single-mother households, and deteriorating institutional resources, such as schools and community centers (McLoyd, 1998). Furthermore, frequent gunfire, disruptive activities, drug dealing, and prostitution are named among myriad problems inner-city families endure (Dahl et al.,

2010). As such, many parents in these environments express profound fear regarding their children's safety and well-being (Dahl et al., 2010).

Despite their fears, African American parents who live on marginal incomes in crime-infested areas are often resilient amid apparently hopeless living conditions (Baker & Bell, 1999). Traditionally, these parents have relied upon family, fictive kinship, collective unity, religion, spirituality, a strong sense of community, and shared philosophical values based on many enduring aspects of their African heritage (Boyd-Franklin, 2013). Many African American parents have found social media to be an outlet for expressing their concerns, connecting with other community members, and seeking healing.

YouTube is a modern-day media outlet providing access to various sources of information, ideas, and messages, including the stories of African American parents who have lost their children to gun violence. Specifically, this social-media outlet has documented content about many violent acts and captured a national outcry against those viewed as egregious and unjust.

One example of such an act was the murder of African American youth, Trayvon Martin. On February 26, 2012, neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin after an altercation. This travesty sparked a national conversation about race relations and prompted national leaders, including President Obama, to address racial profiling ("From Trayvon Martin to Walter Scott," 2015). Further igniting an already heated debate, Zimmerman, who insisted that he acted in self-defense, was acquitted of second-degree murder and manslaughter in July 2013.

In general, public opinion polls indicate that many African Americans viewed the death of Trayvon Martin as a race-related incident (Gabbidon & Jordan, 2013; Pew Research Center,

2013). Sha'Kema and Thomas (2015) conducted an exploratory online investigation to examine African Americans' reactions to the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin. Many individuals self-identifying as African American posited that race played a role in Martin's death (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015). The Pew Research Center (2013) conducted a poll that suggested that 78% of African Americans viewed race relations as an important issue to address, whereas only 28% of Caucasians felt the same way. These findings imply that Trayvon Martin's death was more meaningful for African Americans than for other ethnic groups. Furthermore, both contemporary and historical African American experiences may have led African Americans to view Trayvon's Martin's death as a vicarious cataclysmic event—witnessing racism within one's racial or ethnic group (Helms, Nicolas, & Green, 2010). Although this explanation relates to being an actual bystander, the media coverage regarding Martin's death appears to have made African Americans virtual bystanders (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015). Media coverage of Martin's sudden and painful death also triggered emotional reactions to racism (Carter et al., 2013). Consequently, many African Americans experienced some level of emotional distress given they identified Martin as a member of their ethnic group (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015). African Americans' emotional distress was manifested through anger and a sense of anxiety. Acknowledging this emotional distress is important, for it has implications for mental health (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015). Given the context of Martin's death, anger may be regarded as a normative emotional response to an apparent injustice (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015). Generally, anger is a common reaction to discrimination (Carter, Pieterse, & Smith, 2008; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003). More specifically, anger has significant implications for African Americans as a marginalized group (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015). While they

experience this anger, African Americans are often unable to express it openly, possibly causing an anger inhibition paradox (Steffen, McNeilly, Anderson, & Sherwood, 2003).

Along with suppressing their anger, many African Americans presented with anxiety as characterized by a reduced sense of safety (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015). After all, a random individual gunned down Trayvon Martin. Understandably, random violent acts compel people to pursue a sense of safety, experience a heightened sense of danger (Harrell, 2000), and be in a constant state of hypervigilance (Carter & Forsyth, 2010). To clarify, worry, nervousness, and concerns about potential harm are characteristic of hypervigilance (Carter & Forsyth, 2010). Presenting symptoms of anxiety, however, is not necessarily a negative phenomenon for African Americans.

Undoubtedly, anxiety may be more reflective of a healthy cultural paranoia, which isdefined as the expansion of paranoid reactions in response to historical and contemporary racism (Grier & Cobbs, 2000). Research suggests that perceived racism leads to self-reported nonclinical paranoia (Combs et al., 2006). Additional research indicates that nonvictims, those who are members of the social identity group of the hate crime victim, tend to feel unsafe (Noelle, 2002). This research implies that social identity may have impacted how African Americans emotionally responded to traumatic homicides, such as the murder of Trayvon Martin (Sha'Kema & Thomas, 2015).

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Literature Review

Trauma Among African Americans

The word *trauma* can be traced to the Greek word for "wound" (Figley, 2013). Trauma can be defined as an emotional state of distress and strain resulting from remembrances of an unusual, catastrophic experience that devastated the survivor's sense of invulnerability to harm (Figley, 2013). Most often, a catastrophe precedes a traumatic event. Catastrophes are classified as an unexpected event or series of events that is abrupt, devastating, and often dangerous, either to oneself or significant others (Figley, 2013). The behavioral and emotional responses to trauma generate a traumatic stress reaction, which can be defined as a set of conscious and unconscious actions and emotions linked to coping with stressors of the catastrophe and the period immediately following (Figley, 2013).

Regrettably, murder is a recurrent catastrophe that plagues many African American communities. In the United States alone, approximately 15,000 African Americans were murdered in 2007 (U.S. Department of Justice, 2008). Notably, homicide is a leading cause of death for young adults and characteristically causes survivors to struggle following this traumatic loss. As recently as 2006, African Americans were 5.8 times more likely to be victims of homicide than were Caucasians (Heron et al., 2009), thus showing that a disproportionate number of homicide victims in the United States are African American (McDevitt-Murphy, Neimeyer, Burke, Williams, & Lawson, 2012). Understanding ways in which African Americans experience their grief, loss, and trauma is therefore an important public-health concern (McDevitt-Murphy et al., 2012). Equally important is an understanding of how poverty, racism, and oppression exacerbate homicide bereavement African Americans endure (Holloway, 2003; Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008; Rosenblatt & Wallace, 2005;). Largely, loss by homicide can

negatively affect survivors' emotional states, and lead to adverse outcomes, such as

posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), complicated grief, and depression (Rynearson &

McCreery, 1993). Regrettably, homicide and its traumatic effects are prevalent in many African

American communities.

A general definition of trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing experience, such as

the death of a child (Google Dictionary, n. d.). Traumatic events overwhelm the nervous system

in response to real or perceived danger (Smith, 2016). Nevertheless, not everyone perceives

danger the same way (Smith, 2016). For instance, a parent's raised fist may frighten one child

and make another one laugh. The laughing child may realize the parent is joking while the

frightened child may experience the threat of danger (Smith, 2016). In this way, threatening

behaviors are not a determinant for trauma. Instead, the perception of threat causes trauma

(Smith, 2016). Generally, individuals respond to trauma through physical distance, emotional

withdrawal, freezing, or aggression (Smith, 2016).

Generally, African Americans contend with historical trauma, which is an example of

intergenerational trauma (Jones, n. d.). This type of trauma targets a specific group of people;

hence, family members who have not directly been exposed to traumatic events can still feel its

effects generations later (Jones, n. d.). In recent years, Dr. Joy DeGruy (2017) coined the

theoretical explanation, posttraumatic slave syndrome (PTSS). While not scientifically studied

to date, PTSS posits that slavery, systemic racism, oppression, Jim Crow laws, and mass

incarceration have led to multigenerational maladaptive behaviors (DeGruy, 2017). African

American parents often perpetuate the syndrome by unintentionally indoctrinating their children

with maladaptive cognitions about themselves (DeGruy, 2017). Of note, PTSS has been

exacerbated by the emergence of welfare laws, which forced fathers out of homes (Jones, n. d.).

Also, it has led to a diminished educational and industrial system, increased crime and family disintegration, and reduced access to jobs and middle-class status (Jones, n. d.). Correspondingly, the advent of the *hyperghetto*—extreme poverty and underprivileged groups— led to drug-infested communities and a concentrated police presence (Jones, n. d.). Equally disturbing, the mid-1980s introduced an institutionalized generation caused by what has been termed the "crack era" (Jones, n. d.). Under those circumstances, this element of internalized oppression and learned helplessness debilitated many African American families (Jones, n. d.). In contrast to this internalized oppression and learned helplessness, research has found that historical trauma experienced by African Americans has played a role in their growth and resilience. To explain, research has shown that members from historically traumatized populations have been vulnerable to grief, loss of spirituality, fear, worthlessness, anger, and aggression (Danzer, Rieger, Schubmehl, & Cort, 2016).   Nevertheless, historical trauma has strengthened African Americans' resolve to grow and persevere through oppression. Traditionally, such factors as religion and spirituality, racial and cultural pride, and racial socialization have been instrumental in building African American resilience (American Psychological Association, 2008; Brown & Tylka, 2011; Stevens-Watkins, Sharma, Knighton, Oser, & Leukefeld, 2014). Despite this resilience, historical trauma has had a negative effect on African Americans, especially in the face of community violence.

How can historical trauma affect African Americans, especially African American mothers? Primarily, the deterioration of the African American family has been noted as an effect of historical trauma and a cause of more contemporary exponential consequences. To illustrate, a civil-rights litigator and legal scholar, Michelle Alexander (2012), wrote a book entitled, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Jim Crow is a

metaphor for the mass incarceration of African American men. Realistically, homicide has contributed to the prevalence of mass incarceration among African Americans.

  Homicide. Rates of homicide among African Americans surpass those of other racial or ethnic groups in the United States (Sharpe & Boyas, 2011). In 2007, 14,180 homicide victims were reported, and 48% of the victims were African American (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008), although they are underrepresented in the overall population. Although these statistics indicate the disparity in the rate of homicides among African Americans, they neglect to communicate the depth of trauma experienced by others, including surviving mothers (Sharpe & Boyas, 2011). As such, studies have shown that homicide often results in shock, anger, shame, powerlessness, loneliness, grief, and posttraumatic stress responses for surviving mothers (Amick-McMullan, Kilpatrick, & Resnick, 1991; Burgess, 1975; Figley, 1989; Masters, Friedman, & Getzel, 1988; Rinear, 1988; Rynearson & McCreery, 1993; Spungen, 1998). Of note, studies have shown that homicide can be psychologically detrimental to surviving family members (Sharpe & Boyas, 2011). Sadly, numerous African American families contend with other acts of community threats.

  Community threats. Threats are prevalent in African American communities. Violence ranges broadly from actions producing no injury to armed assaults resulting in death (Felson & Painter-Davis, 2012). Though many offenders cause severe damage, most of them engage only in trivial violence (Felson & Painter-Davis, 2012). Felson and Painter-Davis (2012) posited that considering the severity of violence is essential to understanding group differences. In fact, substantial differences exist across communities in violence involving weaponry, injuries, and death (Felson & Painter-Davis, 2012). Unfortunately, African Americans are more likely than other races to be victims of gun violence and unarmed violence (Felson & Pare, 2010). Felson

and Painter-Davis (2012) asked why incidents involving African American victims and offenders are more likely to include weapons. Furthermore, they focused on "adversity effects," such as a threat toward an individual with whom one is in conflict (Felson & Pare, 2010). Felson and Painter-Davis (2012) found that African Americans maintain a street code that encourages young people to assume an aggressive stance to evade victimization and to respond to threat with aggression (Anderson, 2000). Even African American youth who were less inclined to use violence tended to follow this street code (Felson & Painter-Davis, 2012). Of note, aggressive behaviors are adaptive and preemptive because of the close proximity to potentially dangerous circumstances (Felson & Painter-Davis, 2012). Essentially, many African American youth do not uphold internalized attitudes toward violence. Rather, their encounters with violence merely result from being members within a violent subculture (Felson & Painter-Davis, 2012). Hence, the need to arm oneself with a weapon amid community threats is plausible.

Justifiably, to counteract the threat in African American communities, many residents may carry arms for protection (Nielsen, Martinez, & Rosenfeld, 2005). Nonetheless, acting aggressively and carrying weapons have considerable consequences that are difficult to predict (Anderson, 2000). At times, aggression deters violent acts while at other times it elicits violence and escalates the use of weapons (Felson & Painter-Davis, 2012). Consequently, the escalation of aggression and use of weapons produces arms races. As such, many African Americans arm themselves with guns and other weapons to protect themselves from those who possess them as well (Blumstein, 1995). Notwithstanding, gun violence is not the only vice that has contributed to an oppositional culture.

Intrinsically, an oppositional culture in African American communities has emerged because of traumatic events and the escalation of racial tension within African American

communities. Police brutality, senseless murders, and increased arrests of African American

men are just a few traumatic events that occur in African American communities across the

nation. Hence, during a speech to the Congressional African American Caucus, President

Barack Obama expressed:

> Too many young men of color…feel targeted by law enforcement, guilty of walking
> while African American, or driving while African American, judged by stereotypes that
> fuel fear and resentment and hopelessness. We know that, statistically, in everything
> from enforcing drug policy to applying for the death penalty to pulling people over, there
> are significant racial disparities. (MacDonald, 2016, p. 11)

Given this racial tension that is sweeping across the United States, African Americans have

developed both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. Although viewed as a maladaptive

coping strategy, African Americans understandably perceive a need to sustain an image of

toughness, respect, and self-sufficiency. Specifically, guns have come to symbolize these

aspects of the culture in African American neighborhoods (Warner, 2007). As such, a pervasive

lack of faith in the police and criminal-justice system to protect community residents exists

(Warner, 2007). This lack of faith has caused many African Americans to take matters into their

own hands and to protect themselves against civil injustices (Warner, 2007). Furthermore,

ethnographic studies of inner-city violence have identified several neighborhood factors that

likely influence the quantity and nature of crime in African American communities (Anderson,

2000). Of greatest consequence are an oppositional culture against police and a heightened need

for respect and status (Warner, 2007).

Amid this oppositional culture, many African Americans' resilience emboldens them to

exercise more adaptive coping strategies. In particular, African Americans may employ

spiritual, physical, psychological, and social coping strategies to respond to community violence.

To clarify, coping is a deliberate process by which individuals take specific actions in response

to stressful circumstances or physiological reaction to stressors (Ellis, Griffith, Allen, Thorpe, & Bruce, 2015). Commonly, stress and coping theories are based on the notion that changes in "conscious cognitions" can lead to behavioral change (Sheeran, Gollwitzer, & Bargh, 2013). Coping is differentiated from other aspects of human behavior by its relationship to adaptation in the face of life stressors or conditions (Eckenrode, 2013).

For many African American parents, spirituality is the basis from which they are able to cope with distressful experiences. Sharpe and Boyas (2011) examined the coping strategies of African Americans. They conducted qualitative interviews with eight African American family members, ranging in age from18 to 82 years, of homicide victims. Participants were recruited from the Massachusetts Office of Victim Services and other support services in New England. Sharpe and Boyas (2011) found that the primary coping strategies employed by African American survivors involved spiritual coping. These family members focused on meaning making and preserving a spiritual link to the deceased (Sharpe & Boyas, 2011). In summary, African American surviving family members found spiritual ways to cope with homicide as manifested by attaching meaning to the loss of a loved one, maintaining a connection to the deceased, and exercising collective coping (Sharpe & Boyas, 2011).

Religion and spirituality are recognized not only as coping strategies within African American communities, but also as protective factors against anxiety, depression (Mitchell & Ronzio, 2011), and grief (Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008). Approximately 80% of African Americans identify religion as an essential aspect of their lives, and 50% attend church at least weekly; a strong majority practice Christianity, and 59% of African Americans report an affiliation with the African American Church (Pew Research Center, 2009).

In one study, African Americans endorsed spiritual, psychological, social, and complex forms of coping (Avent, Cashwell, & Brown-Jeffy, 2015). In particular, six participants named spiritual forms of coping as a self-governing, apposite form of coping (Avent et al., 2015). Even when participants endorsed alternative forms of coping, spiritual coping appeared to be foundational (Avent et al., 2015). Participants also seemed to depend on biblical support and other spiritual practices when referring to spiritual coping. One participant even spoke about the power of prayer, in that it yields expected results (Avent et al., 2015). Only two of the eight participants upheld psychological strategies as an independent coping method (Avent et al., 2015). When other participants commented on psychological coping strategies, they did so in conjunction with other coping methods, such spiritual, physical, and social coping mechanisms (Avent et al., 2015).

Physical coping strategies have been found to be effective. One study examined how African American men and women describe the relationship between stress and coping (Ellis et al., 2015). Researchers found that men reported that physical activity aided them in handling negative emotions, such as feeling upset or angry (Ellis et al., 2015). Both men and women found physical activity to be a healthy and constructive way to cope with life stressors (Ellis et al., 2015).

In addition to physical coping strategies, psychological coping strategies have been found beneficial. Initially, the two forms of psychological coping were problem focused, such as decision making, and emotion focused, such as emotion-regulation strategies to address distressful circumstances (Folkman, 2010). A third coping strategy is meaning focused coping, which posits that positive emotions occur in conjunction with negative emotions throughout stressful periods, including caregiving and bereavement (Folkman, 2010). To explain, meaning-

focused coping stems from deeply held values and beliefs that focus on strengths gained from life experiences (Folkman, 2010). Various types of psychological coping strategies work in tandem, such as the regulation of depression (emotion-focused coping). This coping style allows individuals to focus on making a decision (problem-focused coping), which is ultimately informed by a review of underlying values and goals (meaning-focused coping) (Folkman, 2010).

Social coping skills are just as valuable as psychological coping. A connection with family and friends to help people cope with stressful life events has consistently been linked to good mental health (Lakey & Cronin, 2008). Cohen and Wills (1985) identified social support as a stress buffer. They theorized that social support buffers or protects people from the negative effects of stress (Lakey & Cronin, 2008). In fact, evidence suggests that the link between life stress and poor mental health is stronger for people with low social support than for people with high social support (Lakey & Orehek, 2011). More compelling is that individuals of higher social status, as evidenced by educational and professional success, have been found to have greater coping resources than individuals of lower social status, such as greater access to social supports (Eckenrode, 2013).

In many instances, coping efforts are social in nature (Eckenrode, 2013). Persons under duress tend to seek out help and comfort from others (Eckenrode, 2013). Though the circumstances for which help seeking is a beneficial coping strategy are not completely clear, the consensus is that access to socially supportive relationships and an awareness of feeling supported safeguard individuals against negative psychological consequences of stressful life events (Cohen & McKay, 1984; Kessler, Price, & Wortman, 1985).

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In close relationships, a certain degree of synchrony occurs as each person endeavors to cope with a common stressor (Eckenrode, 2013). For instance, a mother who experienced a similar tragedy may comfort a mother who loses a child to gun violence. Nonverbal cues, displays of emotion, and indirect disclosures are ways in which individuals support each other (Eckenrode, 2013). Overall, whether within one's social structure or personal social relationships, the social environment considerably influences how African Americans cope with psychological stress (Eckenrode, 2013).

Psychological Stressors of African Americans

One source of psychological stress for African Americans originates from an intermingling of perceived racism and sexism (Moradi & Subich, 2003). Hence, researchers have examined the interplay between life stress, perceived racism, and psychological functioning. They have found that racism-related stress was not a substantial predictor of psychological functioning when controlling for overall life stress (Pieterse, Carter, & Ray, 2013). In effect, the research proposes that the intersection of gender and race for African Americans has been emphasized as an essential consideration when exploring stressful life experiences (Jackson, Hogue, & Phillips, 2005; Moradi & Subich, 2003). Unquestionably, a significant stressor among African Americans is racism.

Contending with racism has been linked to negative psychological outcomes, such as decreased self-esteem (Jones, Cross, & DeFour, 2007), diminished levels of personal mastery, and increased psychological distress (Broman, Mavaddat, & Hsu, 2000). The pervasiveness of perceived racist events has also been predictive of adverse health outcomes (Kwate, Valdimarsdottir, Guevarra, & Bovbjerg, 2003). A correlation between perceived discrimination and self-reported depression has also been found among African American women (Hunn &

Craig, 2009). Nevertheless, research findings on the correlation between the experiences of

racism and psychological distress are inconclusive (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000).

Despite limited research, such factors as gender, sexism, and a wide range of stressors clearly

have accounted for perceptions of racism and psychological outcomes (Carter, 2007; Jackson,

2005; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Pieterse & Carter, 2007; Szymanski & Stewart, 2010).

Indisputably, many African Americans perceived Trayvon Martin's murder as a racist

act. Regrettably, George Zimmerman considered Trayvon Martin as a threat given he was an

African American man strolling down the street wearing a hooded jacket and carrying a bag of

Skittles. Sadly, Zimmerman's misperception led to an altercation and Martin's eventual death.

In a response to this senseless murder, African Americans catapulted a public discourse about

African American parenting into social media.

African American parenting. A growing number of African American families are

headed by single mothers. The 1965 Moynihan report concluded that the heart of the

deterioration of African Americans in society is the deterioration of the African American family

(Moynihan, 1965). In 2011, 41% of all births in the United States were by unmarried parents,

with an even greater magnitude among racial and ethnic minorities (Hamilton, Martin, &

Ventura, 2012). While many unmarried parents live together when their children are born,

nearly two thirds live separately by the time their children turn 5 years of age (Carlson,

McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). Although unemployment, low income, urbanization, and

history have contributed to the decline of the African American family, the rise of single-parent

families has been considered the most severe social problem (Nichols-Casebolt, 1988). One

major contributing factor is the prevalence of African American male joblessness, which has

historically led to familial and financial instability among African American mothers and their

children (Nichols-Casebolt, 1988). Another factor leading to the increase of African American

homes run by single parents is births to never-married single women. By 1984, more than 50%

of all African Americans were born out of wedlock (Nichols-Casebolt, 1988). Today, African

American women are more likely to give birth outside of marriage than are women of any other

racial or ethnic groups (Solomon-Fears, 2014). Out of all births in 2013, unmarried African

American women made up 71.4% of births in that group compared to 29.3% of Caucasian

women and 53.2 % of Latina women (Solomon-Fears, 2014). Correspondingly, 67% of African

American children will reside in primarily mother-headed homes at some point during their

development (Solomon-Fears, 2014). Given the financial instability of these homes, these

statistics are sobering (Nichols-Casebolt, 1988).

A close examination of single mothers found that in 2012, 45.5% of single mothers with

children under age 18 years were financially unstable, as evidenced by an income below the

poverty level (Solomon-Fears, 2014). With regard to the different income categories, 23.9% of

single-mother families had an annual income under $10,000, 43.3% had income under $20,000,

and 80.2% had income under $50,000; 19.8% had income above $50,000 (U.S. Census Bureau,

2012).

Despite these alarming statistics, African American single mothers in the United States

are pervasive. In 2011, only 44% of African American households were headed by married

couples. According to a 2012 report, households were run by 4,085,938 African American

single women as compared to 836,460 African American single men (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider,

2013). As of 2012, 3,545,000 households were run by African American mothers with children

under 25 years of age. Within these homes, 1,549,000 had one child under 18 years old, 883,000

had two children under 18 years old, 391,000 had three children under 18 years old, and 212,000

had four or more children under 18 years old (Vespa et al., 2013). Regarding their educational

level, 484,000 African American single mothers had less than a high-school education,

1,250,000 were high-school graduates, 1,298,000 had some college, and 512,000 held a

bachelor's degree or higher (Vespa et al., 2013). The poverty status in 2011 among African

American women was as follows: 1,524,000 fell below the 100% poverty range, 951,000 fell in

the 100 to 199% poverty range, and 1,069,000 fell within the 200% poverty range and above

(Vespa et al., 2013). In general, more than 30% of single-mother homes had an annual income

under $15,000 while only about 12% had an annual income that exceeded $50,000 (Vespa et al.,

2013).

       Parenting styles of African Americans. In light of high poverty rates and other

hardships, African American parents have been an object of close examination and culpability

from various directions (Kaplan, 1996; McGuffy, 2005). In public discourse, many espouse that

to be African American and poor is antithetical to good parenting (McGuffey, 2005; Collins,

2000; Mink, 1998). Although single-parent families are not an anomaly, at present more

children grow up in these families than did 50 years ago (Coontz, 1997). Today, most single-

parent homes are headed by women (Elliot, Powell, & Brenton, 2015), and these homes have a

greater likelihood of poverty or financial instability than two-parent homes (U.S. Bureau of the

Census, 2008). As stated previously, African American mothers are more likely than mothers of

other racial groups to raise children in the absence of fathers. In 2009, 50.4% of African

American children were raised by single mothers, compared with 18.5% of Caucasian children

(Kreider & Ellis, 2011). Furthermore, African American women are nearly three times more

likely to manage single parenthood and poverty than Caucasian women (Thistle, 2006). Hence,

the lack of financial resources of African American single mothers may shape their mothering

strategies and perceptions (Elliot et al., 2015). Additionally, one must acknowledge that the parenting of African American single mothers is affected by psychosocial factors, such as having daughters who are often deemed as hypersexual and hyperreproductive (Collins, 2000; Kaplan, 1996; Littlefield, 2008) and sons who are perceived as aggressive and threatening (Collins, 2004; Ferguson, 2000; Russell-Brown, 1998). Given these psychosocial stressors, studies indicate that in addition to daily parenting, African American mothers strive to protect their children from racism and enable them to thrive in a racist society (Collins, 2005; Lareau, 2003; Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008).

Ellis et al. (2015) conducted a study on 16 low-income African American single mothers and focused on the roles of sacrifice, self-reliance, and protection in African American single-parent mothering practices. In sum, these women maintained that good mothers sacrifice for their children, are self-reliant, and are protective of their children (Ellis et al., 2015). In essence, African American single mothers surmised that good mothers put their children's needs first, protect and provide the finest for their offspring, and teach them about responsibility and self-reliance (Elliot et al., 2015). According to these 16 mothers, these mothering approaches occur within the context of impersonal and antagonistic bureaucratic structures. Thus, much of their mothering involves advocacy (DeVault, 1999) and fighting for the rights and welfare of their children (Smith, 2005; Griffith & Smith, 2004). Overall, Ellis et al. (2015) found that African American single mothers consider themselves ultimately responsible for ensuring their children's well-being and remedying the problems they encounter. Unfortunately, they found that mothers who believe good mothering produces good children and adults often blame themselves when their offspring do not achieve culturally recognized success, such as achieving good grades and upward social mobility (Ellis et al., 2015).

Similarly, African American fathers value investing time in their children's overall welfare. Nevertheless, given mothers are commonly children's main caregivers, studies about parenting have historically centered on maternal care (Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012). While fathers have traditionally been the breadwinners, disciplinarians, and protectors of their families, the past 25 years have wrought a pluralistic shift toward redefining parental roles of mothers and fathers (McBride et al., 2005). More currently, researchers found that fathers also prize spending quality time with their children (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Some researchers report that fathers have increased their involvement in caregiving by as much as 800% in the past 30 years (Hopkins, 2007), while others report that paternal involvement has modestly increased (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004). For instance, Cowan and Cowan (2005) posited that increases in fathers' involvement can be more precisely defined as "modified traditionalism" as opposed to a radical shift in caregiving responsibilities.

Concerning disciplinary practices, tradition has held that African American fathers are harsh, punitive, and inclined to use physical punishment. However, Roopnarine (2004) and Mandara (2006) rebutted these suppositions, reporting that past studies of African American fathers' disciplinary practices have been impacted by observer bias and a failure to differentiate parents who spank their children from those who abuse them. Often overlooked, African American fathers most likely corrected their children by discussing misbehavior, directing children to behave, nonverbal redirection, and denying privileges ahead of physical discipline (Bradley, 2000). Participants in Coles' (2001) study of full-time African American fathers identified "authority figure" and "disciplinarian" as two of their lowest parenting priorities. Alternatively, they emphasized their roles as providers and nurturers and used discussing their children's misbehavior as occasions to both change their behavior and to guide them through

better decision making (Perry et al., 2012). Beyond parenting priorities and disciplinary practices, research has found that African American fathers are their children's playmates (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson., 2000), promote their academic achievement, establish and support high expectations, and show interest in their children's extracurricular activities (Grief, Hrabowski, & Maton, 1998). Furthermore, African American fathers have also been found to maintain high levels of communication, monitor (Strom et al., 2000), teach morals (Coles, 2001), help with schoolwork, nurture infants, participate in decision making (Roopnarine, 2004), and encourage children to be strong and independent in the face of racism (Coles, 2009; McAdoo, 2000). Unfortunately, a cultural gap exists between African Americans' perceptions of good parenting and society's perceptions.

African American parenting has been examined in the context of misunderstanding, hypercriticism, erroneous assumptions, and inadequate conceptualizations (Moynihan, 1965). In particular, African American parenting styles continue to be a controversial facet of the Moynihan report (Mandara, 2006). Studies on parenting styles provide the following three basic styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative (West-Olatunji, Sanders, Mehta, & Behar-Horenstein, 2010). Authoritarian parenting is a more punitive, less communicative style of relating to children, and it carries a negative connotation. Historically, the authoritarian style has been predominant among African American parents (West-Olatunji et al., 2010). Contemporary research suggests that African American parenting mirrors authoritative styles that emphasize discipline, nurturance, and encouragement (Mandara, 2006). Overall, researchers have found that African American parents are more authoritative than Caucasian and Asian American parents (Baumrind, 1978; 1991; Mandara, 2006). In particular, Mandara and Murray (2002) found that African American authoritative parents tended to be more strict and less acquiescent

than European American authoritative parents. Nevertheless, African American parents are more likely to guide their children's interactions but in a rational, problem-oriented manner. Furthermore, they tend to welcome dialogue and consider their children's reasoning and perspective (Baumrind, 1971).

While many African American parents are more authoritative, the impact of Trayvon Martin's death on their parenting is not clear. Regardless of their parenting styles, African American parents had strong opinions about this traumatic event. To illustrate, Thomas and Sha'Kema (2015) conducted a qualitative investigation to explore African American parents' views of Trayvon Martin's death. Their analysis showed that many parents felt that Trayvon Martin's death was a form of racial profiling. These parents also conveyed that they worried about their children after the murder and upheld that men, in particular, needed to be protected (Thomas & Sha'Kema, 2015).   In response, parents discussed racism and emotionally processed the tragic incident with their children. They also taught their children how to respond if placed in a similar situation. These responses included, but were not limited to, getting help, moving away from the perpetrator, being respectful, and exercising self-defense if necessary (Thomas & Sha'Kema, 2015). Interestingly, many African American parents extended their discussions about Trayvon Martin's murder beyond the home.

Strikingly, the death of Trayvon Martin launched a public discourse about community violence among African Americans and the response of African American parents to it. Much of this discourse occurred within the context of social media. In effect, a blogosphere emerged, offering a space for citizen journalism and an interlinkage of professionals and nonprofessionals (Graeff, Stempeck, & Zuckerman, 2014).   Likewise, social media became a tool to help spread news in response to Martin's death and to spark activism.

Receiving only cursory news coverage at first, the murder of Trayvon Martin gained media attention and dominated headlines for months (Graeff et al., 2014). Researchers used the theories of networked gatekeeping and network framing to map out the massive media ecosystem using quantitative data about the content produced around the Trayvon Martin phenomenon in online media. They also parsed measures of engagement with the story to track the interrelations among mainstream media, nonprofessional and social media, and their audiences. Researchers found that broadcast media remained an amplifier and gatekeeper of the Trayvon Martin story, but it became subject to the scrutiny of media activists who worked through participatory or nonprofessional media to co-create the news and impact how this major controversy was framed (Graeff et al., 2014).

One such amplifier and gatekeeper of the Trayvon Martin story was YouTube. YouTube has evolved into one of the most successful Internet websites, delivering a new generation of short-video-sharing service since its founding in early 2005 (Cheng, Dale, & Liu, 2008). In general, YouTube is a video-sharing platform that permits nonprofessionals to upload content onto their customized YouTube Channel (YouTube, 2011). It features comment threads and videos individuals can manage. In addition, YouTube is the third-most trafficked international website, boasting more than 800 million users monthly, 4 billion videos viewed daily, and 60 hours of video uploaded every minute (YouTube, 2012). This unparalleled platform can be integrated with other social-media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google Plus (YouTube, 2011). Finally, YouTube delivers a powerful analytics tool for all users, making the number of views uploaders receive easy to track (YouTube, 2011).

Although it is a source of video content, YouTube generates one of the greatest forms of social engagement, enabling many African American parents to discuss the murder of Trayvon

Martin and other countless acts of community violence. Of note, YouTube upholds that violent

or graphic content is unacceptable. The company insists that posting violent and gory content

intended to be shocking, sensationalized, or disrespectful is unacceptable and prohibits content

that promotes or condones violence, racism, or the incitement of hatred (YouTube, 2016).

Nevertheless, YouTube is a platform for free expression (YouTube, 2016). Fundamentally, the

YouTube culture is composed of diverse actors who produce, disseminate, remediate, remix,

share, and view videos in a specific platform for an assortment of cultural, social, and economic

purposes (Sumiala & Tikka, 2011). Hence, many actors choose to use YouTube as a platform to

discuss African American parenting in the face of community violence.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze how YouTube content on the

discussion about African American parenting changed in the face of community violence since

the murder of Trayvon Martin, which occurred in February 2012. Content parsed from this study

was used to inform clinicians about the following: African American parents' shared

experiences, helpful resources for them, and areas for future research and clinical intervention.

Chapter 2: Methods

Study Design

This study used a retrospective study design based on the use of archival video data retrieved from YouTube videos. Acknowledging the influence of social media on community violence and its impact on families, a qualitative approach was used to classify and understand concepts and themes that emerged from content shared by the participants on their YouTube videos. Specifically, this study analyzed uploaded YouTube videos. Furthermore, a grounded-theory method was used to systematically engender theory and understanding of the patterns that emerged from the data. Grounded theory has been found to produce valid, reliable, and standardized data that can be used to direct future research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Internet-based qualitative research allows researchers to observe participants in an anonymous and nonthreatening setting that is not influenced by experimenter effects (Kazdin, 2003).

In addition, this study analyzed content to identify coping methods and strategies for African American parents in response to community violence. Commentators in the videos discussed how parents coped with community violence from a holistic perspective and within the physical (e.g., diet and exercise), psychological (e.g., mental health, coping strategies), spiritual (e.g., cultural and/or religious practices), and social (e.g., interpersonal skills, family life, community activism, advocacy, professional endeavors) contexts.

Videos

Ten YouTube videos that included content on parenting African American children recorded before the death of Trayvon Martin (i.e., February 26, 2012) and 20 videos after his death (i.e., beginning February 27, 2012) were selected for qualitative analysis. Altogether, 30

videos on the discussion about African American parenting in the face of community violence were analyzed.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria required participants to be English-speakers whose YouTube video content targeted parenting African American children. YouTube videos posted from 4 years prior to Trayvon Martin's death, which occurred February 26, 2012, through December 1, 2016, that met the aforementioned criterion were eligible for analysis. Originally, the plan was to retrieve videos by searching the following: "Trayvon Martin," "Community Violence," and "African American/Black Parenting." However, because "Community Violence" was too broad, it was replaced by "Trayvon Martin and Parenting." This list did not need to be extended because sufficient content was available under these title searches.

Exclusion Criteria

The exclusion criteria included videos posted or sponsored by an organization, political party, or advocacy group. Also, public or private institutions or agencies could not have been involved in the creation of the video. Videos that did not contain narratives were also excluded. This study also excluded videos that showed actual footage of community violence.

Measures

YouTube videos are viewed as a trace of a social behavior (Giglietto, Rossi, & Bennato, 2012). Features of YouTube studies use sampling techniques and content analysis (coded by humans or sometimes automatically by the computer; Giglietto et al., 2012). The following statistical information was ascertained: date of video post; number of views; number of video likes (i.e., thumbs up); and race, gender, and number of people in videos. Originally, one objective was to identify the socioeconomic status of the targeted audience; however, content did

not reveal this information. Generally, much of the selected content was devoted to underserved

African Americans residing in urban communities.

Debate concerning the ethical concerns of analyzing data retrieved from social media has

been substantial (Flicker, Haans, & Skinner, 2004; McKee, 2013) because of the potential risk of

compromising commentators' privacy (McKee, 2013). To address this concern, this researcher

included only videos that were publicly available on YouTube. To further protect the identity of

commentators and video authors, usernames, video titles, and specific demographic

characteristics were deidentified and assigned codes (e.g., T1A to mean Transcript 1 after

Trayvon Martin's death).   This researcher also sought Institutional Review Board (IRB)

exemption to conduct this study.

Procedures

This researcher searched YouTube for publicly available videos uploaded between

January, 2008, and December, 2016, that had been extensively viewed using the following

search terms: "Trayvon Martin and Parenting," "Trayvon Martin," or "African American/Black

Parenting."   Given the available content on the subject matter, only videos uploaded between

November 23, 2009, and July 19, 2016, were selected. The selected videos were documented on

a video tracker spreadsheet that listed video links and the dates videos were viewed. To

systematically identify a sample of relevant videos, this researcher endeavored to screen the first

500 videos for "Trayvon Martin" and 200 videos each for "Trayvon Martin and Parenting" and

"African American Parenting." For each identified relevant video, YouTube produces a page list

of 20 recommended videos that describe a similar topic based on this researcher's search history

and prior videos selected and viewed. Therefore, this researcher reviewed the recommended

video list to identify additional applicable videos. However, after a certain number of videos, the

content was no longer relevant to the title. To be considered relevant, videos had to be posted by

individuals, have no advertising, include the aforementioned search terms, have content recorded

in English, and have a minimum of 300 views because videos with more views have more

comments. Accordingly, 288 videos were viewed for "Trayvon Martin," 200 for "Trayvon

Martin and Parenting," and 124 for "African American Parenting." Of the 612 viewed, 30

videos were selected. The selection process included the following steps. Video links were

recorded on a tracking spreadsheet. The links to videos that met the inclusion criteria and were

relevant to the discussion were highlighted in red. A new spreadsheet was created for

highlighted links.   This researcher selected videos that resonated with her views. Nevertheless,

in future studies, this researcher will use random selection to prevent selection bias. Selected

videos were tracked on a spreadsheet, which included the following information: code number,

date posted, date viewed, video link, video author, number of views, number of likes, and video

description (if available).

Statistical Analysis Plan

This study used grounded theory to examine how YouTube content on African American

parenting changed in the face of community violence after the murder of Trayvon Martin, which

occurred in February 2012. The goal of this exploration was to identify healthy and holistic

ways African American parents coped with community violence. To guide the qualitative

analysis, YouTube video content was used (see Appendix).

Again, social-media platforms, such as YouTube, have become an integral part of

socializing (Lai & To, 2015). They affect individuals' beliefs, values, and attitudes (Lai & To,

2015). Social medial also allows governments and organizations to interact with people while

allowing users to make informed decisions (Lai & To, 2015). Hence, translating social-media

content into information, categories, and themes is critical for spreading knowledge and

formulating strategies. For this purpose, a grounded-theory approach was used to analyze

YouTube video content.

This researcher used a grounded theory approach to analyze video content. Traditionally,

research designs rely upon a literature review leading to the development of a hypothesis, which

then is tested by experimentation in real situations (Allan, 2003). Grounded theory is a

qualitative research method that endeavors to explain social phenomena (Woods, Gapp, & King,

2016).   Since grounded theory examines the realities and analyzes the data with no

predetermined hypothesis (Allan, 2003), this approach was more appropriate for analyzing video

content. To illustrate, grounded-theory data analysis involves exploring concepts behind

actualities by developing codes, concepts, and categories (Allan, 2003). Additionally, grounded-

theory coding is used to identify and conceptualize the underlying issues beneath the "noise" of

the data (Allan, 2003). Throughout the analysis, the researcher identifies words and phrases that

highlight matters of importance or interest to the research (Allan, 2003). These matters may be

repeated throughout the content, thus creating short descriptors known as codes (Allan, 2003).

According to the literature, the coding process should be facilitated with an open mind and

without preconceived notions (Allan, 2003).   In addition, other types of coding, such as axial

and selective coding, are used in grounded theory.

Axial coding is the process that integrates initial codes with more concentrated and

abstracted codes (Woods et al., 2016). To explain, the purpose of the code is to make a

connection with the data, such as a video transcript (Woods et al., 2016).   Identified codes are

then compared to other codes to capture conceptual patterns and themes in the data (Woods et

al., 2016).   These codes are clustered into categories (Woods et al.,, 2016).   Thereafter, patterns

and themes are captured from the categories, leading to theories about the data (Woods et al.,

2016). Selective coding, on the other hand, focuses on choosing a single core category and

relating other categories to that category in an abstract theoretical manner (Birks & Mills, 2015).

While selective coding enables researchers to develop a more succinct narrative from the data,

this researcher used axial coding to provide a basic framework from which to analyze the data.

As a part of the coding process, this researcher analyzed YouTube videos. YouTube

provided close-captioned transcripts that were auto-generated. This researcher recruited

graduate-level psychology students from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine to code

and analyze the video transcripts. During the initial phase, two second-year African American

female doctoral students volunteered. After the initial coding meeting, two additional African

American female doctoral students volunteered. Each coder agreed to code the three pre-

Trayvon Martin's death and three post-Trayvon Martin's death transcripts. During early

recruitment, two coders and this researcher coded TA1 to identify words or short phrases that

assigned a comprehensive and noteworthy feature for a portion of visual data. Emerging themes

and concepts were derived from videos, and each team member created an outline. Given

scheduling challenges, this researcher facilitated a phone consultation with two coders to discuss

findings, identify emerging themes, and help validate the themes produced. Given the study

used a grounded theory, the coding team also engaged in identifying categories, themes, and

explanations. Their findings were logged on a Google shared document. Coders were unable to

document behavioral observations, such as individuals' mental-health status (e.g., affect) and

visual content (e.g., setting of video) because they used only transcripts to code video content.

This researcher reviewed initial codes, searched for themes among codes, reviewed themes,

defined and termed themes, and produced a final analysis of content from before and after

Trayvon Martin's death. Additionally, data were categorized into the following four domains:

physical, psychological, spiritual, and social coping mechanisms.

Chapter 3: Results

Emerging Themes

During the analysis of the YouTube video content, core themes emerged. Two themes emerged from the 10 YouTube videos before the death of Trayvon Martin (February 26, 2012), and two themes emerged from the after-death videos. The before themes that emerged were the following: *African American Beliefs About Parenting* and *African American Beliefs About Acculturation.* The after themes that emerged were as follows: *African American Families* and *Racial Discrimination*. Within these overarching themes, several subthemes emerged.

Before the Death of Trayvon Martin

African American beliefs about parenting. Themes that emerged from the content of videos recorded before Trayvon Martin's death included subthemes regarding African American beliefs about parenting. These themes arose from African American parents, professionals, philosophers, and laypersons who merely shared their views about African American parenting. Overall, the videos showcased rich content about parental beliefs beginning with the need to understand child development.

In T1B, an African American professor of psychiatry and public health noted that understanding child development is a core belief about parenting. As such, parents attend to their children's developmental needs and parent them accordingly. In particular, the content revealed that understanding brain development helps parents to guide their children. It showed that children have a primitive feral fight, flight, or freeze response that influences how the frontal lobe develops. The professor further elucidated, "The last part of the brain to develop is the frontal lobe, which is the thinking, judgment, wisdom, thoughtful, discernment part of the brain; so children by a virtue of how they grow and develop are all gasoline and no brakes." Therefore,

parents and community members have to serve as the "brakes" for children, underscoring the notion that "it takes a village to raise a child."

In addition to nurturing child development through communal parenting, African American parents nurture their children through attachment and resourcefulness. A clinical psychologist commented, "Children need connectedness or good relationships or attachments," for they help children develop self and cultural identity (T1B). To clarify, the originator of attachment theory, John Bowlby (1973), maintained that a strong attachment to a caregiver fortifies one's sense of security and substance. Hence, the importance of connectedness and good relationships leads to healthy attachments between African American parents and their children (T1B). In contrast, an African American entrepreneur and vlogger opined that parents blur parent-child boundaries when they attach to their children by befriending and dressing like them (T4B). More compelling, an African American male educator and a female author/educator agreed that enmeshed attachment can lead to the infantization of boys in particular (T8B & T10B). Therefore, parents need to model resourcefulness and further strengthen their children's development (T2B).

Socializing children is another way for African American parents to nurture their children's development. In T2B, a counseling psychologist and expert on African American parenting issues and best practices for rearing an emotionally and mentally healthy child explained that parents socialize their children through instruction, exposure, and modeling. Through this process, children essentially learn how to conduct themselves in a culturally, spiritually, and socially acceptable manner. Principally, the content showcased how African American parents value teaching their children about respect. Highlighted were respect for people, property, others' feelings, elders, and self (T2B). Although the video preceded the

resurgence of post-2012 police brutality, the counseling psychologist explained that parents need to teach respect for the police. Again, during 2011, the prevalence of police brutality and racial profiling had not received as much coverage as it has received post Trayvon Martin's death. Yet, this psychologist deemed modeling a healthy respect for police to be necessary.

Content accentuated the value of nurturing children through modeling (T5B). To clarify, modeling is based on Bandura's social learning theory (1977), which posits that individuals learn from each other through observation, imitation, and modeling. Undoubtedly, children pattern themselves after their parents. In fact, society often judges children based on learned behaviors. For example, African American children are stereotypically regarded as lazy because their mothers are viewed that way (T5B). Nevertheless, African American mothers are often highly involved and effective in modeling appropriate behaviors for their children (T5B).

While modeling contributes to nurturing child development, content revealed that parents should instill children's sense of uniqueness and self-identity. Specifically, content emphasized that parents should instill the values of self-esteem, self-pride, self-discipline, and self-sufficiency in their children (T1B, T2B, & T7B). African American children have traditionally been encouraged to embrace their ethnic distinctions and to celebrate their uniqueness. As such, the author and educator from T7B and T8B dedicated time to training parents about their cultural and racial background, for this knowledge would help parents and their children cope with racism. In one video, a Caucasian parent educator asked, "How do you build up one's pride when historically your group has been demeaned in a society?" (T3B). He maintained that by not addressing this concern, ethnic pride and a sense of uniqueness in African American children go ignored (T3B).

Arguably, African American children cannot develop a sense of pride and uniqueness unless their parents and others value their opinions (T2B). A counseling psychologist stressed the following:

> The parent needs to know what's important to the child because we could present a child with a lot of things…. The parent needs to get into the kid to find out what's going on with the kid. You're not going to be able to tell the kid at 10 or 12 do this… without ever having heard from them. If you have a chance to talk to them when they're little, when they're two and three, you read to them. You ask them what they felt about the story. You let them know that their opinion is valuable to you. That'll make them want to share their opinion with you when they're 12 and 13 years old. (T7B)

While the clinical psychologist featured in T2B did not specifically posit that children should have a voice, he implied that a part of valuing children's opinion was by giving them a "voice." What, then, is a "voice"? Fundamentally, when children have a voice, they can openly communicate their concerns. Subsequently, children may feel valued and heard. To illustrate, a vlogger and mother to an adolescent daughter shared how open communication allowed her and her daughter to resolve problems and to clarify expectations (T5B). In other words, the vlogger maintained her stance while honoring her daughter's voice.

Content highlighted that the key to cultivating children's voices is to nurture their sense of self. To explain, the psychiatry professor featured in T1B noted that African American parents should emphasize self-control:

> Children need a sense of power, a sense of models to understand how things work, a sense of uniqueness, which translates into self-esteem. Children also need social and emotional skills. A social skill is how do you talk to somebody to resolve conflict and yet

maintain a decent relationship? An emotional skill is how do you control your anger?

How do you regulate your affect? Those things are taught and learned. (T1B)

That is to say, parents should guide their children through the process of managing their

thoughts, feelings, and actions. Content showed that while teaching self-control can be

challenging, parents can use daily interactions to cultivate autonomy, leadership abilities,

personal responsibility, a sense of accomplishment, and self-confidence (T2B). Teaching these

skills is not exclusive to verbal lessons. Content revealed that parents "need to have a model of

what [they] expect from [their] children" (T2B). Instead of relying on schools to guide their

children, for example, "parents really need to realize that they have more say so… more

power…more authority than just watching these kids turn bad" (T2B). In essence, parents

greatly influence how their children develop a sense of self.

Based on content analyzed, parental guidance, nurturance, and connectedness are among

the strongest threads in the fabric of the African American community. A featured counseling

psychologist expressed, "Children know that they're loved first of all because they have to walk

out feeling like no matter what happens to me out there I have a solid place I can go home to and

be nurtured" (T2B). With this assurance in mind, parents must love, protect, support, and

encourage their children. By doing so, they nurture their children's social and emotional skills

(T1B). Also, nurturance helps children to develop the skills necessary for conflict resolution,

anger control, and healthy coping (T1B). Moreover, even parents who merely listened to their

children and attended to their basic needs were considered nurturers. Nevertheless, establishing

boundaries and admonishing children are also signs of nurturance.   A strong connection and

parent-child bond are the most essential elements of nurturance. Collectively, video content

showed that this connectedness can serve as a buffer against risky behaviors, such as substance use, promiscuity, and community violence (T2B & T7B).

African American beliefs about acculturation. Acculturation occurs when the minority culture adapts to another's culture while retaining distinctive cultural indicators of language, food, and customs (Cole, 2018). While African American parents adhere to cultural norms when raising their children, T9B showed that they harmonize mainstream culture with African American culture. Other content underscored the importance of reinforcing African American values within communities (T7B).

The process of acculturation customarily occurs through the educational system. Education, according to T7B, is a process by which children can develop positive self-images. Two videos offered conflicting views of how useful the educational setting can be in African American acculturation. A well-known controversial female African American author argued that teachers can acculturate children as long as they have a cultural understanding of their students (T10B). In contrast, an educator and author argued that regardless of teachers' efforts to be culturally sensitive, they are not equipped to acculturate African American children. In fact, he contended that a conspiracy exists to destroy African American boys through the American educational system (T8B). Furthermore, T8B highlighted how such factors as racism, economics, deprivation, and sexism threaten African Americans' cultural uniqueness. As such, content suggested that African American parents should not completely immerse their children into the dominant culture, for doing so can potentially diminish their children's' sense of cultural identity (T8B & T10B).

Content revealed that cultural identity is developed when African Americans foster a sense of self-control, self-sufficiency, self-awareness, and self-image in children (T1B & T2B).

In particular, it stressed that when children become self-sufficient, "they can accept any challenge and … deal with whatever circumstances life had to hand [them]" (T2B). Although self-sufficiency implies that individuals can meet their basic needs without any outside help, content suggested that African American parents embrace a slightly different view (T2B). Two clinical psychologists suggested that African American parents teach children to be independent while simultaneously eliciting the support of those in their ecosystems when necessary (T1B & T2B). Notably, a psychiatry professor maintained, "It's not just the parent—the mother and father -- raising the child, but it's the entire community" (T1B). He essentially identified the community as the village (T1B).

Content principally underlined the need for parents and the village to help their children cope with social injustices, such as systematic inequality, racial discrimination, healthcare disparities, predatory economics, political corruption, educational marginalization, and unequal pay. For example, the educator and author in T7B postulated that Caucasian men make an average of $403 dollars per week as compared to African American women, who make an average of $234. He had no statistical data to substantiate this claim; nevertheless, economic disparities between African Americans women and Caucasian men cannot be denied (T7B).

While coping with economic disparities is a challenge, content stressed that facing educational desegregation is also challenging. As such, an author and educator cited that the average Caucasian child scores within the 60th percentile on the California Achievement Test while the average African American child scores within the 30th percentile (T7B). He questioned the 30-point differential and argued that curriculum design is biased in favor of the dominant culture (T7B). In addition, the author and educator asserted that teaching methods are not necessarily culturally adapted to African American children's learning styles. Hence, one's

capacity to learn is customarily overshadowed by academic achievement (T7B). Therefore, parents need to protect their children from academic marginalization.

Fundamentally, African American parents prize protecting every aspect of their children's lives. Like most parents from other cultures, African American parents endeavor to protect and shield their children from systemic injustices (T5B & T6B). In particular, African American parents value the traditional educational system. Nonetheless, these parents protect and insulate their children by educating them at home and in the community (T7B). This education is accomplished through modeling learning, attending to childrens' interests, and providing opportunities to practice and apply what children learn in school (T5B & T6B). In addition, African American parents prize instilling morals, values, ideas, and habits in their children (T6B & T9B). By doing so, they protect them against such risk factors as sexually transmitted infections, community violence, and substance use (T1B & T10B).

After the Death of Trayvon Martin

Despite attempts of African American parents to shield their children from systematic injustices and risk factors, February 26, 2012, marked the dawn of a new day. African American parenting shifted in the face of community violence. On that tragic night, George Zimmerman fatally shot and killed Trayvon Martin. This 17-year-old African American resident of Sanford, Florida, was en route to a family member's home when the suspicious 28-year-old, mixed-race Zimmerman confronted him. A physical altercation ensued, and Martin was tragically murdered. This senseless death rocked the nation and caused an uproar about race relations in the United States. Consequently, a racial divide emerged, which was further exacerbated on July 13, 2013, after a six-person jury rendered Zimmerman not guilty.

The tragic story of Trayvon Martin nearly went unnoticed. His death could have been numbered among the grim statistics about community violence among African Americans   had his determined parents, Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, not insisted that Zimmerman be held accountable and the nation be put on alert about the proliferation of gun violence and racial profiling. Joining the fight of Martin's parents, many commentators used YouTube to vocalize their concerns about African American parenting.

Were the messages about African American parenting different from messages prior to Martin's death? Indeed, messages about African American parenting were different from those prior to February 26, 2102. Yet, some themes were the same. From the content of YouTube videos recorded after Martin's death, the following themes emerged: *African American Family* and *Racial Discrimination*. From these emerging themes, several subthemes developed.

African American family. One predominant theme that emerged from the YouTube content after the death of Trayvon Martin was that of the African American family. A famous actor and author noted that the African American family is not monolithic; it is multicultural (T24A). He argued that the African American family has a rich heritage that has been diluted by the disintegration of the family unit. The content also highlighted that the degeneration of the African American family dates back to the transatlantic slave trade (T24A). It noted that husbands were separated from wives, and children were generally separated from their parents (T24A). This compulsory separation has led to continuous obstructions in the path of African American family unity (T24A).

Deterioration of the African American family. The deterioration of the African American family has also arisen from welfare laws, according to an African American psychologist (T21A). The content exposed how welfare laws discouraged men from being in the

home. It also provided examples of the familial decline, such as the government forbidding

African American fathers from residing in financially subsidized homes with their partners and

children (T21A). Video T24A supported this idea in that it established that Caucasians have

historically hired African American women over African American men because they feel less

threatened by women. The content further promulgated the idea that the public-welfare system

has been instrumental in dividing the African American family (T24A). A Caucasian

commentator asked the following:

> What about the welfare state, which kind of encourages people to not get married and
>
> have kids? It discourages the nuclear family. One of the biggest disadvantages in the
>
> black community is the fact that they have basically completely forgotten about the
>
> nuclear family. (T19A)

In light of this disadvantage, content reiterated that the court system perpetuates the corrosion of

the family (T21A).

 The court system was cited as undergirding father-absent homes. Content highlighted, "It

comes back to the role of the court. Now the court don't help this at all…There's nothing worse

than going in front of a white man and say, 'Can I see my daughter?'" (T21A). A sense of

humiliation is associated with requesting permission to spend time with one's own children, for

"it hurts a father or mother to have to go to the enemy and beg permission" (T21A). The reality

is that the welfare system requires mothers receiving public assistance to take fathers to court,

even if they do not wish to do so. The psychologists asked, "You ever go down the family court

and look like a damn slave ship except it ain't on waters, it's on land?" (T21A). While

supporting their children is their responsibility, fathers who are delinquent in child support

payments are subject to possible imprisonment (T21A). Therefore, the psychologists

discouraged African Americans from using " the power of institutional racism to fight the other parent. That is almost an unforgivable sin" (T21A). He argued that if grandparents and elders stood up more for children, parents would not have to rely upon the court system to address their children's needs (T21A). In effect, content suggests that a major contributing factor to the corrosion of the family is the absence of African American fathers (T4A, T7A, & T21A).

Content maintained that the absence of African American fathers has played a significant role in the deterioration of the African American family (T9A). An African American radio personality reported that he asked Kweisi Mfume, former president of the NAACP, about the presence of white racism and the biggest threat to the African American community. He reported that Mfume responded, "The absence of black fathers" (T4A). Content revealed striking statistics about the impact of absent fathers. The following report is noteworthy: That children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime; nine times more likely to drop out of school and 20 times more likely to end up in prison. The Journal of Research on Adolescence confirms that even after controlling for varying levels of household income, kids in father-absent homes are more likely to end up in jail. And kids who never had a father in the house are the most likely to wind up behind bars. In 1960, 5 percent of America's children entered the world without a mother and father married to each other. By 1980 it was 18 percent, by 2000 it had risen to 33 percent, and fifteen years later, the number reached 41 percent. For blacks, even during slavery when marriage for slaves was illegal, black children were more likely than today to be raised by both their mother and father. Economist Walter Williams has written that, according to census data, from 1890 to 1940, a black child was more likely to grow up with married parents than a white child. For blacks, out-of-wedlock births have gone from 25 percent in 1965 to 73 percent in 2015. For whites, from

less than 5 percent to over 25 percent. And for Hispanics, out-of-wedlock births have risen to 53 percent. What happened to fathers? …. Our generous welfare system allows women, in effect, to marry the government. And this makes it all too easy for men to abandon their traditional moral and financial responsibilities. Psychologists call such dependency 'learned helplessness.' (T4A)In essence, content unveiled the reality that the welfare system creates disincentives to help African American women. It also shows that through the welfare system, mothers have "psychologically castrated fathers" and "created a war against fathers" (T21A). Consequently, many fatherless children seek structure in discipline, which they have often found in gang membership and other community problems.

Content also provided commentary on how the mass incarceration of African American fathers and men in general factors into the mother-led, father-absent household in the United States (T9A, T21A, & T24A). It revealed that given that many fathers are imprisoned, mothers are left to raise their children on their own (T24A). Consequently, according to the psychologist, studies show that boys are significantly more affected by their fathers' absences than are girls (T21A). Content further explained that male individuals face embarrassment because they feel ashamed about their fathers' imprisonment (T21A).

According to a psychologist's opinion, imprisonment is not the only reason for the removal of fathers from homes; divorce and separation are reasons as well (T21). Divorce can have detrimental and systemic effects on families (T21A). This psychologist maintained that divorce and separation affect families' physical, mental, and spiritual well-being (T21A). Consequently, children may consume low-nutrient, high-fat, high-sugar diets to cope with feelings of rejection, abandonment, and insecurities (T21A). Others may be drawn to gangs to experience a sense of familial ties (T21A). Meanwhile, girls in particular may become sexually

promiscuous in exchange for intimacy and connection (T21A). Even more disturbing is that conflict often breeds resentment and retaliation (T21A). Consequently, parents often use children as a form of revenge. The psychologist gave the example of a custodial parent purposely keeping the other parent away from their children to inflict emotional pain (T21A).

Content also highlighted that the deterioration of the family has led to other societal problems among African Americans. A conservative Caucasian political pundit contended the following:

> They blame guns, poor education, lack of jobs [sic]. Rarely do they define the problem accurately, so here it is. The reason there is so much violence and chaos in the black precincts is the disintegration of the African American family. Right now, about 73% of all black babies are born out of wedlock. That drives poverty, and the lack of involved fathers leads to young boys growing up resentful. And when was the last time you saw a public service ad telling young black girls to avoid becoming pregnant? . . . White people don't force black people to have babies out of wedlock. That's a personal decision—a decision that has devastated millions of children and led to disaster both socially and economically. So, raised without much structure, young black men often reject education and gravitate towards the street culture—drugs, hustling, gangs—nobody forces them to do that. Again, it is a personal decision…. The solution to the epidemic of violent crime and poor black neighborhoods is to actively discourage pregnancies out of marriage; to impose strict discipline in the public schools, including mandatory student uniforms, to create a zero tolerance policy for gun and drug crimes, imposing harsh mandatory prison time on the offenders; and finally challenging the entertainment industry to stop peddling garbage. (T9A)

While the aforementioned vices may have arisen from the erosion of the African American

family unit, strength, resilience, and unity persist within African American families.

    Strength of the African American family. Content stressed that the strength of the

African American family has inoculated it against the litany of societal problems they face. For

example, content underscored that communal parenting illustrates the power of the African

American family (T7A). A prominent African American journalist reported, "There is a need for

black men and women to step up and become the village that raises black children" (T7A). For

example, parents once permitted others from the community to discipline their children for

disruptive behaviors (T7A). In addition, family members, such as uncles, functioned as father

figures (T7A). These examples demonstrate how familial strengths and parental roles influence

African American children.

    African American parental roles. Content presented many parental roles that

significantly influence how African Americans function in life. These roles included the

following: leader, protector, nurturer, spiritual guide, and messenger.

    Leader. One role is that of a leader. Parents lead their children through guidance,

direction, encouragement, modeling, and instruction (T16A). Content illustrated how African

American parents are their children's primary educators. Although most African American

parents send their children to schools for education, they teach their children about basic life

skills, African and African American heritage, ways to navigate through life, and other relevant

subjects. A contemporary African American writer, poet, and scholar pontificated on the

following:

        Growing up, I didn't always understand why my parents made me follow the rules that

        they did. Like, why did I really have to mow the lawn? Why was homework really that

important? Why couldn't I put jellybeans in my oatmeal? My childhood was abound with

questions like this. Normal things about being a kid, and realizing that sometimes it was

best to listen to my parents even when I didn't exactly understand why. And it's not that

they didn't want me to think critically. Their parenting always sought to reconcile the

tension between having my siblings and I understand the realities of the world, while

ensuring that we never accepted the status quo as inevitable. I came to realize that this, in

and of itself, was a very purposeful form of education. (T16A)

This scholar insisted that preparing children to exist in a world that is saturated with prejudices,

malevolence, and uncertainties is crucial.

Protector. Content also publicized that amid the precarious world in which children live

African American parents are compelled to function as protectors (T10A, T16A, T18A, &

T21A). They take specific measures to safeguard their children from hurt, harm, and danger. In

a video featuring African American parents, one parent admitted, "The idea that she could be

taken from me . . . the only reaction I have is to fight that. Like, why would somebody take her

from me? [It's] what makes me hesitate or [feel] uncomfortable about raising another black child

in American society" (T18A). This parent was befuddled by the notion that her young daughter

was vulnerable to violence because of her skin color. Another featured mother shared these

sentiments. A Baltimore mother exemplified a protective parent (T11A). At the height of

Baltimore riots after Freddie Gray's controversial death, this mother marched into a

cantankerous crowd, grabbed her son, and struck her son (T10A & T11A). Content showed that

though deemed controversial, this protective mother took bold measures to safeguard her son

from community devastation (T11A). During an interview, the mother concluded, "At the end of

the day you're just trying to be a mom that's trying to protect your child" (T11A).

Like the Baltimore mother, many African American parents fear that their children will be victimized. A notable journalist noted, "Over the course of the past several months, the world has watched as unarmed black men, and women, have had their lives taken at the hands of police and vigilantes" (T10A). This phenomenon has intensified parental fears and created a climate of tension and vulnerability. A mother shared the following:

> I have to live with my five-year-old. He understands. He asked me, 'Mommy are you gonna get shot by the police?'…He was playing with his…white friend around the same age, and the white friend…pulls up his hand, and it's like, 'Oh, I got a shot by the doctor'…You can just see the disparity of the lives that they're living. (T18A)

This sad commentary is all too common within the African American community. When asked about the greatest challenge she has faced while raising her children, this mother responded, "The greatest challenge that I faced raising them is making sure that they don't fall into any of those narratives" (T10A).

Regrettably, even small children fear police brutality when they should view them as protectors. So many African American parents can relate to those who fear that their children will succumb to gun violence, especially at the hands of police, such as in the Tamir Rice case (T10A). Nevertheless, the political pundit opposed this view. He insisted, "It is now time for the African American leadership, including President Obama, to stop the nonsense. Walk away from the world of victimization and grievance and lead the way out of this mess" (T9A). The pundit disputed, "You derelict parents, you're the ones hurting these vulnerable children." (T9A). Despite this opposing view, content revealed that African American parents prioritize protecting and nurturing their children.

Nurturer. Nurturing their children as they develop socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually is likewise a priority for African American parents. Content showed that children "need masculine—structure, discipline, accountability, responsibility -- and feminine—love, nurturance, compassion" (T21A). Amid social injustices, African American parents remain their children's nurturers. For example, one mother explained that amid life's challenges, she prioritizes nurturing and spending time with her children (T23A). In essence, the content indicated that nurturance requires quality time, setting boundaries, providing structure, teaching children about heritage, and policing what they watch on television (T23A). This nurturance often evokes the parents' roles as spiritual leaders.

Spiritual guide. As spiritual guides, African American parents essentially teach their children core spiritual and religious values and morals. This moral code tends to dictate how parents function in the role of disciplinarians (T6A). An American activist and radio personality asserted the following:

> When I was growing up, education was important but not number one. Number one was a relationship with parents and God. It was; it really was. They have black schools and black colleges and universities around, but… morality was number one, and as a result, blacks were themselves. But now they think worldly knowledge is greater than spiritual knowledge. (T6A)

The activist upheld that negativity emerges from worldly knowledge.

Messenger. Given the rise of negativity, such as the African American adolescent slayings, content indicated that parents are messengers. Parental messages need to address how one is to respond to law enforcement and racial profiling. The author and poet shared the following:

> These are the sorts of messages I've been inundated with my entire life: Always keep
>
> your hands where they can see them, don't move too quickly, take off your hood when
>
> the sun goes down. My parents raised me and my siblings in an armor of advice, an ocean
>
> of alarm bells so someone wouldn't steal the breath from our lungs, so that they wouldn't
>
> make a memory of this skin. So that we could be kids, not casket or concrete. And it's
>
> not because they thought it would make us better than anyone else; it's simply because
>
> they wanted to keep us alive. (T16A)

The author underlined the need for African American parents to teach their children to be

vigilant and circumspect.

Content analyzed suggested that the process of vigilance includes modifying physical

appearance to reduce threat perceptions. Content revealed that by virtue of their skin color,

African American adolescents are subject to unwarranted scrutiny and judgment (T1A & T10A).

A child psychologist unveiled the following:

> Regrettably, we've talked about physical dress and how certain garments that you wear
>
> can place you at better risk. The sad thing is that what you wear should have no bearing
>
> on whether or not you get shot down in the street by a civilian because you fit a particular
>
> stereotype, but that is the reality. (T1A)

The psychologist stressed that even something as simple as clothing can bring unsolicited

attention (T1A). Accordingly, parents need to discourage their children from wearing such

apparel as ski masks, hoodies, and loose-fitting jeans. A Caucasian commentator, who debunked

the notion of racial profiling, shared an example of how mere objects that one carries can be seen

as a threat. He argued the following:

> Like Tamir Rice. Yeah, he did get himself into an unfortunate situation and that is sad, but something tells me you're about to say that it's all the cops' fault, in which case I'm going to have to laugh at you…I'm sorry for that a child was murdered in cold blood in broad daylight at a park. Well, you're not even going to mention the fact that he had a toy gun. Normally, you people at least mention that one usually the story goes. He had a toy gun, and the cop shot him for it; but you're not even going to mention that. You're going to leave [out] all of the context. (T19A)

Provided that many commentators would disagree with this view, the point regarding the toy gun is noteworthy. In fact, the author and poet recalled the following:

> When I was around 12 years old, on an overnight field trip to another city, my friends and I bought Super Soakers and turned the hotel parking lot into our own water-filled battle zone. We hid behind cars, running through the darkness that lay between the streetlights, boundless laughter ubiquitous across the pavement. But within 10 minutes, my father came outside, grabbed me by my forearm, and led me into our room with an unfamiliar grip. Before I could say anything, tell him how foolish he had made me look in front of my friends, he derided me for being so naïve. Looked me in the eye, fear consuming his face, and said, "Son, I'm sorry, but you can't act the same as your white friends. You can't pretend to shoot guns. You can't run around in the dark. You can't hide behind anything other than your own teeth." (T16A)

Implicitly, African American children need to refrain from the very appearance of delinquency, for by virtue of their complexion, they are vulnerable to racial profiling.

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Racial discrimination. In light of recent racial profiling cases, much YouTube video content was devoted racial discrimination. A large part of the discussion focused on how to respond when racially profiled.

Racial profiling. Racial profiling is commonly understood as a discriminatory practice of targeting people based on their race. As mentioned earlier, this profiling can be aggravated by physical appearance, behavior, or events or, in many cases, can be unwarranted. Content implored African American parents to teach their children how to respond to this unjust practice (T1A, T10A, & T16A). To illustrate, one commentator detailed the following:

I think most men of color in this community or in this country really have had encounters with law enforcement. Riding along in my vehicle in my own community pretty close to my house, and we were pulled over, not given a reason why, we were pulled over, no traffic violations, not a suspicion of anything. We were made to get out of our vehicle; we were made to give the police information and to give them our identification and also give them our cell phones, which was odd to me. When they gave us our IDs back, we went to put [them] in our pockets, and as we went to put them in our pockets, the police officers…grabbed at their weapons and said keep your hands where we can see them. Scary moment, and we felt as though it . . . was a situation where we had to basically comply with everything that law enforcement was saying because you know [how] those situations can turn out. (T10A)

This illustration conveys the need to maintain respect and to refrain from arguing. Nevertheless, one parent disputed, "It's maddening. I get so frustrated and angry about having to prepare my kids for something that they're not responsible for. And these are conversations that people of other races do not have to have with their children" (T15A). Her sentiments echo the frustration

of many African American parents who fundamentally endeavor to raise their children in a safe environment in which conversations about racial discrimination and social injustices are unnecessary.

Given the current racial climate, T1A emphasized how parents can incubate their children from discriminatory acts. The content stressed that principles, such as positive racial identity, are antidotes to racial discrimination (T1A). When asked how parents can instill a positive African American identity in their children, a clinical psychologist suggested the following:

What I would suggest based on the research is really starting to instill that early. Making sure that you have positive images of African Americans in your home, whether art work or kente clothe. These are positive things many African Americans are familiar with. And making sure those cultural artifacts, in terms of books and other things, are present in the home, so kids have a positive cultural reality on which to derive their personal identity. (T1A)

This psychologist explained that studies have shown that parents can prepare and protect their children by promoting positive racial identity and a sense of connection to other African Americans (T1A).

Fighting racial discrimination through education. Analogous to promoting positive racial identity, education can prepare children to cope with racial discrimination. In T16A, the author and poet disclosed, "One of my favorite educators, Brazilian author and scholar Paulo Freire, speaks quite explicitly about the need for education to be used as a tool for critical awakening and shared humanity" (T16A). Through education, African American children can transcend racial discrimination and be introduced to a world that offers them endless opportunities. To enrich their children's educational experiences, commentators encouraged

African American parents to maintain engagement with the schools. When asked about the Baltimore mother who publically chastised her son, one parent responded, "I'm a teacher. I need you to come into the school, and if I'm calling you, I need you to come and be accountable for your child" (T10A). This mother emphasized the need for open communication between parents and teachers. Overall, communication was an essential theme raised in the content analyzed.

Largely, the overarching theme that emerged from the content recorded after Trayvon Martin's death was the manner in which African American families cope with racial discrimination. The following subthemes also emerged from the content: the deterioration of the African American family, the strength of the African American family, African American parental roles, racial profiling, and fighting racial discrimination through education.

Concluding Thoughts

To summarize, African American parents maintain a learning environment at home through connectedness, quality time, and open communication (T1B & T2B). They also guide their children, provide structure in the home, and involve their children in community events (T1B & T2B). Moreover, African American parents protect their children by instilling in them values and morals (T6B & T9B).

Historically, African American parents have agreed that it takes a village to raise their children. Content parsed from videos recorded before Trayvon Martin's death accentuated this belief. Videos showed that African Americans believed this village cultivated central principles, such as respect, limit setting, open communication, and connectedness. Regarding discipline, African American parents prized both parental and communal discipline. Furthermore, they guided their children though the process toward acculturation, for they were inclined to teach their children how to integrate into the dominant culture without compromising their own

cultural uniqueness. As such, these parents encouraged self-identity and self-awareness, which were accomplished by learning about African American history. Equally important, African American parents were praised for teaching and modeling healthy coping in the face of social injustices. Moreover, these parents esteemed protecting their children amid discrimination and other societal ills. Fundamentally, African American parents endeavored to insulate their children from potential risks.

As has been noted, content parsed from videos created after Trayvon Martin's death provided commentary about the African American family. The African American family not only consisted of parents and children, but also included the community known as the village. Through this village African Americans strengthened their resolve to fight against racial discrimination. Notably, much discussion was devoted to the deterioration of the African American family. The prevalence of single-mother, fatherless homes wrought dialogues about poverty, crime, school dropout rates, welfare, and prison. Nevertheless, content highlighted the resilience and strength of the African American family. In particular, it showed the many roles African American parents play to prepare their children to cope with societal challenges. Overall, many themes emerged from the YouTube video content. The question is whether the analysis of the selected videos answered the research question raised in the purpose of the study.

The purpose of this study was to determine if and how YouTube content on African American parenting changed in the face of community violence since the murder of Trayvon Martin. In the final analysis, content on African American parenting changed since Trayvon Martin's death. Content parsed from videos recorded before February 2012 focused on the themes of African American beliefs about parenting, discipline, communal parenting, acculturation, attachment styles, self-identity, and role modeling. Content also highlighted

values regarding African American history and ancestral connections. In short, from the content analyzed after February 2012, themes emerged about the deterioration of the African American family, racial discrimination, racial profiling, social injustices, community violence, victimization, and response to law enforcement. Content also revealed how parental modeling and education can counteract the social disparities plaguing African American communities throughout the nation.

Remarkably, video content created both before and after Trayvon Martin's death presented similar themes. During both time frames, content showcased parental roles and responsibilities. For example, parents were presented as leaders, protectors, and their children's advocates. In addition, the importance of education was underscored in before and after videos. Finally, such ideals as self-love, self-identity, and self-esteem were considered noteworthy before and after Martin's death.

Content also showcased noteworthy differences. Themes emerged from videos recorded before Trayvon Martin's death focused on understanding and spending time with children whereas videos recorded after his death focused on preparing and protecting children against violence and racism. Also, the before content highlighted such themes as resourcefulness and respect for authority; however, after content accentuated such themes as victimization and contempt for authority. One striking difference was the conflicting views on discipline. Before content discouraged parents from berating and spanking children. However, the after content praised the Baltimore mother for chastising her son verbally and physically. This conflicting view is important because it speaks to a form of violence. While some would argue that this form of discipline can contribute to community violence, others may argue that it is a necessary protective strategy. Overall, unlike after content, before content did not include anything about

the deterioration of the family or the prevalence of crime and racism. The exclusion of these factors was likely the result of the limited media attention devoted to these matters when those videos were recorded.

Holistic Coping Before Trayvon Martin's Death

Although African American parents have instilled ideals such as protectiveness and respect for authority in their children, parents have generally had to contend with their children's vulnerability to community violence. Part of this study endeavored to analyze how African American parents employed holistic measures to cope with violence in their communities. These measures include the following: physical (e.g., diet and exercise), psychological (e.g., mental health, coping strategies,), spiritual (e.g., cultural and/or religious practices), and social (e.g., interpersonal skills, family life, community activism, advocacy, professional endeavors).

Content recorded before Trayvon Martin's death highlighted how African American parents holistically coped with community violence and institutionalized racism. Physically, content emphasized the need for parents to have access to modern medicine and vaccinations to raise healthy children (T1B). It also stressed that parents should provide their children with a healthy diet (T2B). In fact, a clinical psychologist posited that parents should limit fast food, for it creates unhealthy eating habits (T2B). He argued the following:

> …We have this oral fixation where we just have to have something good going down our throat all the time…Good habits versus bad habits—[bad habits]only get worse… know if you used to drink a soda pop and Kool-Aid versus water, juice, and milk; there is need for instant gratification…It's just as easy [to get] into alcohol and other drugs right because you want something that makes you feel good. (T2B)

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The clinical psychologist maintained that seeking instant gratification through dietary consumption might lead to seeking pleasure through substance. Content also stressed that, at minimum, parents can prepare their children to cope with problems by meeting their dietary and other physical needs (T10B).

In addition to preparing children to cope with violence physically, content approached psychological coping strategies. Specifically, content focused on behavioral modification, coping strategies, and social learning. A clinical psychologist noted that parents could teach children anger control and emotional regulation (T1B). He also expressed that attachment and protection incubate children against trauma (T1B). This psychologist asserted the following:

> Children need to learn how they can deal with and minimize the trauma that they experience in life because you cannot get out of life without being traumatized. And people don't know how to deal with that frequently, but you need to know how to take that traumatic helplessness that people experience and turn it into learned helpfulness. (T1B)

When children develop learned helpfulness, they are better prepared to cope with traumatic events. Furthermore, content highlighted that children who possess a healthy sense of self, self-discipline, and self-esteem have the fortitude to face violence with relative ease (T2B & T7B). To cultivate self-esteem, parents need to discipline their children, set appropriate limits, and teach them about respect (T2B, T4B, & T5B). One commentator went so far as to suggest, "The black community really need to start teaching and gaining better control over their children" (T4B). Essentially, his argument reinforces the notion that it takes a village to raise a child. This village also teaches healthy coping by valuing children's concerns and reinforcing their positive behaviors (T2B). The most effective way to do so, based on content, is through modeling (T2B).

A psychologist discouraged parents from merely dictating to their children   (T2B). He

admonished parents "to have a model of what we expect from our children" (T2B). Content also

discouraged parents from berating and spanking children, for those approaches arose from

slavery, in which "the master made the workers afraid of him by flipping them" (T3B). Of note,

content accentuated the need for parents to discipline their children in preparation for adulthood

(T8B).

Content also revealed that a part of preparing children for adulthood and trauma occurs

through spirituality, which encompasses religious and cultural values. Although limited, content

reflected that ancient teachings found in the Bible, Quran, and other religious texts address the

need to guide and instill values in children. A psychologist highlighted, "In the Bible, in the

Quran...there are ancient technologies where people have written about how to treat people and

how to treat children" (T1B). These texts tend to be a springboard for family values. Hence,

content highlighted that "every family has their own culture. Every family has their own ways of

doing things, so they have normal values and their own beliefs" (T9B). Parents need to be

deliberate about implementing these clearly defined values and beliefs (T9B). In other words,

parents cannot subject themselves to the status quo. They have to rear their children in

alignment with African American values and beliefs, which develop through familial and social

ties.

According to content, parents can help their children cope with community violence

through social connectedness. Therefore, content encouraged parents to incorporate cultural and

social elements to their parenting (T3B). It also emphasized the need for parents to teach their

children to help others in their communities, such as by "helping the elderly across the street"

(T6B). Content also stressed the importance of facilitating discussions about racism with

children (T6B). These discussions, according to an educator and author, should be underscored by conversations about respect, cultural awareness, and understanding (T7B).   Likewise, educational settings can prepare children to learn adaptive coping skills (T9B). In school and community settings, for example, children learn respect for elders (T9B). Nevertheless, content revealed that children are primarily socialized within the family structure (T10B). An author upheld, "To raise a child you need a parental coalition of a man and a woman" (T10B). Through this coalition, children can learn to develop healthy relationships with others. They can also learn to bond with others in community settings (T9B). In sum, content before Trayvon Martin's death displayed physical, psychological, spiritual, and social coping strategies.

Holistic Coping After Trayvon Martin's Death

While content developed after Trayvon Martin's death highlighted holistic responses to community violence, most content was devoted to social coping strategies. Examining the physical, psychological, and spiritual responses to violence is worthwhile before divulging these strategies.

Content emphasized the need to address children's overall physical health and well-being. For example, a psychologist raised the issue of health disparities prevalent among African Americans (T1A). She did not identify specific strategies to address this problem. Nevertheless, a minister promoted healthy eating and discouraged parents from giving their children "junk food" (T2A). One parent shared that a part of nurturing and caring for her children was through feeding them wholesome meals (T23A).

Content also revealed that healthy coping stems from psychological factors. As such, a psychologist encouraged parents to consider their children's personalities and temperaments when discussing such topics as racial discrimination (T1A). She also stressed that building

resilience in children is vital to their emotional health (T1A). Content underscored this point in

that parents need to cultivate self-love (T2A & 15A). Acknowledging that children need

boundaries, content suggested that parents set limits, discipline, teach respect, and spend quality

time with their children (T17A, 20A, & 23A). A notable psychologist declared, "Discipline must

be done with love, or it's not discipline; it's abuse" (T21A). He stressed that a correlation exists

between parents who have a healthy self-esteem and effective parenting (T21A). Accordingly,

one mother disclosed that she strengthens her emotional well-being through self-care practices

(T23A). She shared, "I like to take time for myself, so after I'm done with all the things that

need to be taken care of, … I like to just relax. I throw my music on, take a bath, and I watch a

little YouTube" (T23A). This parent also expressed that she guides her children by maintaining

African traditions and refraining from "Americanizing" them (T23A).

In addition to maintaining African traditions, content revealed that parents cultivate

healthy coping through spirituality. Content showed that parents can incorporate reading

spiritual texts, such as the Bible, into their regimen (T2A). It also advised that a relationship

with God is imperative (T6A). Acknowledging the importance of education, a radio host

asserted that a relationship with God takes precedence over anything else (T6A). He proclaimed,

"We are a spirit created in the image of God" (T6A). Therefore, parents need to lead and guide

their children's' lives through spirituality (T6A). Otherwise, the radio host warned, "We are,

creating the children in their image, which is an image of Satan" (T6A). Some content suggested

that, at the very least, parents need to set moral standards by which their children can live

(T12A). Content stressed the importance of establishing these values based on African traditions

(T1A & T201A). One mother recommended, "If you have certain morals values and lessons you

want to instill into your children, you have to be very careful of the company that you keep

around them, so basically the point I'm trying to make is if I was in Africa…the village will take

care of them" (T20A). Concerning company, a psychologist cautioned parents to protect their

children from negative influences (T21A). He alerted, "So you gotta recognize that we got

spiritual vampires in the black community" (T21A). The psychologist explained that people

areuniversally exposed to these "vampires" in social settings.

Given the presence of negative forces in the African American community, content

revealed that parents promote healthy coping within social contexts. Content unveiled that age-

appropriate conversations about community violence is vital (T1A). In particular, content

publicized the need for conversations about the "black male code," which prepares male African

Americans for encounters with law enforcement (T1A, T10A, T15A, & T16A). A documentary

encapsulates this idea. Some respondents commented the following:

> MAN: There's this unspoken code of white — of racism and white supremacy that says
> that my life doesn't matter.

> WOMAN: You can put your hands up and say — and cooperate and say that I'm choking
> and still be killed, and then there's no repercussions.

> WOMAN: It's maddening. I get so frustrated and angry about having to prepare my kids
> for something that they're not responsible for.

> WOMAN: And these are conversations that people of other races do not have to have
> with their children.

> MAN: The conversation with him was really just, look, you're a beautiful young boy.

> WOMAN: Being African American is a wonderful thing; it's a wonderful blessing. You
> have come from great people, but it's also a hard thing.

> MAN: In America, because of your skin color, as a black boy and as a black man, we are
> going to be dealing with a lot of danger.

> MAN: Under no circumstance are you to talk to the police if you're arrested until I get
> there.

> WOMAN: Do what they say. Don't get into any arguments.

WOMAN: Make sure your hands are out of your pockets, so they can see.

MAN: These are the questions you can ask. This is who to call. This is what happens if this bad thing — it's not like, 'Please, master, don't whip me.' No, it's like, 'Excuse me, sir. What's your badge number? I'm going to film this.'

MAN: If you want police brutality to stop, if you want police to treat you like a human being, then you have to see yourself as a human being.

WOMAN: You have every right in this world that anyone does.

MAN: What I love about you, as my son, is, I remember when we thought about having you, and, you know, knowing that we wanted you and watching you grow. (T15A)

This content captures the sentiments of many African American parents. Nevertheless, content confirms that conversations like these help families cope with institutionalized racism.

To address institutionalized racism, content showed that healthy coping arises from conversations about a positive self-identity and role models. Inclusively, content showcased the following strategies: acknowledge that racism exists, expose children to positive African American images, connect children with elders in the community, educate them about their heritage and history, teach children about racial pride, consistently praise children, and give them hope for the future (T1A, T2A, T7A, T10A, & T18A).

In effect, parents can exemplify social acts to teach healthy coping. Content reinforced the notion of communal parenting. For example, a mother encouraged parents to align with people who ascribe to the same ideals as they do (T20A). A panel of men advised parents to be active in their communities through advocacy, mentorship, and connecting with a supportive system, such as community organizations (T7A, T10A, & 18A).

Communities consist of families; therefore, content provided commentary about the role of the family in teaching children healthy coping. Owing to their skin color, African American children are often seen as a threat. As such, content stressed the importance of providing

children with the best quality of life (T18A). Therefore, parents need to ensure that their homes

are peaceful, loving, and organized. While content highlights the strength of single-mother

homes, it emphasized the benefits of two-parent homes (T9A, T13A, T21A, & T24A). One

commentator maintained, "Single mothers can't raise boys" (T13A). Another conveyed,

"Having two parents in the home is really the most important thing.   I believe that you have the

best results when you have two parents in the home. Certainly, economically…all the research

bears out that when you have two parents in the home, the family saves more—does better etc."

(T24A). To that end, a strong and supportive family prepares children to cope with community

violence and institutionalized racism.

In conclusion, pervasive violence is a dismal reality in many African American

communities. Exposure to violence and crime can be traumatic and disheartening for parents

and their children. Despite this reality, content showed that parents have applied and taught their

children holistic ways to cope with community violence. Interestingly, videos recorded prior to

Trayvon Martin's death provided a more comprehensive understanding of holistic coping.

Central to videos recorded after Trayvon Martin's death was social coping. Generally, physical,

psychological, and spiritual coping strategies were underrepresented in these latter videos. This

dynamic may speak to the rise of racial profiling, police brutality, and institutionalized racism

over the past 6 years.

Chapter 4: Discussion

Limitations of the Current Study

This study had several significant limitations. It used only video content to analyze African American parenting since the death of Trayvon Martin. Videos cannot communicate all the ways in which African American parents responded to this tragic event. Furthermore, the individuals featured in these videos did not necessarily reflect public opinion or represent African American parents as a whole.

Another limitation of the study was the lack of diversity. Persons who do not use technology and social media to express concerns may be underrepresented in the data. For example, senior citizens may be less inclined to use YouTube to share their views on African American parenting. As such, certain demographics were not represented in the examined video content. In addition, the study primarily focused on heterosexual parents. Nuances that are unique to same-sex parents may not have been captured by this study. Also, the lack of diversity was the result of selection bias in that the sample selection was not necessarily reflective of public opinion.

An additional significant limitation was the small sample size. The selected videos narrowed the number of emerging themes, and they showed a lack of generalizability. This lack of generalizability and depth of content produced biased and inconsequential findings. Even more constricting, the content analyzed came only from YouTube videos dated over an 8-year period.

An analysis of video content was also a limitation. This researcher had no opportunity to probe participants for clarification or to gain better insight into the commentaries presented. Also, videos may exclude information that would otherwise be shared in live interviews.

Another limitation was that coders were at a disadvantage. They were unable to view selected video. Consequently, coders were unable to capture nuances, such as body language, tone of voice, temperament, and emotions. Furthermore, transcripts were produced from a close-captioning system used by YouTube for auto-generated transcripts. Many of the transcripts may not have been syntactically accurate. Therefore, some content could have been misconstrued and certain elements discounted.

Implications for Findings

There were several implications for findings. The viewership indicated that people were interested in commentaries about community violence, that the issue was prevalent in the African American community or society as a whole, and that people were ready to address and combat the problem. In addition, YouTube has a feature that allows viewers to press a "thumbs up" to display that they liked the videos. The number of likes may have implied that viewers resonated with the content shared or at the very least considered the video valuable.

Viewership rates on YouTube videos were also indicators of community engagement. Comments posted on this video-sharing platform may have been suggestive of the public discourse around community violence. It may have also suggested that YouTube and other forms of social media cultivated a sense of community, emotional support, understanding, and mutual encouragement. In general, views, comments, and thumbs up of YouTube videos may have confirmed that viewers developed a sense of responsibility for themselves and others, particularly pertaining to community violence.

In addition to community engagement, the content about how African American parents cope with community violence signified common coping strategies. While the literature posits that African American parents tend to use emotion-focused coping strategies (e.g., verbalizing

emotions, crying) and show increased signs of emotional distress (Sharpe & Boyas, 2011),

findings from this study indicated that most parents used problem-focused coping strategies.

Contrary to emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping (e.g., active planning and

counseling) has often been associated with fewer mental-health challenges (Arias & Pape, 1999;

Mitchell & Hodson, 1983). The content revealed nothing about seeking counseling; however, it

showed that parents seek to problem solve through preventive measures, such as instilling morals

and values in their children through open communication (T10A & T23A) and supervising the

way their children present themselves (T1A).

As research showed, some parents used emotion-focused coping strategies. This coping

strategy was illustrated in the video about the Baltimore mother who chastised her son for

engaging in a riot. Of note, some African American parents have a history of exhibiting poor

health factors (e.g., hypertension, obesity, diabetes.), which may exacerbate both parental and

emotional distress consequences (Sharpe & Boyas, 2011). Additionally, while not much content

was devoted to health, one psychologist discussed how family conflict and divorce could lead to

health conditions, such as cancer (T21A). The same psychologist expressed that children suffer

from obesity and childhood diabetes and present with suicidal risk given the breakdown of the

family system (T21A).

In light of coping styles, one must consider how several mediating factors, such as age,

family structure, cultural norms, and environmental influences, impact the ways African

American parents cope with community violence. Given the limited content, this study could not

thoroughly examine how the coping strategies of African American parents related to race,

culture, and coping styles. Accordingly, findings from this study may help to inform other

trauma-related research.

Nevertheless, video content raised the phenomenon known as post traumatic slavery syndrome (PTSS). Content unveiled that PTSS caused a divide between men and women because husbands were historically separated from their wives (T24A). Learning about the long-term effects of PTSS on parenting and community violence would have been helpful. Gaining more insight about trauma-related research would have also been clinically beneficial.

Of additional clinical benefit would have been discussion about the inferiority complex and mental slavery common among African Americans. Because many African American parents recognized racial oppression, content featured discussions about the importance of instilling self-identity and self-worth in children. One clinical psychologist even suggested exposing children to positive African American images (T1A). Nevertheless, more dialogue about self-image disparity and colorism is necessary given its historical context. For instance, in a study, psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1950) designed an experiment to evaluate how segregation impacted African American children. The study involved these children choosing between white dolls and brown dolls. The researchers found that 65% of the African American children preferred the white doll (Clark & Clark, 1950). The Clark doll test demonstrated that African American children once attributed negative characteristics to their own race. In fact, many children in the study ascribed positive qualities to white dolls and negative features to black dolls (Clark & Clark, 1950). Fundamentally, the study, along with subsequent doll tests, served as commentary on the impact of society and culture on African American children's self-perception and self-esteem. Given this researcher is a cognitive-behavioral therapist, research exploring relationships between self-perception and community violence would have been advantageous. Similarly, in briefly commenting on vulnerability to trauma, a psychologist mentioned the need to reprogram one's mind away from a victim mentality (T21A). This

reprogramming occurs during childhood development. In effect, children develop their mindsets

from three origins: early childhood experiences, their innate temperament, and cultural influence

(Beck, 2011). Parents, therefore, have the eximious task of shaping their children's mindset.

This feat can be challenging.

In general, parenting is a lifelong challenge. Stevenson, Davis, and Abdul-Kabir (2001)

postulated, "The hardest job in America today is raising children—especially African American

children" (p. 2). In *Stickin' To, Watchin' Over, and Getting' With: An African American

Parent's Guide to Discipline* , Stevenson et al. (2001) provided a framework from which African

American parents can guide and protect their children from racism while simultaneously

developing their character. Interestingly, their text is reflective of the discussions presented in

the YouTube content. In particular, suggestions about discipline, African American parenting,

and racism align with the before-and-after emerging themes.

Through discipline, parents can help children maximize their potential (Stevenson et al.,

2001). Authors highlight that within African American communities, parents commonly speak

of discipline in terms of the biblical phrase, "Spare the rod and spoil child" (Proverbs 13:24).

People customarily interpret the rod as a tool to spank children. However, the Hebrew word for

rod represents an instrument, "village," staff for chastisement, tribe, and race of people

(Stevenson et al., 2001). Hence, the rod not only represents physical discipline, but also refers to

the nurturance and guidance of the tribe, family, community, and race (Stevenson et al., 2001).

Notably, children respond differently to different individuals. As such, when parents expose

their children to trustworthy supports, they increase the likelihood of their children responding

positively to discipline and developing healthy relationships with others (Stevenson et al., 2001).

Given this point, effective discipline occurs only in the context of a relationship, and it requires

an element of teaching (Stevenson et al., 2001). Hence, discipline can be seen as a shepherding

process of praise, accountability, love, teaching, and connection (Stevenson et al., 2001).

To effectively enforce discipline, three key ingredients are necessary. Raising African

American children requires affection, protection, and correction (Stevenson et al., 2001).

Nurturing, supervising, and disciplining children takes courage and cultural fortitude (Stevenson

et al., 2001). Therefore, as YouTube content revealed, it takes a village to combat established

and institutionalized racism and discrimination (Stevenson et al., 2001). The caveat is that

children must trust their parents in order for discipline to work (Stevenson et al., 2001). In

essence, children associate correction with caring. They also expect their parents to operate from

a place of love (Stevenson et al., 2001). Given a closer look at discipline, Stevenson et al.

(2001) formulated the following:

> Three Ingredients of Effective Discipline in the Black Community
> 1. *Stickin' To*—unconditional love and support (affection)
> 2. *Watchin' Over*—loving supervision (protection)
> 3. *Gettin' With*—loving confrontation and accountability (correction)

The first ingredient of Stickin' To means that discipline starts with loving children regardless of

their performance. This kind of discipline manifests through active engagement in children's

lives, active listening, showing affection, and ongoing support (Stevenson et al., 2001).

YouTube content showcased parents who disclosed how affection played a role in their child

rearing. For instance, in sharing her bonding time with her daughter, one mother disclosed, "We

do doll's hair and stuff like that" (T23A). Watchin' Over involves monitoring children, hearing

their words, paying attention to their unspoken language, observing their body language, reading

their feelings, and understanding their needs (Stevenson et al., 2001). Content also stressed the

importance of giving children voice (T2B) and maintaining age-appropriate communication with

them (T1A). Finally, Gettin' With involves face-to-face, up-close interactions that encompass

correction and accountability. Parents have to be deliberate about correcting children without breaking their spirits (Stevenson et al., 2001). Accordingly, parents guide their children through the decision-making process, instill values in them, and hold them accountable for their actions (Stevenson et al., 2001). When parents punish instead of hold their children accountable, they may develop anger and hostility. This belief was more prevalent in the before content. Some of the after content esteemed physical discipline (T10A & T11A), whereas before content stressed communication and boundary setting (T1B & T2B)

Whichever discipline approach they take, African American parents face unique challenges. While other ethnicities and cultural groups face their own challenges, African Americans have endured enormous hardships that have had long-lasting effects on their families and in their communities (Stevenson et al., 2001). As such, "How we treat our children today is not only a statement about our future but a reflection of our past experiences…" (Stevenson et al., 2001, p. 14). Undoubtedly, parents can develop healthy and wealthy children through exposure to cultural family rituals, customs, maxims, and other enriching life experiences (Stevenson et al., 2001).

Unfortunately, society has misconceptions about African American parenting styles and child behaviors (Stevenson et al., 2001). If given credence, the media would have people believing that all African American parents give their children much-deserved spankings, which ultimately lead to children becoming violent adults (Stevenson et al., 2001). Although research has found that parents facing financial challenges and other life stressors are more inclined to use corporal punishment (Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000), one must consider the context in which children are disciplined (Stevenson et al., 2001).

The reality is that racism trauma influences African American parenting (Stevenson et al., 2001). By and large, many African Americans grew up hearing "get the switch" (Stevenson et al., 2001). This type of physical discipline aligns with a perpetual belief that African American children are unworthy of respect and need to be controlled (Stevenson et al., 2001). Moreover, this belief supports historical ideals regarding African enslavement (Stevenson et al., 2001). Regrettably, the psychological damage of racism reinforces negative stereotypes about youth and parenting (Stevenson et al., 2001). Also, a pattern of blaming the victim becomes a common psychological response to trauma (Stevenson et al., 2001).

In addition to understanding the effects of racism, considering African American cultural style of parenting is essential. African Americans have a unique way of communicating, behaving, and expressing emotion (Stevenson et al., 2001). To illustrate, when the Baltimore mother publically chastised her son, many people understood that she took a protective rather than punitive approach to disciplining her son (T10A & T11A). Customarily, African Americans use voice, body language, rhythm, and tone to express themselves. Consequently, these cultural nuances are often misjudged or diagnosed as deviant by the dominant culture (Stevenson et al., 2001). Hence, misinterpretations of African American behavior have caused many parents to reject professional and clinical advice (Stevenson et al., 2001). Nevertheless, the key is to show African American parents how to use their cultural style to instill confidence and discipline in their children (Stevenson et al., 2001).

In summary, effective African American parenting involves cultural coping and cultural pride. More importantly, discipline is merely an extension of love (Stevenson et al., 2001). A loving disciplinary approach is to improve African American children's psychological future by addressing the current state of violence against African Americans.

Relevance of the Study to Theory and Practice of Psychology

Part of the impetus for focusing on the challenges to African American parenting in the face of community violence was to address the current state of violence against African Americans (i.e., the killing of African American men and women by police officers). Moreover, this study is relevant to the theory and practice of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), for it may help African American parents to evaluate their thoughts about community violence, to develop healthy thinking patterns, and to use holistic coping strategies.

One culturally adapted treatment intervention is entitled Oh Happy Day Class (OHDC; Ward & Brown, 2015). This treatment protocol was adapted from the Coping with Depression (CWD) course, which is based on social learning theory (Lewinsohn, 1987). In essence, OHDC is a psychoeducational group that helps African American participants to develop skills to cope with depression. Session topics include the following: Introduction and Overview of Group Counseling and Nguzo Saba Principles; Depression – Etiology, Risk Factors, Symptoms, & Treatment; Men/Women and Depression; Stigma and Access Barriers; Depression and Chronic Physical Illness; Community Resources; Anger Management; Stress Management and Learning to Relax; Constructive Thinking; Forgiveness; Depression and Pleasant Activities; Maintaining Gains & Developing a Life Plan Using Nguzo Saba; Wrap up and Review; and Reunion (Ward & Brown, 2015). Overall, the OHDC treatment has been found to be effective in reducing symptoms of depression (Ward & Brown, 2015).

In addition to OHDC, trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) may help African American children and adolescents cope with community violence (Cohen, 2016). TF-CBT is a CBT protocol to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The aim of treatment is to reduce PTSD symptoms and improve mental-health functioning (Cohen, 2016). TF-CBT

fundamentally involves individual therapy that helps children to develop emotional skills

training and to confront the events that have led to their PTSD symptoms (Cohen, 2016). The

treatment was initially developed to treat sexual trauma, but it has expanded to address other

traumatic events, such as intimate-partner violence and traumatic grief (Cohen, 2016). TF-CBT

is exclusively used for children and adolescents who present with clinical levels of PTSD.

Requiring between 12 and 15 sessions, the treatment aims to teach coping skills and prepare

children and adolescents to confront and address painful or scary experiences (Cohen, 2016). In

general, TF-CBT has been found to be effective in that participants reported significantly lower

levels of PTSD, depressive, and mental-health symptoms (Cohen, 2016). However, TF-CBT had

no significant bearing on anxiety reduction (Cohen, 2016). Furthermore, no literature focused on

the use of TF-CBT with African American populations.

An intervention that has shown to be promising in reducing juvenile delinquency is

multisystemic therapy (MST; Farrington, Gaffney, Lösel, & Ttofi, 2017). This ecologically

driven treatment accounts for the social systems in which adolescents are immersed (Markham,

2017). MST is for adolescents aged 10 to 17 years old. The treatment aims to reduce

antisocial behavior, prevent out-of-home placement, and identify if other problems, such as

substance abuse or other socioemotional problems, are present (Markham, 2017). MST is

based on the nine core principles of Multisystemic Therapy: finding the fit; focusing on

positive strengths; increasing responsibility; present-focused, action-oriented, and well-defined

problems; targeting sequences; developmentally appropriate; continuous effort; evaluation and

accountability; and generalization (Henggeler, Schoenwald, Borduin, Rowland, & Cunningham,

2009).). Notably, MST is one of the most empirically researched treatment approaches to

treating antisocial behaviors in adolescents (Markham, 2017).   Findings indicate that it is a

comprehensive and widely used treatment modality (Markham, 2017). Granted, no literature is exclusively devoted to how MST has been used with African American youth. However, one article showed a study that included 38 adolescents. Of those adolescents, 11% were African Americans (Hogue, Dauber, & Henderson, 2017). Whatever the case, one of the greatest benefits of MST is that it emphasizes the need for adolescents to use the programs offered in their own communities, such as advocacy groups. MST might be a particularly effective approach for African American youth and families because it works within their ecological system. In other words, treatment extends beyond the client; it focuses on his or her entire "village."

Possible Implications Related to Advocacy

Community violence is prevalent in many African American, inner-city communities across the nation. Families of low socioeconomic status, in particular, contend with several challenges. So many communities are plagued with poverty, crime, disenfranchisement, substandard education for youth, urban blight, and single-parent homes. Despite these challenges, Dr. Fatima Hafiz-Wahid, a community activist, describes Chester, PA—an inner city as a community where families are strong and resilient (personal communication, November 5, 2015). Therefore, advocacy for African American families residing in urban communities could focus on building stronger, more resilient families, thus possibly decreasing the likelihood of community violence.

A community advocacy program composed of community residents and leaders can address the holistic needs of African American parents through strengths-based, person-centered practices. An advocacy team could be regularly trained by behavioral-health professionals,

county officials, politicians, religious leaders, and community activists to assess the quality of services and to recommend improvement where needed.

Volunteers can offer opportunities for community members to voice their concerns through surveys, interviews, and a follow-up group session. These methods can focus on such factors as quality of life, community service delivery, satisfaction with services and supports, community integration, visions of the future, participation in developing goals, systems that are working for them, and recommendations for improvements. The advocacy team can also recruit community members to volunteer at schools, churches, libraries, food banks, and community centers. Overall, the advocacy group members can model and uphold respect, hope, and resiliency as they continuously inform African American parents and their families about behavioral-health resources available to them.

Given the long-term benefits of advocacy groups, highlighting some existing groups that advocate for African American and underserved communities is worthwhile. *The Huffington Post* recently published an article entitled, "28 Organizations That Empower Black Communities" (Hill, 2017). The article provides a list of organizations and movements that fight to mobilize racial and political equality. The following organizations and movements are relevant to this study. Black Lives Matter was created in response to George Zimmerman's acquittal in 2013. The movement focuses on maintaining a national dialogue about state-sanctioned violence (Hill, 2017). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a historical civil-rights organization that strives to achieve racial justice for residents of urban communities (Hill, 2017). Rapper and actor Common founded the Common Ground Foundation to provide opportunities to underserved youth through mentorship, community service, and the arts (Hill, 2017). The Trayvon Martin Foundation endeavors to

spread awareness about gun violence to families who have been victims (Hill, 2017).   Trayvon Martin's death also inspired the Million Hoodies movement, composed of a coalition of youth organizing to end mass incarceration and the criminalization of young African American men (Hill, 2017). Similarly, Color of Change works to end the widespread racial injustice in the criminal-justice system. The Black Youth Project explores African American millennials' attitudes and cultural norms to capitalize on their life (Hill, 2017).   Sister Love, one of the limited organizations for African American women, is an Atlanta-based organization committed to educating women of color about reproductive health, safe sex, and HIV/AIDS (Hill, 2017). Altogether, these organizations and movements address the devastating effects of community violence within African American communities and upon African Americans across the nation.

Suggestions for Future Work

African Americans who have survived traumatic life events, such as their children dying from gun violence, represent a people devastatingly impacted by traumatic grief and loss. Although research has explored physical, psychological, spiritual, and social coping strategies (Davis et al., 2000; Murphy et al., 2003; Sharpe & Boyas, 20011, the literature does not include any psychotherapeutic treatment protocols that have been developed to improve holistic coping. Therefore, future research needs to examine the impact psychotherapeutic treatment can have on the mental, physical, and spiritual well-being of African American survivors of traumatic life events. Such research may inform how behavioral-health clinicians may support African Americans as they advance through the healing process. Future directions of research could focus on creating a multimedia CBT treatment program that incorporates culturally adaptive coping strategies for this population.

CBT is the most widely studied treatment modality for treating patients who have vicariously or directly experienced violent trauma (Horowitz, Guyer, & Sanders, 2015). CBT is a highly structured, time-limited, and present-oriented therapeutic approach for treating disorders, such as depression (Beck, 2011). The treatment model involves cognitive formulation and conceptualization of patients' beliefs and behavioral patterns (Beck, 2011). The cognitive model maintains that dysfunctional thinking is pervasive among psychological disturbances (Beck, 2011). Hence, the focus of CBT is to help patients assess their thinking in more realistic and adaptive ways, so they experience an improved emotional state and behavioral response (Beck, 2011). More specifically, CBT would help African American parents deal with community violence. Through interventions, such as communication skills training, problem solving, cognitive restructuring, Socratic questioning, and stress-reduction strategies, African Americans can confront and defuse the effects of community violence on their families. Hence, the role of the therapist is to produce cognitive changes—challenge patients' thoughts and beliefs to yield sustainable emotional and behavioral change (Beck, 2011).

Although little is known about a multimedia CBT model, researchers have begun to examine the use of telecommunications technologies and Internet-based intervention to deliver psychological and behavioral treatments (Mohr et al,, 2010). Information on the acceptability and effectiveness of multimedia treatment is minimal (Mohr et al., 2010). Yet, these treatment modalities have become more widespread in the Western world (Wagner, Schulz, & Knaevelsrud, 2012). For instance, Internet interventions for individuals diagnosed with PTSD have been found to be more effective in reducing symptoms in comparison to in-person interventions (Wagner & Maercker, 2010).

Cognitive-behavioral treatments include various interventions that are effective for treating several psychological diagnoses and symptoms, such as anxiety disorders and depression (Horrell, 2008). Few studies have tested the effectiveness of this empirically supported treatment modality for ethnic minorities in the United States. In a search of PsycINFO and MEDLINE databases, 12 studies were identified that explored the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral interventions for African Americans with a range of diagnoses. Among these studies, the sample was characterized by low education level, poverty, and elevated rates of abuse and trauma. CBT was found to decrease depressive symptoms and to improve social functioning (Horrell, 2008).

In addition to investigating the effects of a psychotherapeutic treatment protocol for African American parents, future research can explore the absence of discussions about African American female youth in the face of community violence. More recently, contemporary news in mass media about girls is increasingly grim (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2013). While the notion of "bad" girls has been known for years, media images of "gangster" girls have catapulted over the past decade (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2013). These girls are portrayed as just as menacing as their male counterparts (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2013). While their aggression and violence have recently dominated girl culture literature, research seems to be lacking on criminalized girls, the masculinization of female defiance, breaking gender norms, and racialized and class-based consequences of policies and practices about the aggression of all girls (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2013). Furthermore, few studies have focused on the nature of the paternalistic system, which aims to protect girls and subtly classifies them as a youthful underclass (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2013). Therefore, future research should give attention to adolescent girls and their families, especially given the fact that 21st-century parents are anxious about their daughters'

sexuality and safety in ways that often yield silence about the risks girls encounter (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2013).

In conclusion, this study established that conversations about African American parenting changed after the death of Trayvon Martin, which occurred on February 26, 2012. Content showed differences between emerging themes before Trayvon Martin's death and after his death. The before emerging themes highlighted beliefs about African American parenting and acculturation. These included principles of communal parenting, respect for authority, giving children voice, and self-identity. While after emerging themes also addressed self-identity, the overarching themes were African American families and racial discrimination. In light of these differences, the predominant message of the before and after content was the following African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child."

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Appendix

Demographics for YouTube Videos

Code	Date Posted	Date Viewed	Race	Gender	Position	Commentators	Views	Likes	Comments
T1B	11.23.09	9.1.17	AA	M	CP	1	1,518	16	3
T2B	12.31.11	9.1.17	AA	M, F	CP & J	2	678	8	0
T3B	12.10.09	9.1.17	CAU	M	CP & J	2	777	4	0
T4B	7.23.11	9.1.17	AA	M	V	1	427	0	6
T5B	3.5.10	9.1.17	AA	F	M & D	2	753	22	20
T6B	12.10.11	9.1.17	AA	F	Psych	1	415	4	1
T7B	8.23.11	9.1.17	AA	M	E & A	1	2,624	33	2
T8B	2.26.11	9.1.17	AA	M	E & A	1	3,287	14	3
T9B	3.17.10	9.1.17	AA	M	V	1	493	9	7
T10B	11.29.10	9.1.17	AA	F	A	1	3,425	84	8
T1A	4.12.12	9.1.17	AA	F	CP	1	532	6	1
T2A	7.24.12	9.1.17	AA	M	Min	1	114,536	931	112
T4A	6.13.16	9.1.17	AA	M	J	1	1,296,976	9,000	3,184
T6A	6.10.16	9.1.17	AA	M	J	1	1,642	50	40
T7A	1.28.13	9.1.17	AA	M	J & P	4	677	7	1
T9A	7.22.13	9.1.17	CAU	M	J	1	11,151	47	15
T10A	5.1.15	9.1.17	AA	M, F	J, Ath, M	4	2,119	15	11
T11A	4.29.15	9.1.17	AA, LAT, CAU	M, F	J, M & S	6	15,533	87	49
T12A	9.28.15	9.1.17	AA	M	A	1	1,199	108	9
T13A	1.29.13	9.1.17	AA	M	V	1	18,686	257	280
T15A	3.20.15	9.1.17	CAU, AA	M, F	J, M & F	12	6,182	58	Disabled
T16A	4.23.15	2.5.17	AA	M	A	1	244,476	5,425	309
T17A	12.19.12	9.1.17	AFR	F	Act	1	3,037	58	14
T18A	7.8.16	9.1.17	AA	M, F	FA & M	3	626,075	27,000	10,183
T19A	7.19.16	2.5.17	CAU	M	V	1	1,494	65	106
T20A	12.6.13	9.1.17	AA	F	M	1	311	9	3
T21A	3.26.13	9.1.17	AA	M	CP	1	430,074	4,000	535
T22A	2.28.14	9.1.17	AA	F	A	1	16,553	139	63
T23A	12.6.13	9.1.17	AA	F	M	1	958	20	7
T24A	12.26.12	9.1.17	AA	M	A, Act	1	14,860	297	90

Legend

AA- African Americans	F- Female	Psych-Psychiatrist
CAU- Caucasians	CP- Clinical Psychologist	E- Educator
LAT- Latino	J- Journalist	A- Author
AFR-African	M-Mother	Ath-Athlete
M- Male	FA-Father	Act- Activist