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Rebecca M. Swann

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TAG-TEAM BACK AGAIN:  
USING MEMORY AS METHOD TO UNDERSTAND THE INTERGENERATIONAL  
TRANSMISSION OF EGALITARIAN PARENTING IN MY BLACK FAMILY

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

REBECCA M. SWANN

Montclair State University

Upper Montclair, NJ

May 2020

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Jennifer Urban

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation  
TAG-TEAM BACK AGAIN: USING MEMORY AS  
METHOD TO UNDERSTAND THE  
INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF  
EGALITARIAN PARENTING IN MY BLACK FAMILY

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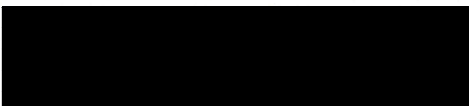
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Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program:  
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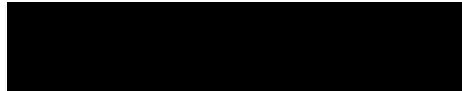
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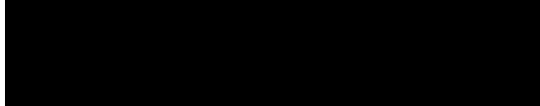
  
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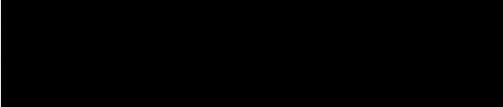
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## ABSTRACT

### TAG-TEAM BACK AGAIN:

#### USING MEMORY AS METHOD TO UNDERSTAND THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF EGALITARIAN PARENTING IN MY BLACK FAMILY

by Rebecca M. Swann

Life course theory's (Elder, 1998) principles of *linked lives* and *historical time and place* can be used to understand how attitudes, values, and behaviors are passed down across generations amid the historical context of Black families in the United States. This dissertation used autoethnography to explore the construction and transmission of egalitarianism, allowing the researcher to be both participant and analyst. Qualitative data consisted of critical reflections and 17 individual oral history interviews with family members across four generations. Procedures outlined in Gilligan's Listening Guide were used to analyze data, resulting in pronoun-poems for each interviewee and generation. Individual voices and generational experiences are highlighted in poems. Data were analyzed within and across individuals to identify generational constructions of egalitarianism, including how these constructs were adapted as they transferred from generation to generation amid varying societal contexts. This study produced three major themes: parental socialization, partnering socialization, and intersectional socialization. Findings from this study suggest that Black families share responsibilities to achieve the common good, with respect and attention to the needs of individual family members.

*Keywords:* autoethnography, oral history, egalitarianism, parenting, life course theory, Black family, intergenerational, Gilligan's Listening Guide

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All my life, I've listened to the stories of my ancestors. I could never grow tired of hearing a tale one more time. Some stories may never make it to a wider audience, but they are no less important. I am motivated to share the untold stories, bringing unsung heroes to the fore and giving voice to the voiceless. With this whisper, I have endeavored to bring all our voices forward.

I am privileged to have been supported by teams of people who were willing to puzzle with me, strategize methodology, help me figure out how to amplify my story, send an encouraging text, motivate me to keep going, check-in on my mental health, and offer solidarity. You compassionate souls have kept me moving toward the finish. I could not possibly list you all, but you know who you are. I see you. I honor you. I appreciate you. I love you.

Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.  
Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories.  
Summer nights on the front porch  
Aunt Sue cuddles a brown-faced child to her bosom  
And tells him stories.

...And the dark-faced child, listening,  
Knows that Aunt Sue's stories are real stories.  
He knows that Aunt Sue never got her stories  
Out of any book at all,  
But that they came  
Right out of her own life.

The dark-faced child is quiet  
Of a summer night  
Listening to Aunt Sue's stories.

- Excerpts from *Aunt Sue's Stories* (Hughes, 1926, p. 40)

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family and friends, those with us in a physical form and those in spirit. None of this would have been possible without your constant encouragement, support, and willingness to rearrange your lives to give me space to dream and write. Thank you for sharing your stories with me. I am forever grateful.

*Grandma Jeanne* – You saw me as a Black feminist before I knew I would be and opened my eyes to Toni, Zora, Alice, and Ntozake. Your subtle influence helped shape my life.

*Grandma Priscilla* – They say, “You cannot be who you cannot see.” I saw you. You have always been the inspiration.

*Grandpa Joe* – You were the invisible glue that held us together. Thank you.

*Old Pop* – Your crazy tales always had a grain of truth. I still hear your stories in my head.

*Daddy* – I struggle to find the words, so I will say: ‘I still hang around, neither lost nor found. I hear the lonely sound of music in the night.’ You are loved. You are missed...all day, every day.

*Mom* – Your belief in me always has carried me through. You are my lighthouse. Thank you for your unconditional love and ready ear.

*Marcus and Drew* – You two are my greatest accomplishments. Thank you for your love, patience, and understanding. I look forward to your stories most of all.

*Damian*, my life partner – You are everything I never knew I needed. This is for us.

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## PREFACE

### **how to listen #1**

Somewhere in my brain  
each laugh, tear and lullaby  
becomes *memory*.

### **writing #1**

It's easier to make up stories  
than it is to write them down. When I speak,  
the words come pouring out of me. The story  
wakes up and walks all over the room. Sits in a chair,  
crosses one leg over the other, says,  
*Let me introduce myself*. Then just starts going on and on.  
But as I bend over my composition notebook,  
only my name  
comes quickly. Each letter, neatly printed  
between the pale blue lines. Then white  
space and air and me wondering, *How do I  
spell introduce?* Trying again and again  
until there is nothing but pink  
bits of eraser and a hole now  
where a story should be.

### **how to listen #7**

Even the silence  
has a story to tell you.  
Just listen. Listen.

### **how to listen #10**

Write down what I think  
I know. The knowing will come.

Just keep listening ...

- Excerpts from *Brown Girl Dreaming* (Woodson, 2014)

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There is a photo of my 37-year old grandmother, Priscilla Sisco Swann in front of the White House. The photo was taken by my grandfather; he drove her there to attend National Head Start Day hosted by First Lady Ladybird Johnson. It was 1965. My grandmother was a founder of a Head Start program back home in New York State. She also worked part-time and was raising a family with my grandfather. My grandparents had six sons. At the time this photo was taken, my father, the eldest, was 18 and my uncle was five. I have always been inspired by this photo. For me, it represents egalitarian values and shared responsibilities between spouses. It represents flexible gender roles and support toward common goals. It represents the tenacity and determination of women, particularly Black women. This photo is the heart of this study.



*Figure 1.* Priscilla Sisco Swann standing in front of the White House

Framed by life course theory, this autoethnographic study explores my family's construction of egalitarianism and its transmission over four generations. The purpose of this study is to understand how egalitarianism was constructed and passed down. The processes and practices of families like ours are not accounted for in the family science literature (Trask, 2018; van Eeden-Moorefield & Shih, 2015) and are particularly important for individuals and families who are not commonly participants in studies of egalitarian parenting. I hope to contribute to conversations in family science about intergenerational transmission of egalitarian Black family

processes. This study required me to critically reflect on my experiences as a Black granddaughter, daughter, niece, sister, cousin, wife, and mother. The data used for this study includes my reflections along with the memories and narratives shared by 14 members of my family. Throughout this dissertation, I provide personal references, recollections, and facts based on familial ancestral research to keep the reader grounded in my family's experiences. Humbly, I request that the reader allow my use of scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004), which is an approach to telling one's own story. In this study, I integrate family theory, social-historical context, and research methodology to build a multivocal narrative of how egalitarianism is constructed and transmitted in my Black family. Autoethnography "shows struggle, passion, embodied life, and the collaborative creation of sense-making" and "was designed to be unruly, dangerous, vulnerable, rebellious, and creative" (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 433). When integrating these three concepts (i.e., theory, context, and methodology) this dissertation frequently uses a familiar tone, a first-person voice, and non-standard academic style.

### **Problem Statement**

One of the greatest challenges for dual-earner families is maintaining work-family balance. Two incomes are necessary to afford most families' current standard of living (Heckert, Nowak, & Snyder, 1998; Gerson, 2010). Many families with two working parents negotiate responsibilities in order to feel they are successful caretakers of their families and careers. Often, working parents use egalitarianism to share responsibilities for earning wages, maintaining the household, and caring for children. Studies done at the time of the Women's Liberation movements (Beckett and Smith, 1981; Dietrich, 1975; Scanzoni, 1975; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978) showed that Black families were more likely than White families to exhibit egalitarianism. In 1978, married Black women had a greater employment rate (noted by labor force

participation) than married White women (58% and 47%, respectively) continuing and narrowing a trend that began in 1890 (22% and 2%, respectively; Goldin, 1977). Since that time however, there has been a dearth of research on dual-income Black families in general and there have been no studies on how Black families construct egalitarian processes. There have been cross-race studies (Beckett & Smith, 1981; Dietrich, 1975; Dugger, 1988; Glauber & Gozjolko, 2011; Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006; Scanzoni, 1975; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978) on the degree to which people have egalitarian gender attitudes.

Individuals in families exhibited more egalitarian gender attitudes in the 1970s and 1980s than they ever had before (Carr, 2004; Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 2011; Min, Silverstein, & Lendon, 2012; Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 1997). However, attitudes do not always translate to behavior. Despite this, more Black than White fathers are involved in caregiving interactions with their children (Jones & Mosher, 2013). Moreover, Black men and women have been part of the labor force for hundreds of years, whether paid or unpaid. As a result, it may be assumed that Black couples have had more experience negotiating how to work together to share responsibilities for maintaining a home and raising children. Egalitarianism appears to be manifested in both the attitudes and behaviors of Black families (Becker & Moen, 1999; Beckett & Smith, 1981; Curenton, Crowley, & Mouzon, 2018; Dietrich, 1975; Jones & Mosher, 2013; Mack, 1978; Middleton & Putney, 1960; Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012; Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006; Scanzoni, 1975; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001; White, 2006a, 2006b; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978).

There is evidence that Black families exhibit egalitarianism when looking at point-in-time studies but there has not been a study that looks at the development of egalitarianism across generations. Life course theory and its principles of *linked lives* and *historical time and place* can

be used to explain the intergenerational transmission of egalitarianism in the United States from the 1960s to the present. Life course principles theorize that families pass down egalitarian attitudes and behaviors to younger generations. Trask (2018) underscores the importance of using life course theory to study how race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity affect individual and family development, especially the critical analyses of context, time, and process. Further, the increase of women in the workforce has rearranged family processes whereby traditionally patriarchal values are being substituted with more egalitarian processes (Trask, 2018). Life course theory and these specific principles can provide a framework for the study of how Black families in the United States construct and transfer egalitarianism to their descendants, but first the way Black families have been portrayed in family science scholarship needs to be addressed.

There also is a problem in how scholars have written about Black families. Western studies of families have often focused on heterosexual, two-parent households (often White) perpetuating a deficit-perspective of families who did not meet these criteria (Coontz, 2011; Trask, 2018; van Eeden-Moorefield & Shih, 2015). Further, most research on dual-earner couples includes only White participants (Becker & Moen, 1999; Carr, 2004; Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 2011; Daly, 2001; Min, Silverstein, & Lendon, 2012; Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 1997). The lack of inclusion of different races in these studies leads family scholars to identify White families and their associated values and priorities as the norm. Further, research on Black families often has focused on the pathological aspects of Black parenting. Many studies have examined the failures or pathologies of Black families, including absent, nonresident, incarcerated, or unmarried parents (Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996) and matriarchical family structures (Frazier, 1948; Moynihan, 1965). Other scholars have attempted to provide more strengths-based accounts of Black fathering (Cochran, 1997; Furstenberg, 2007;

Gadsden & Smith, 1994; Hamer, 1997; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1997). The problem of focusing on Black family pathology highlights the cultural deficit perspective through which they are viewed. The benchmark “Standard North American Family,” or SNAF (Coontz, 2011; van Eeden-Moorefield & Shih, 2015), consists of a male breadwinner and female homemaker who are White and middle-class. The SNAF family has been used as a family reference point against which all other family types are compared. A strengths-based account of Black family process that explores how Black families construct egalitarianism and pass down this value over generations would advance the field by adding the complexities of diverse families. The stories Black families tell about resilience and strength need to be collected and shared to inform a narrative of how Black families operate. Interventions with Black families also should consider an increased emphasis on ancestors (extended family) and the role they play in family process. A scholarly personal narrative, like this study, can provide scholars, and other consumers of family science, evidence of a Black family that has collaborated overtime to achieve a collective aim – the societal advancement of women.

In my family, egalitarianism looks like shared humanity and responsibility across gender lines, within marriage or between co-parents. You can see examples of this cooperation in the way families communicate, establish shared goals, and support one another toward these goals, including males accepting family roles that challenge hegemonic expectations of men. This means that fathers provide nurturing care for children and perform household responsibilities in order to allow mothers to pursue academic and career goals. In their stories of partnership, my family members recognized the value of community and emphasized familial harmony and compassion over generations.

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is framed by life course theory's principals of *linked lives* and *historical time and place*, concerning how values, attitudes, and behaviors are passed down over generations. It also includes the historical context of Black families in the United States as well as concepts of egalitarianism and work-family balance.

Life course theory explains individual development within time and space and the degree to which lives change in relation to context. The principle of *linked lives* often refers to the multiple generations in a family through which values, attitudes, and behaviors are passed down. The principle of *historical time and place* refers to the social-historical context of these intergenerational relationships. Over generations, the Black family has endured a legacy of oppression during slavery, Jim Crow, and currently mass incarceration. Many Black couples have been dual-wage earners since the Post-Reconstruction period and may have developed egalitarianism, a type of cooperative decision-making and role sharing that emphasizes gender neutrality and the care of both work and family. Over generations, Black men and women have shown egalitarian attitudes and behaviors (Becker & Moen, 1999; Beckett & Smith, 1981; Curenton, Crowley, & Mouzon, 2018; Dietrich, 1975; Glauber & Gozjolko, 2011; Jones & Mosher, 2013; Kane, 2000; Mack, 1978; Middleton & Putney, 1960; Orbuch & Eyster, 1997; Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012; Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006; Scanzoni, 1975; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001; White, 2006a, 2006b; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978). Cross-race studies have shown stronger egalitarian attitudes and behaviors among Black husbands as compared to White husbands (Glauber & Gozjolko, 2011). My study investigated how my conception and practice of egalitarian parenting was influenced by experiences of previous generations of my

family as well as the social-historical context in which members of my family grew up (the United States from the 1930's through the 1980's)

### **Methodology**

I used autoethnography to study how egalitarianism was constructed and passed down in my Black family. This research method allowed me to explore and more deeply understand the culture of egalitarianism in my family. Autoethnography combines autobiographical and personal storytelling with cultural and social contexts (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014) and emphasizes reflection and positionality. Autoethnography provided me the opportunity to study my natural settings and make sense of and interpret egalitarianism as it was passed down to me (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3) while recognizing the social-historical context. This autoethnography included critical reflection, journaling, and in-depth individual oral history interviews with 13 family members across four generations. In addition, I reviewed old photographs and historical documents. Procedures outlined in Gilligan's Listening Guide (2015) were used to analyze qualitative data.

### **Significance**

This study is significant to the field of family science because it brings attention to a contribution made by an understudied group. Though many Black couples have been dual-wage earners since the Post-Reconstruction period, they have been understudied in research on work-family balance. "Negative spaces are the recessive areas that we are unaccustomed to seeing but that are every bit as important for the representation of the reality at hand" (Daly, 2003, p. 771). Black families' egalitarian attitudes and behaviors are the "negative spaces" in the study of work-family balance.



**Organization**

This dissertation is organized into chapters. Chapter 1 presents the introduction, Chapter 2 provides a review of theory and relevant literature and identifies the research question. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used. Chapter 4 presents the findings. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the findings in conversation with the broader literature.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study. It begins with a presentation of life course theory and discussion of the principles of *linked lives* and *historical time and place*, continues with a presentation of the historical context of Black families in the United States, and concludes with a discussion of scholarship on dual-earner families and the negotiation of responsibilities in a household. All of these concepts are important to understanding the intergenerational transmission of egalitarianism in Black families.

Life course theory uses positional and temporal concepts to situate an individual within time and space. Social-historical context is of particular importance to understanding how lives change in relation to the external societal environment. This dissertation focuses on two principles of life course theory. *Linked lives* often refers to the multiple generations in a family. These intergenerational relationships are a key forum for the transmission of values, attitudes, and behaviors. Moreover, the social-historical context of such transmission may influence the extent to which the transmitted value proliferates or dwindles. During the 1970s and 1980s, egalitarian gender role attitudes increased and women entered the workforce perhaps as a result of social movements such as Civil Rights, Vietnam protests, and Women's Liberation, where young adults were empowered to raise their voices in opposition to the status quo. Historical data on employment indicates, however, that Black women were part of the workforce as early as 1890, participating at rates far exceeding that of White women (Goldin, 1977, McKay, 2007). Moreover, Black couples have demonstrated egalitarian attitudes about women in the workforce and exhibited egalitarian behaviors in the maintenance of their households for a long time (Beckett & Smith, 1981; Dietrich, 1975; Scanzoni, 1975; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978). However, scholarship on the intergenerational transmission of gender role attitudes primarily focuses on

White families and these studies are most frequently quantitative, including the analyses of secondary data from large national, sometimes longitudinal, panel studies (Acock & Bengtson, 1978; Blee & Tickamyer, 1995; Cotter, Hermesen, & Vanneman, 2011; Cunningham, 2001; Glass, Bengtson, & Dunham, 1986; Min, Silverstein, & Lendon, 2012; Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 1997; Platt & Polavieja, 2016; Roest, Dubas, & Gerris, 2010; Schofield & Abraham, 2017; Thornton, Alwin, & Camburn, 1983). This study examines how egalitarian behaviors, like parenting, are transmitted across generations and is framed by life course theory.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### ***Life Course Theory***

Elder's life course theory (1998) posits that lives change in response to changing contexts. Society, biology, psychology, and family interact to shape an individual's development. These interactions may include war, economic crises, disease, political movements, stress, poverty, affluence, neighborhood composition, family structure and household membership, employment, and immigration. Context impacts lives. Ontogenetic theorists (e.g., Erikson) view the social world as a "scene or setting" through which individuals must pass. Conversely, life course theorists view the social world as a contributor to an individual's development. Relational development systems (RDS) theory sees this as a bi-directional process (Ford & Lerner, 1992; Overton, 2015). RDS is a meta-theory and Life Course theory is a mid-range theory that is included under the umbrella of RDS meta-theory. The individual influences and is influenced by the context.

A positional and temporal perspective guides life course theory. The theory's key terms make clear the linear movement of someone from one developmental state to another within a normative or age-graded span of time, including transition, turning point, trajectory, sequence,

timing, and age. *Transitions* refer to choice points or discrete events in a relatively short time period that result in a change of role or require additional responsibility. A *turning point* refers to a dramatic change in one's life (i.e., incarceration, reentry after incarceration). A *trajectory* is a plane that may "knife-off" from a previous state; it represents a change in direction. *Sequence* implies an understanding that there is a hierarchy or progression of development while timing is defined within the context of one's cohort. Finally, *age* is used to define birth cohorts. All individuals born within a particular span of time are expected to have experienced changes in society at the same developmental time point. Birth cohorts define what is "normal" for those in the cohort. Therefore, appropriate development is relative. These concepts are key to understanding the interplay between individuals and their social-historical context.

Life course theory can be visualized as an integration of three distinct clocks measuring ontogenetic time (individual biographies), generational time (cohort experiences) and, historical time (social and cultural contexts), respectively (Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Macmillan & Copher, 2005; Umberson, et al., 2010). The theory is guided by five principles (Elder, Shanahan, & Jennings, 2015): *life-span development*, *timing*, *human agency*, *historical time and place*, and *linked lives*.

The *principle of life-span development* emphasizes the study of individuals from birth to death; human development is a life-long process. This principle also concerns the temporal (i.e., age-based) cohorts or cohort-historical perspective (Elder, Shanahan, & Jennings, 2014). People in particular birth cohorts have distinct life experiences. *Cohort centrism* is the belief that a group of people born at the same historical time experience social change within a given culture in the same sequence and at the same age (e.g., Baby Boomers, Millennials). However, because of intrapersonal variability and the intersections of race, class and gender, one should not assume

that a cohort of people experience the world in the same way, otherwise known as a *cohort fallacy*.

The *principle of timing* indicates that the impact of context is contingent on the point in an individual's development at which an event occurs. Elder (1974/1999) integrated theories about developmental age and roles to study how timing, context, and agency affect development and socialization across the life course. In Elder's Great Depression study (1974/1999), the age of an individual during the worst of the economic crisis was crucial to understanding how context can impact development. For example, life for children who were young in the early 1930s was dependent on the status of their families while older children would have been expected to assist with financially supporting the family. The ages of children in this social-historical context are important to their developmental trajectories.

The *principal of human agency* refers to the choices made and actions taken by individuals within the opportunities and constraints of social-historical context. For example, children in Elder's Great Depression study (1974/1999) may have sought employment to provide economically for their families. Parents may have decided not to have more children to limit the number of individuals in their household.

The *principle of historical time and place* concerns the study of human lives in relation to social-historical context. Individuals are embedded in and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime. They adapt their lives to accommodate changes in society. Elder's (1974/1999) study of youth growing up during the Great Depression connected youth development to the concepts of hardship, the importance of employment, and the timing of marriage.

Finally, the *principle of linked lives* positions the family as the primary arena for experiencing and interpreting the broader social world. The family and its network of interdependent, shared, and often reciprocal relationships link individual to environmental experiences. The developmental trajectories of other family members and social-historical context also influence an individual's developmental trajectory. In life course theory, individuals' lives are interconnected; social and historical context influences individuals through these interconnections. This principle explains how values, beliefs, traditions, and behaviors are passed down (or transmitted) from one generation to the next.

### ***A Culturally-Responsive Life Course Theory***

Life course theory is guided by temporal and positional concepts. Similarly, concepts of time and space also guide African religious and philosophical beliefs (Mbiti, 1969/1997). These concepts connect to the principle of *linked lives*. Adding African philosophy helps to make life course theory more culturally responsive because it focuses on the importance of intergenerational connections in Black families. African philosophy primarily is focused on two points of actual time— what was (past) and what is (present). Little consideration is given to what will be (future). In fact, in the Kikamba and Gikuyu languages, there are no verb tenses to describe behaviors in the distant future (beyond two years). Mbiti notes that, “A person experiences time partly in his individual life, and partly through the society which goes back many generations before his own birth” (1969/1997, p. 17). Though the future is limited to events within the next two years, the African duration of “past” is seemingly infinite.

The Swahili terms ‘*sasa*’ and ‘*zamani*’ are used to describe African concepts of time. *Sasa* refers to the immediate— things that are about to occur, in process, or recently experienced as well as all events experienced in the past. *Sasa* is an all-encompassing dimension, as it

includes the present, limited future, and **experienced** past, and may be measured at the individual or community level. Mbiti (1969/1997) also refers to *sasa* as “micro-time.” *Zamani* is an all-encompassing dimension, including the present, limited future, and the **infinite** past. However, Mbiti considers *Zamani* to be “macro-time”, meaning that *Sasa* is incorporated into the *Zamani*. Mbiti (1969/1997) explains:

*Sasa* generally binds individuals and their immediate environment together. It is the period of conscious living. On the other hand, *Zamani* is the period of the myth, creating a sense of foundation or ‘security’ to the *Sasa* period; and binding together all created things, so that all things are embraced within the Macro Time. ...Such history and pre-history tend to be telescoped into a very compact, oral tradition and handed down from generation to generation... Man looks back from whence he came” (p. 22-23).

African religion and philosophy acknowledge that, over the life course, people travel from *Sasa* to *Zamani*. Even after death, people may exist in the *sasa* so long as there is someone who knew them personally and in name. They remain the ‘living dead,’ alive in the memory of those who knew them. My father, three of my grandparents, uncles and some cousins live in the *sasa*. More distant ancestors, who no one who is currently alive knew personally, are in the *zamani*. The *zamani* is where one can find the origins of traditions and customs. My great-great-grandparents, my enslaved ancestors, my immigrant great-grandfather, and ancestors beyond reside in the *zamani*. Mbiti (1969/1997) underscores the importance of family, knowledge of ancestors, and the role of oral history in the intergenerational transmission of values and behaviors. Both Elder’s life course theory and African philosophy place importance on time, space, and process to explain how humans develop over their lives.

Life course theory's aforementioned principles of *linked lives* and *historical time and place* represent the intersection of individual biography and development (ontogenetic), generational experiences and trajectories, and social history. Individuals' experiences, customs, values, and attitudes are transmitted across generations within a family. The family is a "collection of individuals with shared history who interact within ever-changing social contexts across ever increasing time and space" (Bengtson & Allen 1993, p. 470). African philosophy notes that 'the family' extends into the *sasa* and *zamani* and includes the experiences of known and unknown ancestors. The integration of Elder's life course theory with Mbiti's conception of *sasa* and *zamani* allows scholars to make sense of the experiences of diverse families over generations (time) and contexts (space). Further, this integration helps to fend off the bias in family science studies (Trask, 2018; van-Eeden-Moorefield & Shih, 2015) to focus on Western conceptions of family.

## Literature Review

### *Life Course Theory, Linked Lives, and Intergenerational Relationships*

Intergenerational relationships within a family are critical to the life course principle of *linked lives*. Studies of multiple generations in a family have examined relationships between parents and children, and between grandparents and grandchildren (Ames, 1999; Greenfield & Marks, 2005; Hareven, 1994; Elder, 1974/1999; Umberson, Pudrovskaya, & Reczek, 2010). Calling the parent-child dyad the "first and primary intergenerational relationship" (p. 1), Ames (1999) advocates for studying intergenerational relationships in families using a life course approach. She highlights the need to know more about parent-child relationships in midlife and older adulthood because, as society ages, these relationships span more years and are more complex. Scholars know little about these relationships. Generational relations have also been



studied using a life course perspective over time by comparing two cohorts of adults (Hareven, 1994). Taylor, Chatters, and Jackson (1993) documented the strong intergenerational ties of Black families in their Three-Generation Family Study, which derived demographic and relational data from the National Survey of Black Americans, conducted by the Program for Research on Black Americans at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. Greenfield and Marks (2005) used secondary data from the 1995 National Survey of Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) to investigate the relationship between adult children's problems and their parents' well-being. As with other studies of intergenerational relationships, they found that parents' and children's well-being mutually influenced their developmental trajectories. Finally, Umberson, Pudrovska, and Reczek (2010) conducted a review of scholarship on parenthood, childlessness, and well-being also using the life course principle of *linked lives*. They found that parents and adult children maintain relationships and continue to influence, stress, and support one another throughout the life course. In addition to influencing each other's development, intergenerational relationships are key to the transmission of cultural and familial norms from one generation to the next.

### ***Life Course Theory, Linked Lives, and Intergenerational Transmission***

Life course theory also has been used to study family change over time, especially concerning the processes and transmission of socially constructed meanings in culturally specific contexts and using the family as the unit of analysis (Bengtson & Allen, 1993). Bengtson and Allen noted, "The family as a social group provides meaning to events; through the perceptions of its members it defines as a reality, enduring and continuing over time, passed on through the lineage (1993, p. 479)." The concept of intergenerational transmission within families is well documented in the literature.

**Intergenerational Transmission of Pathology.** Though scholars have studied the intergenerational transmission of many concepts, the literature on intergenerational transmission is still saturated with studies of pathology, including incarceration, violence, and divorce.

***Incarceration.*** In a study of the extent to which incarceration “runs” in families, Andersen (2018) found that women are just as likely as men to contribute to the transmission of incarceration across generations because of their partner choices. Further, children with one or more incarcerated parent are more likely to have at least one other incarcerated family member (Wildeman & Wakefield, 2014). Further, estimates indicate the majority of Black men who did not finish high school (70%) are expected to be incarcerated by age 30 (Western & Wildeman, 2009). These findings provide evidence of how social disadvantage proliferates in families, especially among poor, Black families.

***Domestic Violence.*** Ehrensaft et al. (2003) studied the intergenerational transmission of domestic violence with a 20-year longitudinal study of children and found that the strongest predictors of future intimate partner violence were conduct disorder, exposure to domestic violence between parents, and power assertive punishment (e.g., corporal punishment, spanking). However, a child need not develop a conduct disorder to increase the likelihood of domestic abuse (as an abuser or abusee). Exposure to domestic violence between parents was the greatest risk factor to being abused by a future partner (Ehrensaft et al., 2003).

***Divorce.*** Data from the national, longitudinal Study of Marriage over the Life Course indicates intergenerational transmission of divorce regardless of racial group. Black offspring of divorced parents were only slightly less likely to divorce than White offspring (Amato, 1996). Divorce transmission was unrelated to offspring being more accepting of divorce due to personal experience with parents. Contributors to offspring divorce included both offspring spouses

having experienced parental divorce, problematic interpersonal skills (i.e., anger, jealousy, contempt, poor communication, infidelity), and a lack of skills and attitudes that facilitate successful marital relationships (i.e., trust, fidelity, communication). Problematic behaviors associated with divorce were transmitted to offspring, which were associated with their own divorces. The pathological concepts transmitted in these examples do not comprise the whole of scholarly tests of Elder's principle of *linked lives* and intergenerational transmission. Positive attributes also have been found to be passed down through families.

**Intergenerational Transmission of Values.** Life course theory's principle of *linked lives* also has been used to study the intergenerational transmission of positive behaviors, values, traditions, and parenting practices.

**Values and Attitudes.** The intergenerational transmission of values was confirmed by a study examining the transfer of mothers' work values (e.g., money, security, autonomy) to their sons and daughters, confirming that mothers and their offspring held similar extrinsic and intrinsic values about work (Ryu & Mortimer, 1996). Adolescents also were more likely to endorse the same attitudes as their parents across six domains: authoritative parenting, conventional life goals, gender egalitarianism, deviancy, abortion, and sexual permissiveness (Schofield and Abraham, 2017). Intergenerational transmission of literacy was confirmed between parent-child dyads (Bus, van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995), indicating that shared reading experiences (parent-preschooler reading together) led children's language growth, emergent literacy, and reading achievement. The *linked lives* principle suggests that parents' values and behaviors influence children's values and shared experiences can impact behavior.

**Parenting Behaviors.** The parenting one experiences as a child at multiple developmental periods (i.e., in early childhood, middle childhood, and early adolescence) predicts how one will

parent their own three-year old children (Belsky, Jafee, Sligo, Woodward, & Silva, 2005). For mothers, there also is a relationship between the type of parenting experienced and the type of parenting enacted, especially for supportive parenting relationships; there is no effect for fathers (Belsky et al., 2005). Parenting behaviors also are transmitted from parents to children and may be specific to their experiences in adolescence (Chen & Kaplan, 2001). Development is a result of the intersection of individual experiences and their timing in the life span as well as the transmission of values across generations.

***Gender Role Attitudes.*** The timing of the intergenerational transmission of values is sensitive to children's developmental stage (Min, Silverstein, & Lendon, 2012). Using secondary data from the 1971 and 2000 waves of the Longitudinal Study of Generations, Min, Silverstein, and Lendon (2012) found stronger rates of transmission earlier than later in the family life course which then remained stable in children over time. At baseline and follow-up, children held more egalitarian gender role attitudes than their parents.

***Gender Role Attitudes Through Parenting Behaviors.*** Values are transmitted differently across generations and there are differences in active (attitudinal) and passive (behavioral) transmission (Glass, Bengtson, & Dunham, 1986; Roest, Dubas, & Gerris, 2010; Min, Silverstein, & Lendon, 2012). Societal or community values are easier to transmit to children, likely because of reinforcement of these beliefs from multiple groups. Parents, especially mothers, influence their young adult children's gender role attitudes and preferences for housework (Cunningham, 2001). Parental modeling shapes children's attitudes (Cunningham, 2001) and parenting behaviors have more impact than parental attitudes on adolescents' gender role attitudes (Platt & Polavieja, 2016). There have been differing opinions about whether or not intergenerational transmission is stronger between same-sex parents and children (i.e., mothers to

daughters, fathers to sons). Acock and Bengtson (1978) did not find a same-sex transmission of the development of political and religious attitudes in a study of middle-aged parents and young adult children. However, Platt and Polavieja (2016) found a stronger transmission of gender role attitudes through same-sex parent–child dyads than through opposite-sex pairs. Both studies used survey data.

### ***Historical Time and Place and Intergenerational Transmission***

Scholars also have used the life course principle of *historical time and place* to explain the adoption of gender egalitarianism (Min, Silverstein, & Lendon 2012; Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 2011; Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 1997). During the 1970s and 1980s, when gender equality social movements were prominent, society experienced turbulent changes, including the recognition of women’s increasing participation in higher education and the paid labor market. Social-historical context sets the frame for the expectations of women and men. Currently, both men and women are expected to be both career and child-focused (Daly, 1996; Daly, 2001). Life course principles have been used to study mothers’ feelings of adequacy. A cohort of mostly White middle-aged women who became parents in the 1970s reported using their adult daughters’ work and family successes or failures to measure the adequacy of their own lives (Carr, 2004). There have been slightly different expectations of Black families.

Black couples historically have been more likely to be dual-income couples (Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006). Some of the reasons for this are that Black women have been “going to work” for longer than White women and are more likely to have been raised by a working Black woman (Beckett and Smith, 1981; Dietrich, 1975; Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006; Scanzoni, 1975; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978). Thus, Black mothers have modeled for their sons and daughters that women work outside the home or for wages. In fact, even in the post-

emancipation United States, Black women and men began establishing systems of dual, balanced work (Dill, 1988). Black families are more likely than Whites to feature a woman as an equal provider of income to the family (Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006). To that end, dual-income families are not new to the Black community. Sadly, they have not been studied in terms of the negotiation of egalitarian processes to balance work and family.

### *Historical Context of Black Families*

Over the last century, many scholars of sociology and history have chronicled the life experiences of Black Americans, particularly E. Franklin Frazier, Herbert Gutman, and Daniel Moynihan. The history of Black families in the United States primarily has been told by male, and mostly White sociologists. Frazier, the only Black sociologist of this group, successfully covered the first 150 years or so of Black history—the slave trade through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—through personal narratives. Frazier's (1939; 1948) efforts to state the facts of Black families are filtered through the zeitgeist of the 1930s, which was particularly critical of the movement of Black families from the rural south to northern cities. Much of Frazier's work labels black families as socially disorganized. Moynihan primarily wrote of the deficits of Black families, pointing to bleak economic prospects for Blacks because of a lack of education, high rates of unemployment, neighborhood poverty, illegitimate children, and primarily female-headed households (Moynihan, 1965). Due to his perception of Black men, Moynihan wrote that they could not and, therefore, would not participate in the matriarchal structure of Black families. Gutman's historical tome (1976) reshaped the deficits highlighted by Moynihan and refocused the scholarly conversation about Black families on their abilities to succeed despite environmental and societal challenges, such as enslavement, family disruption, poverty, and migration.

Primarily researched and reported by these male sociologists, the history of the Black family in the United States has included stories from slavery (1619–1863), the experiences of Black families during Reconstruction (1864–1877) and Post-Reconstruction (1878–1915), and tales of Black families during the Great Migration (1915–1970).

**Slavery (1619–1863).** The Atlantic slave trade began in approximately 1619 with the arrival of the first Africans in Virginia who were cargo on board the *San Juan Bautista*, a ship bound for Mexico, crewed by Spanish sailors. The slave trade was a lucrative business; in 1860, one enslaved Black person could fetch \$800 or about \$130,000 in today's prices (Williamson & Cain, 2016). Enslavers were respected as wealthy, influential businessmen. The slave trade was controversial—condemned by many of those in the cities of the Northern colonies who had no use for slaves but valued by the plantation owners of the Southern colonies who needed slaves to work their fields and farms. An expensive commodity, slaves were closely watched and controlled. The slave trade continued for more than 200 years with approximately four million Africans within the bounds of slavery by the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, which legally ended slavery in 1863 (this point is debatable).

***Black Family Life During Slavery.*** Enslavers, or masters, maintained domination over their property by controlling their most basic human needs. An enslaved person looked to his master for food/water, shelter, clothing, and safety. Enslavers viewed enslaved people as savages or children in need of control who lacked paternal and kinship attachments (Gutman, 1976). On the plantation, many enslavers forbade enslaved people from learning to read and write. Enslaved people were assimilated into the White man's culture through religion and the teaching of White moral values.

In terms of family relationships, there is a difference in what has been reported by White enslavers/legislators and enslaved people themselves. On large plantations, enslaved people were seen and treated much like chattel, purely machines, and relationships between enslaved people were viewed as machine-like and detached from romantic feelings (Frazier, 1939). Moreover, the intra- and interstate slave trade contributed to a lack of marriage or familial ties between enslaved couples as well as between enslaved parents and their children. Civil law did not sanction marriages amongst slaves, and the common myth of licentious black sexuality maintained the need to control the sexual behaviors of Black men and women (Gutman, 1976).

Slaves who worked large plantations were less likely to form strong kinship relationships than were slaves who lived on smaller (more stable) plantations. However, enslaved women played a dominant role in their family and were regarded as having a keen attachment to their biological children while also playing a foster-mother role to the children of her master. The female-headed household dominated Black families during slavery because of the less secure position of Black men. Male slaves were more often traded or sold to other plantations than were female slaves. Enslaved women also had consensual and nonconsensual sexual relationships with their White masters, which sometimes resulted in the conception of mixed race (*mulatto*<sup>1</sup>) children. The children of these interracial relationships often were given priority status amongst slaves—demonstrated by working in the house rather than the fields and being taught to read and write. Some of these mixed race offspring assimilated into White culture.

There was a social hierarchy amongst slaves within and between plantations. Lighter-skinned slaves worked as personal servants and performed other tasks within the master's home

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<sup>1</sup> As a biracial Black woman, I grew up with an extremely derogatory understanding of the word *mulatto*. I understand, however, that this slur is commonly used to describe people of Black and white race ancestry. This is the only place this slur will be used.



and occupied a higher social plane than darker-skinned slaves, who worked in the fields. In addition, society held slaves belonging to wealthier White families in higher regard than the slaves belonging to poorer White families. Moreover, a hierarchy existed between free and enslaved Blacks, with free Blacks having more social status than slaves. Despite this slight difference in social status between free Blacks and slaves, the United States government did not recognize any difference in the rights of Blacks; they simply had none. *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) exemplifies the perceived status of free Blacks and enslaved Blacks. Dred Scott (an enslaved Black man) and his wife, Harriet (a free Black woman), lived in a free state during their marriage before returning to a slave state. In 1857, just before the Civil War broke out, Dred Scott sued for his freedom, but the Supreme Court decided that Blacks had no rights in federal court and that slave states no longer had to honor the ‘once free, always free’ clause (*Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 1857). The Dred Scott decision intensified strains about slavery between the northern and southern states.

**Reconstruction (1864–1877) and Post-Reconstruction (1878–1915).** Northerners were complicit in the continued domination over Blacks in the years following the end of the Civil War and the end of slavery. There was a common understanding that the South was more equipped to handle the issues with free Blacks (McKee, 1993), which may have been due to southerners’ previous experience with controlling Blacks during slavery. In addition, theories that emerged during this time, such as evolutionary theory and Social Darwinism, conjectured that Blacks were less intelligent and inferior to Whites. Andrew Stephens stated, in his 1861 ‘Cornerstone’ speech,

Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner- stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man;

that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth...With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is his place. He, by nature, or by the curse against Canaan, is fitted for that condition which he occupies in our system.

These pseudo-scientific theories added further support to the belief that Blacks needed supervision and control; theories to which both northerners and southerners subscribed.

The Thirteenth Amendment, ratified in 1866, is primarily regarded as the Constitutional Amendment that abolishes slavery in the United States; however, this amendment further endorses institutionalized control. The Amendment states: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted (emphasis added), shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (U.S. Const. Amend. XIII). The fear of Blacks and the need to control them likely led to the period of mass incarceration of Black men in the years after Reconstruction and the further disruption of Black families. The Fourteenth Amendment (ratified in 1868) granted birthright citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to free Blacks and the four million Black slaves emancipated after the American Civil War, and the Fifteenth Amendment (ratified in 1870) gave Black men the right to vote. However, these amendments did not have any impact on the day-to-day lives of Black people.

Because of the widespread belief that Blacks were inferior to Whites, segregation of the races began and was upheld by multiple prominent court cases. One example of this is *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which upheld racial segregation laws or “separate but equal” in the United States. The

Court opinion issued by Brown stated, “The assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is ... solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it” (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). This statement legally absolved White Americans of any responsibility for the beliefs of racial hierarchy that had been purported by evolutionary and Social-Darwinist theories during this period. Instead, the Supreme Court shouldered the colored race with constructing how they might be inferior (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). These ideologies were used to problematize social conditions among Blacks, including poverty, female-headed households, birth rates, life expectancy, low educational attainment, and crime (Frazier, 1939). Plessy v. Ferguson further solidified the practice of segregated facilities, including public bathrooms, water fountains, and schools.

In the years following the Civil War, violence and intimidation were used to prevent Blacks from voting, especially in the southern states of South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana. Despite the formal Constitutional rights documented in the Thirteenth through Fifteenth Amendments, segregationist or “Jim Crow” laws governed life in the south. The legality of “separate but equal” was finally overturned in 1954 with the Supreme Court Case Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. One could argue that Blacks did not actually begin to enjoy the freedoms afforded to them by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments until after the civil rights movement or approximately 1960, nearly 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued in 1863.

***Black Family Life During Reconstruction and Post Reconstruction.*** During this post-Reconstruction period, Blacks were no longer enslaved by slaveholders, but they continued to be confined by sharecropping and debt. Sharecropping required that Black families rent small

plots of land, which they worked themselves. At the end of each year, sharecroppers would pay the landowners a portion of their crop. The inability of Blacks to own their living space was perpetuated through World War II with the failure to issue mortgages to Black soldiers returning from war and through the predatory lending practices of more recent years. Overall, Black families recently freed from slavery experienced turmoil during the post-emancipation period.

Black families who moved off the plantation were displaced and had to figure out how to survive and reconstruct their families. Throughout the history of Black families in the United States, Gutman (1976) argues that members of the Black family were constantly connected despite slavery and the Reconstruction period and separated family members were committed to reconnecting with one another. The stories recounted by slaves to Frazier (1939), including the practice of tying the hands of children together and walking for miles when leaving their plantations and using personal networks to track down family members who were sold off the plantation, demonstrate former slaves' commitment to their families.

**Great Migration (1915–1970).** Historians date the Great Migration to about 1915 through 1970 but for some, like my great-grandfather, the move was earlier. During this time, Black families residing in southern states moved in droves to northern and western cities, such as Chicago, New York, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Detroit, Oakland, and Philadelphia (Wilkerson, 2010). Often referred to as migrants, a better description of these Black settlers may be asylum seekers, those who are looking for protection and security from their country (or state) of origin. In the case of Black families migrating north and west, these families were looking for freedom and opportunity, higher wages to afford them the ability to provide for their families, and the security of life without the fear of lynching. Wilkerson defines this collective, leaderless movement of Black people as the “first mass act of independence by a people who were in

bondage in this country for far longer than they have been free” (2010, p. 10). In all, more than two million Black people moved north and west during the Great Migration with hopes of opportunity (McKee, 1993).

Life in the northern cities was only slightly less troubling than life in the south. About forty years after emancipation, Du Bois (1903) wrote, “...the freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised land” (p. 6) and identified that the color line was the problem of the twentieth century; he was correct. A color line existed in the neighborhoods of the cities experiencing an influx of Black families (McKee, 1993; Wilkerson, 2010). Organizations in Harlem such as the Save-Harlem Committee and the Harlem Property Owners Improvement Corporation sprung up to address the issues of a growing colored population in New York. Real estate agents were advised not to rent to Blacks in particular neighborhoods. The segregationist movement was afoot in Northern cities; however, segregation did not take hold because of the economic demand for housing and the need for revenue (Wilkerson, 2010). White families were leaving Harlem because of the influx of Black families, and White landlords could not afford to lose tenants. Capitalist principals won out over prejudice, and White landlords opened their apartments to Black families and charged higher prices (McKee, 1993).

***Black Family Life During the Great Migration.*** After the end of slavery, Black people established their families within the expectations of society. The role of the man in the home may also be attributed to the shade of his wife’s skin, with mixed race Black women often the "object of pleasure and display" (Frazer, 1939, p. 439) signifying economic success. *Colorism*, or the prejudices and beliefs that lighter-skinned Black people were more economically and socially desirable than darker skinned Black people, had much to do with the Black family’s economic and social advantages (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew & Freeman, 2010; Few, 2007).

Colorism beliefs were held over from the skin color hierarchy introduced in slave times. Colorism also was associated with Black males' role in their households, with status given to Black men with lighter-skinned wives (Frazer, 1939). Further, Frazier argues that Black men's assuming more authority in the family is correlated with male interest in the family and family sustainability. Male interest in the household may have increased when he was married to a light-skinned Black woman whose presence in the family suggested his economic success.

After the Civil War, Black men temporarily reassumed their role as the head of household (Frazier, 1939), as opposed to the matriarchical family structure under slavery. The disorganization of Black families defined by Frazier stems from economic instability experienced in the Great Migration to big, urban cities; this disorganization resulted in Black women reassuming the dominant role in the family. Frazier states that the Black wife "continues to occupy a position of authority and is not completely subordinate to masculine authority even in those families where the man is present" (p. 461). In 1965, Daniel Moynihan further positioned the Black woman as the head of the Black family in a controversial report he authored for the United States Department of Labor (Moynihan, 1965). This positioning branded Black families as ill-suited for the patriarchal U.S. societal norms because of the matriarchal structure of Black families. This matriarchal structure can trace its roots to slavery.

### ***Egalitarian Families***

Another key concept in the conceptual framework of this study is egalitarianism. As mentioned above, Black couples historically have been more likely to be dual-income couples (Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006) and have negotiated balanced (Dill, 1988) support of the family. Egalitarianism is socially-constructed and based on individuals' perception, comprehension, and interpretation of the world. In the context of this manuscript, egalitarian

refers to shared humanity, ability, and responsibility across gender lines, within marriage and/or between co-parents. Masterson and Hoobler (2015) developed family identity-based typologies of dual-earner couples (e.g., *traditional*, *non-traditional*, *family-first*, *outsourced*, and *egalitarian*), describing egalitarian couples as follows:

...Egalitarian couples will strongly incorporate both care- and career-based roles into their family identities. Couples structured in this way enable care and career in both partners' family identities simultaneously...In considering the shared and strong emphasis on care- and career-based roles, both partners will engage in a range of activities inside and outside the home to help verify the ways in which they construe their family identities...Egalitarian couple structures reflect societal shifts in gender equality—as family identities defined in terms of care and career are perceived to be gender neutral. At the same time, in considering the strong incorporation of both care and career into both partners' family identities, there is likely less clarity regarding role responsibilities (as compared with “traditional” and “non-traditional” couple types; p. 83).

In an egalitarian family, partners identify a balance between work and family responsibilities and maintain a satisfactory relationship between them (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001).

Families who take an egalitarian approach to parenting attempt to equally share the tasks required to take care of the household and children as well as earn income through employment.

The concept of egalitarian parenting has been raised in recent research (Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001; White, 2006a; White, 2006b) but has not focused exclusively on dual-income Black families. Related to the issue of dual-income families is the concept of the egalitarian family, which counters Western traditional patriarchal family structures where the father is the breadwinner and the mother is the caretaker. More Black men

than White men have egalitarian views toward gender roles particularly related to child rearing (Glauber & Gozjolko, 2011; Kane, 2000; Orbuch & Eyster, 1997). Moreover, recent research indicates that Black fathers are more involved in their children's daily care than are White and Hispanic fathers (Jones & Mosher, 2013).

Egalitarian parenting has been called different things overtime. Research from previous decades referred to this concept as 'equalitarian' finding that patterns of power relationships among Black married couples were primarily viewed as partnerships with shared authority and neither spouse being more dominant than the other (Mack, 1978; Middleton & Putney, 1960; TenHouten, 1970; Willie, 1976). The cultural schema of work–family integration (Dean, Marsh & Landry, 2013) also is similar to egalitarianism. Work–family integration refers to a mother's belief that her career is equally as important as her husband's and perceives herself as both worker and mother (Dean, Marsh & Landry, 2013). In addition, egalitarian parenting has been described as 'feminist parenting' because it challenges societal norms that dictate that men and women must adhere to traditional gender roles (White, 2006a, 2006b).

Egalitarian attitudes about parenting and household management may occur within married or cohabitating couples; enacting an egalitarian family does not require the sanctimony of marriage. Egalitarian parenting may be related to cohabitation statistics in that those with a more "progressive" view of coupling (i.e., living with a partner without the sanctimony of marriage) may be congruent with a more "progressive" view of rules and roles, specifically gender roles (Perry et al., 2012). Progressive gender roles may be indicative of having more flexible definitions of parenting responsibilities, which could facilitate the potential for more egalitarian approaches to parenting. Similarly, Black family patterns are distinctive and suggest greater acceptance of alternative family arrangements (Carlson, VanOrman, & Pilkauskas, 2013).



In addition, young couples also are more willing to create egalitarian relationships and an egalitarian family (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). These studies suggest that young Black couples may be more likely than others to engage in egalitarian families.

**Family processes in the 1970s-1980s.** Multiple studies examined gender role attitudes in the 1970s and 1980s. A comparative study of females' attitudes regarding women's participation in the labor force found that daughters were more egalitarian in 1980 than their mothers were in 1962 (Thornton, Alwin, & Camburn, 1983). Black families were more likely than White families to exhibit egalitarian roles, sharing responsibilities for earning wages, maintaining the household, and caring for children (Beckett & Smith, 1981). Black parents were also more likely than White parents to enact egalitarian practices, regardless of income level (Dietrich, 1975; Scanzoni, 1975; Willie & Greenblatt, 1978). Black women more often than White women rejected the dominant culture's views of gender roles, which has been attributed to Black women's long history in the workforce: "within Black culture, wage labor has been a normative and integral component of womanhood" (Dugger, 1988, p. 439).

Differences in Black and White men's attitudes about gender roles over time and relative to their mothers' gender role attitudes have been documented using linked longitudinal mother-son data from 1967 to 1981 (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995). Black men were more likely than White men to have more liberal attitudes toward women in the workforce and were more likely to have personal experience with a working woman (Blee & Tickamyer, 1995).

The changing role of men during the 1970s and early 1980s was concurrent with the construction of "new fatherhood" (Messner, 1993). A 'new father' prioritized family, exhibited by an emphasis on childcare, over career goals. This period also saw the introduction of multiple constructions of masculinity that allowed for "softer" (Messner, 1993, p. 725) or egalitarian

representations. Further, the construction of “new father” and “new man” was based on the experiences of middle and upper-class, White heterosexual men (Messner, 1993). There is little information about Black fathers during this time in American history. More recently, “new fathers” have been described as men who maintain egalitarian attitudes toward the family roles of men and women (McGill, 2014). These men demonstrate nontraditional fathering attitudes, work more than 40 hours per week, and contribute to the care of their children in a manner that is distinctive from those with traditional fathering attitudes who worked similar hours (McGill, 2014). There is a subset of “new fathers” who exhibit nontraditional attitudes about fatherhood and spend more hours per week, on average, with their children than do fathers with traditional attitudes (McGill, 2014). However, the men in McGill’s study were mostly White. “New fatherhood” is not new for Black fathers; however, Black fathers have not been exclusively studied.

### ***Dual Earner Families***

Dual-earner couples have been studied to understand how they define, discuss and negotiate time, and maintain family schedules and responsibilities (Becker & Moen, 1999; Curenton, Crowley, & Mouzon, 2018; Daly, 2002; Dean, Marsh, & Landry, 2013; Ray & Jackson, 2013). Couples use informal and formal negotiation processes that emphasize communication, cooperation, and tradeoffs (Daly, 2002). Couples also seek to achieve fairness and balance, or egalitarianism, in the distribution of tasks. Couples report using “trading off” or “tag team” strategies to alternately scale back or intensify their focus on career (Becker & Moen, 1999). “Trading off” strategies promote egalitarianism in theory; however, in practice, gender implications are uneven, with more women than men scaling back their professional goals and opportunities (Becker & Moen, 1999). Other couples highlighted the need for communication,

negotiation, juggling, and sacrifice to manage their work-family lives (Ray & Jackson, 2013). The ability to manage and negotiate shared responsibilities requires a strategic construction of couples' partnerships (Becker & Moen, 1999). These studies also only included White couples.

How couples negotiate time is also related to cultural norms. In negotiations, couples often refer to prior experiences, which may have been shaped by gender roles and societal expectations (Katovich & Couch, 1992). These negotiations must be attentive to what has been done previously and reconciled with what needs to be done going forward. Employment statistics from 1960 to 2005 show that Black mothers consistently have had higher rates of employment than White and Hispanic mothers (Cohany & Sok, 2007; Guy & Fenley, 2014; McKay, 2007). It may be assumed that, since Black women have been active in the labor force since 1890, Black couples have more experience negotiating time and managing family schedules. Black mothers have described how they share parenting responsibilities with their spouse by coordinating schedules and dividing duties (Curenton, Crowley, and Mouzon, 2018). However, only a few studies have examined the processes by which Black families negotiate partnerships, share household and childcare responsibilities, and manage time (Curenton, Crowley, & Mouzon, 2018; Dean, Marsh, & Landry, 2013).

### ***Where Do I Fit In This Narrative?***

I came to the topic of egalitarianism in Black families through personal experience. I grew up in a northeast college town with both parents, a brother, a sister, a cat, and a dog. Both of my parents worked and earned a middle-class income. My mom, a White waitress who attended college in the evenings, was studying to be a nurse. My dad, a Black former Army Lieutenant who worked in sales, was our primary caregiver when Mom was in class or studying. In the evenings, Dad made dinner and did the dishes. He checked homework, coached Little

League, and was the only member in the audience for our choreographed dance routines (most often to Paula Abdul's greatest hits). My perception is that my childhood experience was not unlike that of my cousins and friends. I thought we were a pretty normal Black family...but I may have been wrong.

Twenty-five years later in graduate school, I chose an article to critique for a core course in my Family Science and Human Development doctoral program. The article (McGill, 2014) examined "new fatherhood"; a newfangled idea that men (predominately White men) provided care for and spent time with their children in addition to working full-time hours. I was blown away. I could not believe "new fatherhood" was new. It certainly was not new to me and I did not think it would have been new to my brother, cousins, uncles, friends, and husband – all of whom had experienced or had been enacting "new fatherhood" for an extended period of time. History tells us that Black families have operated as dual-earner households since the post-Civil War Reconstruction era (Frazier, 1948; Moynihan, 1965). As such, Black couples have had to share the responsibilities for financially and emotionally providing for their families. I could not understand why the fathering practices of Black fathers had not been highlighted in this new conceptualization of fatherhood. I felt that a piece of the story was missing.

Since I began reviewing research studies on Black families, I have been disappointed to find that many are written from a cultural deficit perspective and focus on the failures or pathologies of Black parents. Fatherhood scholars have written about absent, nonresident, unmarried, and incarcerated Black parents (as discussed in: Frazier, 1948; Moynihan, 1965). These narratives do not reflect my current or past experiences. I have been looking for strengths-based research that focuses on the assets of Black families and resiliency of Black fathers who take care of their families despite the institutional odds, including racism and emasculation. I am

using my dissertation to tell the strengths-based story myself, through the perspectives and memories of four generations of my family.

I aim to study the construction and transmission of egalitarianism across four generations of my family—from my grandparents (Generation 1 or G1) to my parents (Generation 2 or G2) to myself (Generation 3 or G3) to my children (Generation 4 or G4). The primary research question this study seeks to answer is: How did the social-historical context, as filtered through previous generations, influence my conception and practice of egalitarian parenting? Further, because much of the research on the intergenerational transmission of gender role attitudes is based on secondary quantitative panel data, this qualitative study collected the narratives of four generations of my family, using the myself as the unit of analysis. This dissertation is a story of how my family constructed and transmitted egalitarianism, which in turn influenced my individual development.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how my Black family constructed and transmitted egalitarianism across generations, with special attention to the social movements of the 1960s. Life course theory and its principles of *linked lives* and *historical time and place* frame this study. This autoethnography included critical reflection, journaling, and in-depth individual oral history interviews with 13 family members across four generations. Trustworthiness was ensured by using member checks and consultation with critical friends. This study concludes with the analysis of the experiences of four generations of my Black family, allowing the multigenerational voices to describe their experiences.

This study focuses on the construct of egalitarianism in the lives of an intergenerational network of great-grandparents (G1), grandparents (G2), parents (G3), and children (G4) in a Black family. Moreover, I initially suspected that the current and prospective parenting practices likely passed through generations of this family have been influenced by the social-historical context of the 1960s and 1970s. I expected that the social-historical milieu of this time in history would explain how context impacted G1's development into adulthood and shaped their parenting practices, which were then transmitted to and between their descendants. Further, I anticipated that, within my family, egalitarianism was constructed, modeled and passed down from G1 to G2 to G3. Because of this, G4 has experienced egalitarian parenting (from G3) and expects to enact similar practices in their future familial relationships. In this autoethnography, I represent G3. For G3, I integrate my perspective with that of my husband, siblings, and a cousin.

The organization of research participants into age-graded groups aligns with Elder's life course perspective as individuals' lives are synchronized with their generations' experiences in

relation to historical events. These three clocks (i.e., ontogenetic, generational, and historical) are interrelated and mutually influencing. I believe that G1, raised during the Great Depression and World Wars I and II, and G2, raised in the 1950s and 1960s, likely experienced more gender-specific work and family roles than did future generations. G3, raised in the 1970s and 1980s, likely experienced less gender-specific work and family roles and benefited from greater educational and occupational opportunities as a result of the civil rights and women's movement of the 1960s. G4, raised in the 2010s, experienced very little gender-specific work and family roles and might expect the same for their future families. Finally, I suspected that each generation experienced egalitarianism to an increasing degree.

Hareven (1994) makes clear the distinction between 'generation' and 'cohort'. The term *generation* is used to describe genetic or fictive kin (non-blood relative) relationships within a family (i.e., grandparents and grandchildren, parents and children). *Cohort* refers to the age-graded group of individuals born in a span of time that has shared particular social-historical experiences. Cohorts are nonhomogeneous as they are each influenced by historical events and cultural traditions particular to their age-graded group (Hareven, 1994). A generation might include multiple cohorts and the two terms should not be confounded (Elder, 1978; Hareven, 1994; Kertzer, 1983). This study uses the term "generation" to describe groups of individuals within my family who were/are parents at about the same time. This study's sampling frame includes generations of genetic or fictive kin bound within particular age ranges, so that they share particular social-historical experiences.

Hareven (1994) indicates that use of social-historical perspective allows researchers to do three things: 1) compare past and contemporary phenomena, 2) examine change over time, and 3) identify models of coping that may be adapted for use in the present. This study used

narrative inquiry to accomplish all three. I collected the retrospective life history of G1 and G2, the current experiences of G3 and G4, and the prospective experiences of G4. Elder (1998) recommends the use of retrospective life history methods for “recovering knowledge about the enduring effects of past events” (p. 2). In their study of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Elder, Wu, and Yuan (1993) surveyed young people involved in the crisis of Tiananmen Square about their lives prior to that historic event.

The American social movements of the 1960s, including the Civil Rights Movement and Women’s Liberation, comprised the social-historical context of G2 parents. This study examined the social-historical context of G1 as parents. Considerations of the social-historical milieu helped to explain how context impacted G2’s development into adulthood and shaped their parenting practices. In particular, it was important to understand how this context shaped egalitarianism in Black families.

In my family, I studied my paternal lineage. Figure 1 shows a model of the four generations that were included in this study. In Figure 1, the members of my family who are deceased are marked with a (D), including my father and his parents. In order to include their voices in this study, I relied on the input of those who knew them in life (e.g., spouses, siblings, children) and my own memory. I gathered the perceptions of multiple individuals in my family about the construction of egalitarianism through oral history interviews. The decision to provide the voices of the deceased with those who knew them in life is supported by African concepts of time and space like *sasa* and *zamani*. As previously argued, life course theory is guided by temporal and positional concepts. Similarly, African religious and philosophical concepts of time and space are guided by the concepts of *sasa* and *zamani* (Mbiti, 1969/1997).



Familial relationships, knowledge of ancestors, and oral history remain important to Black families in the United States. This autoethnography included oral history interviews with individuals, still living in the *sasa*, who knew the deceased during their lives. The oral history interviews collected stories and narratives from participants. During the interview, a photograph was shared with participants of my grandmother at the White House in 1965.



*Figure 1.* Priscilla Sisco Swann standing in front of the White House

### **Research Design and Methodology**

I used autoethnography to tell the story of my family. The research question was addressed using multiple qualitative data collection methods, specifically in-depth individual oral history interviews and personal critical reflections recorded in audio journals. Qualitative research can facilitate the understanding of family processes, such as the construction, practice, and transmission of egalitarianism (Daly, 2007). These methods allowed me to tell the story of egalitarianism in my family using multiple voices, including my own. In this chapter, I use the term *oral history* to define what I collected from others to supplement my memories and delve deeper into stories that I may have heard only as a child. As a researcher living out the

egalitarianism I learned from my parents and grandparents, I realize I have a new perspective on what was modeled and passed down to me and what I am modeling and passing down to my children. In this study, I occupy more than one space; I am simultaneously the researcher collecting the stories and memories of others and a subject of the research, using reflexivity to provide an insider view of the transmission process as I experienced it.

My individual development is the focus of this autoethnography. This study examined how my family constructed and transmitted egalitarianism, which in turn influenced my individual development. I collected data from the four generations I have known in the *Sasa*. This study required considerable vulnerability; however, Philaretou and Allen (2006) indicate that this method can be liberating, especially for researchers from marginalized groups. Though the methodology collected multiple perspectives, the composite of these voices provided a rich account of the culture of egalitarianism in my multigenerational family.

### **Autoethnography**

Autoethnography is a research method that provides space for a researcher to study her own cultural experiences. It emphasizes personal, subjective reflections on experience rather than objective, neutral accounts. Adams and Manning write, "...Autoethnography can allow researchers to offer insider accounts of families; study everyday, unexpected experiences of families, especially as they face unique or difficult situations; write against limited extant research about families; and make research more accessible to nonacademic audiences" (2015, p.1). Autoethnography combines cultural analysis and interpretation (whether culture is "out there" or "in here") with narrative details (Chang, 2008). Autoethnographers analyze their own autobiographical data with the same critical interpretation as they do data from others. The goal

of an autoethnography is to have a cultural understanding of the phenomena based on the perspectives of self and others.

Autoethnography began as a qualitative approach that used anthropological ethnography to study a group of which the researcher is a part, or “one’s ‘own people’” (Hayano, 1979, p. 99). More recently, autoethnography has moved to a combination of ethnography and autobiography (Humphreys, Coupland, & Learmouth, 2015). Autoethnography is key to critical resistance work as it gives subjugated and marginalized groups the space to tell their stories (Pratt, 1992) and provides an opportunity for multiple voices and perspectives to be given legitimacy (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

This autoethnography documented my family’s construction and transmission of egalitarianism combining personal experience, memory, and storytelling with existing research, theory and cultural analysis of what it means to be a Black family living through the Great Depression, Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation movements, Mass Incarceration, and Black Lives Matter.

In addition to answering the question, “Who am I to this study?”, this study forced me to both reflect on and report my personal experiences as well as the stories shared by my family. Though I am embedded in my family’s culture of egalitarianism, it was necessary to carve out a space to study this culture. Autoethnography requires that the researcher critically reflect on her own positionality and social location. Autoethnography has restorative aspects and can serve as form of healing (Mizzi, 2010). This study was cathartic for me and my family and helped all of us to better understand the deceased family members who were key to the transmission of egalitarianism.

## **Oral History**

To effectively translate the lived experiences of my family, I conducted interviews with family members across four generations. I refer to these interviews as a collection of oral history. “Memory is the core of oral history, from which meaning can be extracted and preserved” (Richie, 2003, p. 19). Oral history involves interviewing people to gain an understanding of their lived experiences. The Black community uses oral history to pass down stories from generation to generation. Oral history also has been used successfully to capture the stories of Black women (Armitage & Mercier, 2009; Brown, 1997; Tuner, 1997; Vaz, 1997; Williams, 2004). In-depth individual oral history interviews allowed me to capture my family’s stories of egalitarianism, describe the reciprocal multigenerational relationships, as well as document the interplay between individuals’ experiences and historical time and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Congruent with African religious and philosophical concepts of *sasa* and *zamani* (Mbiti, 1969/1997), I collected the oral histories of family members who knew my father and grandparents during their lives to provide my father/grandparents’ experiences with egalitarianism and the modeling and transmission of this value from one generation to the next.

## **Procedure**

### **Participants**

I conducted oral history interviews with 12 family members and reviewed five oral history interviews that had been conducted by historians most of whom knew my father and grandparents in the *Sasa*, for the New City Library Oral History Collection. One of my sons never met my father and neither of my sons knew my grandmother. Table 1 displays the people

who were recruited for oral history interviews and the deceased individuals whose perspective their stories may represent. My voice represents G3.

**Table 1: Participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Generation (G)</b>	<b>Relationship to G3</b>
1	G1	Great Aunt
2	G1	Great Aunt
3	G2	Mother
4	G2	Uncle
5	G2	Uncle
6	G2	Uncle
7	G2	Uncle
8 <sup>2</sup>	G2	Cousin
9	G2	Cousin
10	G3	Self
11	G3	Spouse
12	G3	Sibling
13	G3	Sibling
14 <sup>3</sup>	G3	Cousin
15	G4	Son
16	G4	Son

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<sup>2</sup> This family member had a close relationship with and operated a small business with G1.

<sup>3</sup> This family member was raised by and provided end-of-life care to G1.

I obtained approval from the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board (IRB-FY19-20-1590). All IRB-approved consent forms and interview protocols, and recruitment text can be found in Appendices A-C.

### **Recruitment**

A total of 14 family members were invited to an interview. All participants were contacted by phone, by email, or in person to recruit them to participate in the study. Most of the interviews were conducted in-person at the participant's home between December 2019 and January 2020. Three interviews were conducted by phone.

### ***Recruitment Ethical Concerns***

Prior to data collection, I was concerned that some participants would feel undue influence to participate in my study because I am a member of their family. I attempted to mitigate feelings of undue influence by collecting informed consent virtually rather than in-person. The consent form was available online, using SurveyMonkey, and was completed by the participants prior to scheduling the interview. The MSU IRB approved the consent process for all participants, including my own minor children, ages 7 and 11. All recruited participants had the opportunity to review the informed consent and determine whether or not they wished to participate. By removing myself physically from the consent process, I hoped to mitigate any pressure or undue influence the prospective participant might feel. In addition, all recruited participants had time to seek advice from others if desired. I informed all participants that their identities would be protected by the use of pseudonyms and, during the data analysis phase, I used member checks to ensure they approved of my using any data that might be identifying.

Importantly, the oral history interviews I conducted follow the ethical principles and practices of the Oral History Association (OHA, n.d.), which states “Everyone involved in oral

history work, from interviewers and narrators to archivists and researchers, becomes part of a web of mutual responsibility working to ensure that the narrator's perspective, dignity, privacy, and safety are respected." The ethical practices espoused by OHA focus on respect, transparency, awareness of power dynamics, and safety. As an interviewer who collected the histories of my own family, I recognize my power both as the interviewer and as an aspiring researcher. I informed my participants of the purpose of the interview, ensured they were giving their consent voluntarily, and reiterated that they could withdraw from the interview or refuse to answer a question at any time. I respected and honored my family members' participation by allowing them to review the interview (recording and/or transcript) and approve what was included before I analyzed it.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection methods for this study included individual oral history interviews and a researcher journal.

### ***Oral History Interviews***

To collect the stories of my families' experiences with egalitarianism, I conducted 12 oral history interviews, reviewed five previously conducted oral history interviews, and recorded my own critical reflections, totaling 775 minutes of shared memories, storytelling, and reflection. In-person interviews were an average of 54 minutes long. At each interview, participants were asked to confirm their consent to be interviewed and recorded. A semi-structured interview protocol guided each interview, as determined by the generation each participant represented. Interview protocols are provided in Appendix A. Photographs were used to spark conversation and were shared in person or electronically during each interview. Oral history interviewing requires that the interviewer allow the participant to tell their story (Miller & Crabtree, 2004) so

interruptions and requests for clarification were limited. The stories participants told reflected the details they deemed most important to include. After each interview, I documented my reflections and sent the audio recordings to be transcribed by a transcription service (i.e., Rev.com). Some of my family members previously participated in oral history interviews. The Library Association of Rockland County, as part of the Sound and Story Project of the Hudson Valley's Cube, has published five oral history interviews with two of my great-aunts (Peaks, 2014a; Peaks, 2014; Crawford, 2017a; Crawford, 2017b; Crawford, 2017c). These interviews concern women's rights and work as well as perspectives of growing up in the 1930s and 1940s. The archive states that these audio recordings may be used for scholarly or educational purposes. These interviews and transcriptions were included as data in this study.

### ***Researcher Journal***

I documented my memories and reflections in a researcher journal that I kept over the course of this study – from recruitment to analyses – as well as thoughts and ideas prior to determining a final topic. Journal entries begin in May, 2017 and end in February 2020. I used an audio recorder or the *Easy Voice Recorder* app to collect these thoughts. These audio files were also transcribed by the transcription service. In total, I recorded 89 minutes of my own reflections, musings, and memories.

It was necessary for me to investigate my suppositions and assumptions by considering my positionality in relation to the data I collected and reviewed (hooks, 2004; Luttrell, 2005, 2010a, 2010b; Sosulski, Buchanan, & Donnell, 2010). After each interview, I determined how my memories of events or stories I had been told might be challenged by what I heard from my participants. Because of my closeness to the participants and the stories they shared, I needed to be open to alternate understandings of events with which I was familiar, including the possibility



that my family may not have been as egalitarian as I perceived it to be. I also was impacted by the cumulative effect of the interviews. I did not intentionally order my participants and allowed convenience to guide the order of interview scheduling. As a result, I was a different instrument between interview #1 and #12. This means that, as an instrument or a tool used to gather data, I had different understandings of the events being described by the first participant and the last. My openness to what I was hearing may have changed between the first and final interview. Moreover, though I collected my own reflections along the way, by the end of data collection I knew more about the events about which I was asking.

### ***Positionality***

Prior to conducting these interviews, I disclosed to my participants that I wanted to learn more about their experiences growing up and that I am invested in the stories of Black families. I shared that my identities include granddaughter, daughter, sister, niece, cousin, wife, and mother. I also disclosed that it is important to me that their stories are told, heard, and recorded. For the sake of transparency, I also disclosed that I am interested in the concept of egalitarianism in families. This disclosure may have “biased” my analyses but bias depends on the interest being served (White & Dotson, 2010). I believe that any bias revealing my research questions may have posed is to the benefit of the marginalized group – Black families.

### **Data Analyses**

#### ***Gilligan’s Listening Guide***

I used Gilligan’s Listening Guide (LG), sometimes called the Voice-Centered Relational Approach, to analyze the interviews (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2006). LG is designed to facilitate attending to multiple voices within individuals. The multivocal nature of this autoethnography makes LG an appropriate approach

for this study. Adapted from Gilligan (2015), Woodcock (2016) provides a procedural guide that can be used to maximize the goal of LG to focus on the researcher-participant relationship and the interplay between voice and silence, and tune-in to marginalized voices. LG provides a framework that has been used to analyze oral history interviews (Baird, 2012; Golding & Hargreaves, 2018), allowing the researcher to adapt or modify the LG approaches to better focus on participants' voices and meanings. LG requires that each interview be transcribed and listened to (and simultaneously read) three times. Each listening/reading requires a particular focus:

1. Listening #1 - What are the psychological features of this particular terrain?
  - a. Listening for plot or the stories that participants share
  - b. Listening for silence or pauses or whispering/voice-lowering or trailing off
  - c. Listening for the narrator's response to or being mindful of the interviewer's responses, questions, and confusions
2. Listening #2 - How does the "I" or first-person voice move across this terrain?
  - a. Listening for "I-statements"
  - b. Listening for the self-voice of the participant or how he or she speaks about himself or herself and in relationship to others
3. Listening #3 - What voices within the transcript or text speak to or inform the researcher's question?
  - a. Listening for responses to the study's research question
  - b. Listening for the contrapuntal or themes that complement or compete with each other

Because this study focused on the transmission of values and behaviors across generations, the LG was modified slightly for this study to ensure better analysis of the data

across individuals and between generations. The procedures for Listening #1 mostly remained the same as Gilligan (2015; Gilligan et. al., 2006; Woodcock, 2016) prescribed. Interviews were listened to and transcripts simultaneously were read to hear: 1) the stories that participants shared, 2) silence, hesitancy, pauses, or whispering/voice-lowering or trailing off, and 3) the extent to which the participants were mindful of the interviewer's responses, questions, and confusions. In addition, exhibitions of emotion (e.g., crying, deep breaths) and requests for more time before continuing their responses were considered during Listening #1. Similarly, Listening #2 also primarily followed Gilligan's protocol. Interviews were listened to and transcripts simultaneously were read to hear: 1) the "I" or first-person voice of participants' stories and 2) how he or she speaks about himself or herself and in relationship to others. Listening #3 remained unchanged from Gilligan's procedures (2015). Interviews were listened to and transcripts simultaneously were read to hear: 1) stories related to the research question and 2) any statements or themes that are interacting or competing. I made one significant change to the protocol.

### ***Pronoun-Poems***

In addition to listening for "I" statements in Listening #2, I listened for other pronoun-based statements (hereafter referred to as pronoun-poems), including he/him (my great-grandfather, grandfather, father, or husband), she/her (my great-grandmother, grandmother, or mother), they (my grandparents or parents), we/us (our family, my uncles, my siblings), and you (Rebecca). These poems are short excerpts from the participants' transcribed narration. For the most part, pronoun-poems were extracted from multiple participants representing a particular generation. Pronoun-poems were co-constructed between the narrator and listener based on oral history concepts, including interpretive authority (Borland, 1998), shared authority (Frisch,

1990) and collaborative authorship (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Portelli states, "There is no oral history before the encounter of two different subjects, one with a story to tell and the other with a history to reconstruct" (1998, p. 28). Based on these oral history concepts, I selected and used the multiple participants' actual language to form poems that would capture the sentiments of one generation. These excerpts include participants' perceptions, memories, values, or beliefs and were curated based on what I understood from them. For example, this poem emerged from statements about a woman in Generation 2:

She's very cerebral.  
She looks at everything and takes it all in.  
She had to be that way.  
She had three kids.  
    It was not man-to-man coverage,  
        Like zone coverage.  
She needed to be methodical.  
She had to do all this stuff,  
    And still go grocery shopping.

The pronouns of interest described the main protagonists of my study – my family at-large, my great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, husband, self, and children. In other words, for each interview, I listened for how the participant described or told stories about others. I combined these pronoun-statements into a multi-tab spreadsheet. In this spreadsheet, worksheet tabs were named for each person or couple that was discussed in the interviews. On each worksheet, I recorded the name of the participant, the timestamp of the statement, and the quotation. When analyzing qualitative data, researchers should not assume familiarity with their participants (hooks, 2004); creating pronoun-statements and analyzing them across participants helped me to focus on the specific people participants described and provided me space to consider how those descriptions did or did not influence my understanding of that person. At first, I primarily reduced participants' statements to the pronoun-verb pair in the sentence (e.g., I

went, she wanted, they were), but found that this reduction often did not provide enough context for what the participants' had described. These slight modifications to the LG helped me to focus on participants' stories and perceptions of individuals and our family at-large.

After the pronoun-based statements were extracted from each participant's transcript, they were combined for each of the characters. I created a file of all of the statements about my great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, my husband and myself, and our children, as individuals and couples, respectively. Each family member's perspective was important to understanding how egalitarianism was constructed and transmitted, and which aspects of egalitarianism persisted over time. Creating a repository of pronoun-based statements helped me to develop a greater understanding of my family from the perspective of multiple participants. Pronoun-based statements for each character were analyzed using open-coding. I used an inductive approach to analysis and allowed the data to shape how the findings should be reported. I reviewed the data across respondents to look for a common thread of the construction of egalitarianism, including how this thread was adapted as it moved from generation to generation. The purpose of the analysis was to connect individuals' experiences to greater cultural issues (Wall, 2016). Then, I created pronoun-poems about the different people or couples that were discussed. Throughout Chapter 4, I have used pronoun-poems (Gilligan, 2015, Woodcock, 2016) to enrich the reporting of my research. This story is told from my perspective and includes poems that emerged from data collected from participants. Chapter 4 summarizes the primary themes that emerged from this analysis.

### ***Positionality***

Throughout my study, my positionality took multiple forms, as granddaughter, daughter, sister, cousin, niece, wife, and mother. I primarily hold an indigenous insider perspective because

I was socialized in the community I am studying (Banks, 1998; Chavez, 2008) and am perceived by my participants as part of the group and worthy of receiving and sharing their stories. However, some topics in my interviews were stories I knew little about and shifted my positionality to an indigenous-outsider perspective. Indigenous-outsider perspective describes those who were socialized in the community (e.g., I am part of the family) but have assimilated into an outsider culture (e.g., I am an academic and not of the same generation of some of the storytellers; Banks, 1998; Chavez, 2008). I acknowledge now the potential power dynamic between myself and my participants. That being said, the majority of my participants spoke about father and grandfather based on their relationship to them – “my brother” or “my cousin” rather than “your father” and “Everett” or “Daddy” rather than “your grandfather.” To some extent, I believe that my participants were so engrossed in telling their childhood stories that they forgot about my personal relationship with them.

### ***Trustworthiness***

In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the findings are credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is confidence that the findings represent the “truth” while transferability means that the findings could be applied in different contexts. Dependability is similar to reliability in quantitative studies and assesses the degree to which the findings are consistent and could hold up to repeated examination. Finally, confirmability relates to neutral and objective findings. This component is complicated by my positionality in this study and the autoethnographic method.

Autoethnography does not intend to be objective or neutral. As a method, it is designed to be subjective and personal. For this study, I worked to ensure credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability through prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer review, and reflexivity.

This study included data collection through interviews with four generations in my family over a period of about two months (December 2019 and January 2020). Though this effort may not be intensive enough to be considered prolonged engagement, the collected data provided measures of internal consistency. For example, I collected data from my family at over 13 points (12 participants and my own memories and reflections) and reviewed five oral history interviews conducted by historians for the New City Library Oral History Collection. There was cross-interview consistency in the stories participants shared. These multiple methods were triangulated as a measure of internal consistency. Finally, I used peer review with critical friends, including other doctoral students and faculty, to help me imagine how my analyses and conclusions might be wrong. My critical friends were useful in pushing me to consider how I might be wrong and helpful at ruling out potential “plausible alternatives and threats to interpretation and explanation” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 281). I used the aforementioned researcher journal to review the potential biases and perceptions I documented over the course of the study.

### *Analyses and Reporting Ethics*

I was attentive to the ethical issues of autoethnography (Wall, 2016), using member checks to confirm what participants shared with me. I shared a transcript of the interview with participants and confirmed the accuracy of the transcript with them during a subsequent phone conversation. These conversations also were an opportunity for the participant to clarify or expand on any of their statements. I took notes to record what was said. I also confirmed my participants’ willingness to review drafts of analyses at the start of the study. Member checks were not only conducted with the participants. I also contacted the people the stories were about

to confirm the story could be shared. Pseudonyms were used throughout this dissertation to protect the privacy of individual respondents. During the consent process, I also informed my participants that despite using a pseudonym, their identity may be interpretable. Finally, there is a relational ethic to using the Listening Guide, requiring that the analyses and reporting are attentive to the multiple voices within the data. In addition, I used my critical friends to keep me focused on themes emerging from the data rather than solely my own opinions or preconceived ideas (Wall, 2016).

The following chapter presents the main themes of this study regarding the construction and transmission of egalitarianism over generations, including relevant poems that emerged from the data collected in this study.



## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from my data analyses and my reflections to answer the research question that guides this study: How did the social-historical context, as filtered through previous generations, influence my conception and practice of egalitarian parenting? This section presents the themes that emerged from the analyses about the transmission of egalitarian parenting over generations.

### Themes

The collected data was analyzed at the individual and generational levels. The following eight themes emerged from the data: social-historical context, education, husband support, flexible gender roles – female, flexible gender roles – male, partnering, balanced parenting, and intergenerational parenting similarity. Each theme is discussed below along with accompanying pronoun-poems to elucidate the finding.

#### **Social-Historical Context**

In the case of our three generations, my family had varying experiences with discrimination, particularly during the Civil Rights Movement. Participants in Generations 3 and 4 were not alive at this time. Perhaps because Nyack was so far from the Jim Crow south, the Black people in my family did not experience race-related discrimination. The following three pronoun-poems share statements from participants in Generation 2 about their communities:

It was very rare in Nyack when I felt like I was a Black man.  
I never felt any racial implications.  
I liked Nyack.  
I don't know how to describe [the Civil Rights Movement].  
I saw it happening.  
I read about it.  
It would be on TV.  
I never felt like I was a victim of it.  
I was definitely aware of it.  
I saw people participating.

I knew and understood why.  
It was something on the side  
    Not a direct impact on what I was doing.  
I never felt I should have or should not be involved in it.  
You could see it wore on my mother and my father.  
    - Generation 2 – Age 17 in 1965

I didn't see color as an issue growing up in Nyack.  
I didn't even really notice that [my best friend] was White until someone else mentioned it.  
I'm sure it wasn't entirely that way.  
I really didn't and many others of my peers didn't see color as an issue.  
I wasn't really impacted at all by desegregation.  
I saw on the news.  
I heard about riots in Nyack where I was raised.  
I never witnessed anything.  
    - Generation 2 – Age 7 in 1965

I didn't know anything about hatred and all of that stuff because of our environment.  
I didn't know anything about it.  
I was too young to really know anything about what was going on.  
I couldn't tell you about it.  
I don't believe we had any problems.  
    - Generation 2 – Age 5 in 1965

While these participants may not have had any problems with race-related discrimination during the time of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, many other Black Americans, particularly in the southern United States did (House, 2010; Johnson, 1954; McKee, 1993; Moody, 1968; White, 1999). The Civil Rights Movement in the South often featured violent reactions to Black activism. I selected participants 'I-statements' and provided their ages to show a range of awareness to the movement within one generation of brothers. In addition, I provided the participants' approximate age in 1965 as a means of situating their developmental age in context. I selected the year 1965 because that was the year of the National Head Start Day event that their mother had attended, as well as the year the United States entered the Vietnam War, the assassination of Malcolm X, and the march on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL resulting in President Johnson's signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This context is important to

understanding why it was so significant that a Black woman was invited to the White House this year, as this was a time of particular societal unrest for Black people in the United States consisting of much discrimination in general.

Others in my family did experience race-related discrimination, especially once they left their communities. My father enlisted in the United States Army after high school. He was selected for Officer's Candidate School, graduated from Fort Benning, and was sent to Alabama. There, he experienced racism, perhaps for the first time. This was a turning point in his life.

He often didn't want to talk about civil rights.  
 He would act like he didn't believe it was necessary in a way.  
 I don't know if that came from where he grew up.  
 He always felt that he had opportunity.  
 I believed in civil rights a little bit more than he did.  
 He didn't talk about...  
 He was in the Army.  
 He told me this many years later.  
 He commanding officer had called him the N-word.  
 He couldn't really talk about it for a long time.

- About Generation 2 – Age 18 in 1965

He was given a pistol to protect himself.  
 He was in the military in the South.  
 He was in charge of an honor guard.  
 They would receive the bodies that were coming from Vietnam.  
 They would go and present the flags to the families and serve at the grave side.  
 He was provided with a pistol.  
 People in the South didn't want to see a Black man in a uniform.  
 Growing up in Nyack, he had privilege.  
 Going to Alabama, he was just...  
 He wasn't expecting.

- About Generation 2 – Age 18 in 1965

Others in my family also discussed racism they experienced after leaving the Nyack area. My great-aunt describes:

I left Sparkill.  
 I left this house and went to Orangeburg.  
 People were going out of New York City,  
 Running away from Black people,

Ran right into me and my children.  
 My oldest daughter had a very hard time with the N-word.  
 We never heard...  
 I'd never heard it.  
 I was never called that.  
 It was tough on my kids.

- Generation 1 – Age 26 in 1965

Albany was a different community than Nyack. The State capital was racially diverse though somewhat segregated by race. Growing up in Albany, my mother reported feeling an increased tension in the community around the time of the Civil Rights Movement. She recalled:

My neighborhood was mostly White.  
 There were Black families.  
 My mom was friends with one of the women.  
 I had been in their home before.  
 We actually had to have a curfew in the city.  
 You had to be in your home.  
 I forget what time it was.  
 My dad was a person who believed in treating everyone fairly and the same.  
 He would often make that statement:  
*'I treat everyone the same.'*  
 He was like that.  
 Young black boys would come.

Sit on our porch.

Wait for my father to get home to take them to baseball.

I can remember one neighbor yelling at our house.

- Generation 2 – Age 9 in 1965

Across Generations 1 and 2, my family had varying experiences during the Civil Rights Movement, with some family members personally not affected and others directly impacted by discrimination. I had a similar experience with the shocking revelation that a new environment was not as inclusive as my hometown.

I was born the first biracial daughter of a Black man and white woman in a college town in the northeast. My White mother is the daughter of a second-generation Italian immigrant and a French-Canadian/ English colonist whose ancestors were early settlers of Massachusetts in the mid-1600s. My Black father is the son of Black parents – one whose ancestors were free Blacks

from Skunk Hollow descended from a merchant on a Dutch West India Company trading ship, the *Bruynvis*, that sailed to New Netherland in 1626 and another descended from Virginian slaves. Interracial couples were not an anomaly in my hometown; multiple students in my school had parents of different races. My friends were singularly White, Black, or Hispanic or some mixture of these. I have always embraced my multi-ethnic heritage, which includes all of these viewpoints – the immigrant one, the Mayflower one, the free Black one, the enslaved Black one. Growing up in a racially diverse, progressive, inclusive bubble, I never had to pick a side. Our bubble was round; there was no side. It wasn't until I left this bubble that I understood the need to choose.

I went to college in a southeastern city still holding on to the vestiges of the confederacy; the Stars and Bars flew atop the statehouse only a few blocks from campus. Though I never experienced any explicit racism, I was subjected to the microaggressions of White people who had limited exposure to people of color. A friend's parents were stunned by how articulate I was and my roommate who "didn't see color" openly mused about why Mariah Carey was suddenly working with "so many niggers." I have never felt more Black. No matter how diluted my blackness, in the south, I would be Black and so I decided I would be. Nine hundred miles from my bubble, I built a new one. This new bubble was still progressive and inclusive but it was comprised almost entirely of Black people. All of my friends were Black. I joined a Black sorority. I immersed myself in the writings of Black women writers – Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Gloria Naylor, Ntozake Shange, and Alice Walker – whose stories reflected my own. I found myself in Sula, Janie, and the Lady in Yellow and through these characters I felt connected to the people in my new bubble. I grew into a Black woman with a Black husband and Black sons connected to the Black community. In a pronoun-poem, I reflected:

Growing up in Albany, I never felt other than.  
 I realized...  
 I was the only...  
 I never felt.  
 Going to school in the South, I felt and was Black,  
 I built...  
 I found...  
 I grew.

- Generation 3

There may be gender-based perspectives that need to be taken into consideration with regard to this theme. Family members who reported feeling the strain of their communities or experienced inner tension were all women, while those who reported not being affected by racism were men.

### **Education**

The pursuit of postsecondary education was a prominent theme of the participants with my family. Each respondent mentioned higher education in their interview, particularly regarding the value of education. Many women in my family, from Generations 1, 2, and 3, (my grandmother, great-aunt, mother, and myself) attended college after their children had begun formal schooling. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements from participants about the role of higher education in the lives of these women in my family.

I was supposed to just go from high school to college.  
 My husband convinced me I needed to get married.  
 I got married right out of high school.  
 I went to college after having five children.  
 I went to college and decided.  
 I got work to go to college.  
 I went to Rockland Community College at night.  
 I got it.  
 I went to St. Thomas Aquinas at night.  
 I have a computer science degree.

- Generation 1

My mother never gave up on getting education.  
 She would take courses.

She spent a lot of time going through...

If my mom saw some course she felt would help her advance her educational goal,  
She was participating in it.

I went to school

Then, she went and got her...

She completed her formal education.

She's got a couple of degrees from Rockland Community College

She got a couple of degrees.

My mother would have done her PhD if she had enough time.

She definitely always wanted to have her degree.

- Generation 1

She was going to Maria College to become nurse.

Mom was in school.

She was at class a lot.

She wasn't home.

She went to school.

She had three children and worked a full-time job.

She was working and going to school at the same time.

She could do what she needed to do.

- Generation 2

She has class.

She might not be home in time.

My mom will probably be working on her dissertation.

She gets the chance.

- Generation 3

Across generations, there is similarity in how higher education was pursued by women in my family. We all were married mothers at the time of our enrollment in college though differences exist with regard to the level of education. My grandmother and great-aunt achieved Associate's degrees, my great-aunt and mother achieved Bachelor's degrees, and I achieved post-graduate degrees after we each became mothers. In addition, we all were working at the time of our enrollment in college. In my family, navigating these simultaneous roles – wife, mother, worker, and student – required the coordination of multiple responsibilities and the assistance of multiple others.

## Husband Support

In the case of our three generations, the most frequent supporter of our higher education pursuits were our husbands. As married working mothers, we were not the sole financial providers. All of our husbands worked; some to excess. There are some differences across generations about the intensity of work outside the home. In this study, my grandfather is frequently described as fiercely dedicated to work, doing whatever he could to provide a good life for his family. Multiple participants told the story about how my grandmother would load up their sons in the car and visit my grandfather at work, because the family would not see him otherwise. Representing Generation 1, my great-uncle also was a supportive husband. My father had a different approach to work but was supportive in his own right. The males in my family representing Generation 3, including my husband, appear to have achieved greater balance between work and emotional and caring support. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements about Generation 1's support of women in my family:

My dad was working the 3 to 11 shift.  
 We would go down in the evening time,  
     Take him his dinner,  
         And sit out by the Hudson River.  
 We would go to the water and throw skip rocks.  
 My mom and dad would talk.  
 My brothers and I would be walking in the water, having a good time.  
 My dad would take us in the mill every now and then ...  
 We would go in to get him...  
     - Generation 1

My dad went to work.  
 He worked two jobs.  
 His mission was to provide for his family.  
 He worked different shifts.  
 If he wasn't working a day shift at the mill, then he was driving a truck.  
 He was always leaving, going to work, whether to drive or work at the factory.  
 He did everything he could with the multiple jobs.  
 My dad was still going to work two or three jobs - full time, part time, overtime at the full time.  
 My dad was a...  
     supervisor,



workaholic,  
servant.

His work ethic was unbelievable.  
He wouldn't not work when it was good money.  
- Generation 1

Her husband was very good to her.  
He came home from work and put his check up on the counter for her to take care of.  
He had no issues about that either.  
He never cared that she was doing all this stuff.  
He let her do whatever she wanted.  
He knew her.  
He knew she wasn't gonna do anything wrong.  
He never complained about anything that she did.  
He would give it to her.  
He would bend to her will.  
He would do for her.  
He went.  
He was right there.  
He was involved.  
He would always tell her, 'Yeah babe, you can do it.'  
He supported her and everything she went out to do.  
He was right there - 100% supporting her, encouraging her.  
Dad was supportive of her work.  
Dad would support it.  
My father would do whatever he could to help my mother's dreams come true.  
- Generation 1

He might say:  
*This is what you're going to do?*  
*I'll make sure all of this is taken care of.*  
*That's what you want to do?*  
*You don't have to worry about the house.*  
*You don't have to worry about anything here.*  
*I got this.*  
*You do what you need to do.*  
- Generation 1

While men in Generation 1 were primarily providers offering tangible support (e.g., financial assistance, material goods, or services) to their spouses, Generations 2 and 3 primarily offered emotional and esteem support (Ko, Wang, Xu, 2013) to their wives, often taking on non-traditional gender role responsibilities. Over the course of my data collection, I learned that my

father was a childhood friend of Daniel Friedan, whose mother Betty wrote *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan, 1963) while living in Rockland County. I wonder if my grandmother knew her and if that book had influenced her in any way. I speculate that my father became a feminist through the environmental influence of Mrs. Friedan, his mother, and aunts. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements about how men from Generations 2 and 3 have supported women.

Daddy would literally kick us out of the house just so we didn't make any noise.  
 He was very protective of her.  
 Daddy would send us out of the house so she could rest.  
 He demanded that we respect her.  
 - Generation 2

We're both feminists who appreciate the dedication of a hardworking man.  
 That dedication to their work.  
 That dedication to provide.  
 They're not just doing it because it looks good to do it.  
 They're doing it because of the sacrifice in service for the family.  
 There is a partnership.  
*'I'm doing this for us.'*  
 I think every male person,  
 Our dad,  
 Our grandfather,  
 Your husband,  
 My husband.

These are men who are fiercely dedicated to family.  
 That allows for us to feel vulnerable at times.  
 We don't have to be so hard-edged all the time.  
 We can be vulnerable with our spouses because they understand our partnership.  
 They understand our worth.  
 - Generation 3

I leave first.  
 I come home first.  
 I'm home.  
 I am present in the house.  
 He wakes me up.  
 He makes me breakfast.  
 I'll drive them to school.  
 I leave work about one o'clock pm to pick up children.  
 I pick them up pretty much every day.

I'm getting them at different times, but I still pick them up.  
 I do my best.  
 We figure it out.

- Generation 3

Across generations, husbands supported their wives endeavors by providing care for the home or children. From G1 to G3, there is increasing specificity about the type of care that was provided. This is likely due to the proximity of these activities, as participants representing G3 are currently providing these supports and participants from G4 are receiving them. G3 and G4 experiences are current while the husbands described by G1 and G2 are deceased and provided these supports 30-55 years ago.

### **Flexible Gender Roles - Female**

Across three generations, respondents discussed the role of women in society. Generation 1 shared strong feelings about equal rights for women and advocated for themselves, particularly during the 1960s-1970s when women were increasing their presence in the workforce. In Generations 2 and 3, participants were mixed in their perceptions about who they would be. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements from participants about the role of women:

She was a driving force, rebellious, and brave.  
 My mother was friends with a woman who "burned her bra."  
 She supported that.  
 My mom was very involved.  
 She often complained about unequal pay.  
 She joined different organizations to combat unequal pay for women at factories.  
 She wasn't afraid to go up against something that she didn't feel was correct or right.  
 She had a very big heart.  
 She cared.  
 She ran, went, traveled.  
 She was in charge.  
 She was recognized.

- Generation 1

Women give up their dreams because of children.

They stopped life because of children.  
 My mom might've done that.  
 She wanted to do.  
 She had the opportunity.  
 She was able to do.  
 She says, *'I'm outta here.'*  
 She began to travel.  
 She's been to Africa.  
 She's been to a lot of foreign lands.  
 She went to England.  
 She's been there.  
 She was free-spirited.  
 She wanted to do.  
 She did.

- Generation 1

Mommy told him.  
 I told my husband  
*'I gotta get out of here.'*  
*'I gotta do something.'*  
 I told my husband.  
 I had to talk to somebody that stood taller than...  
 I went for an interview for a job.  
 I made my husband quit one of his jobs.  
 I would go to work then straight to college.  
 My husband had the children.  
 He was a good cook.  
 He didn't mind.  
 He liked to cook.  
 He was from the South, and he didn't mind.

- Generation 1

I was the only female, Black and all White men.  
 I wrote a program.  
 I got it from the mathematical book.  
 They were so proud, *'Blah, blah, blah.'*  
 I became project manager.  
 One White man wanted that job...  
 They gave it to me.

Again, only Black female in the room.

That went on for years.

- Generation 1

I went to work.

I was just a clerk.

I was in a room with nine other White women doing paperwork out of the computer room.

I decided that we weren't being treated fairly.

Every time you see a man, he's in the computer room bypassing 10 women.

I went to my supervisor and said...

*'I want to discuss some discrimination.'*

He thought I was talking about being Black.

I was talking about being female versus the males.

I said... *'You had 10 women*

*You never give them an upgrade in pay or job position.'*

I said, *'I want to go to college...*

*I understand that some people come have been sent to college after they've been hired.'*

He said, *'Oh, no problem.'*

He threw the papers up on the desk.

He said, *'What would you like to take?'*

- Generation 1

I felt torn to be honest with you.

I had never really seen my mother work outside the home.

I very much was interested in being a mother.

I had my own children.

I was working.

I had them.

I wanted to be home and raising my children.

I felt to be a whole person...

I had to be working and had to be achieving.

I had to do both of those things.

I felt...

I still was picking traditional roles.

I first became a teacher.

I became a nurse.

I was still in that mindset.

I could have been...

I could have been a whatever.

- Generation 2

I was elementary age.

Dad played the Mom role.

Mom played the Dad role.

I got in middle school and high school.

Mom was more present.

Mom was home.

Mom would be home cooking dinner.

- Generation 2

I always knew.

I would work.

I saw.

I remember Baby Boom.

The 80s were filled with films about working moms.

I would have a career.

I didn't know what.

I would have it all.

I believed that.

- Generation 3

I think that's what weighs on me.

My husband is the major breadwinner.

I have this feminist mentality.

*'Women can do everything.'*

I can't.

I need this person.

- Generation 3

For Generation 1, equality and inclusion was focused primarily on gender. For Generations 2 and 3, respondents discussed societal pressure about the need to be both working, independent women and being mothers.

### **Flexible Gender Roles - Male**

Men from Generation 2 and 3 shared that they had taken on non-traditional parenting responsibilities. An uncle took a part-time job at the library so he could bring his daughters to work with him. A cousin is a stay-at-home dad. My husband and I have negotiated our work schedules such that I am home in the morning to get the kids ready for school and he picks them up from school and takes care of after-school responsibilities. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements from participants about the flexible gender roles of men in my family:

He'd be there.

He was always there.

He wanted to be there.

He wanted to be present.

He was just always around.

He was very involved.  
He was very much a nurturer.  
He was like a helicopter parent.  
Mom was the breadwinner.  
He didn't want to just be a provider.  
He raised you a little differently.  
- Generation 2

I am present in the house.  
I do my best to make the kids breakfast in the morning before they go to school.  
I'll drive them to school.  
I pick them up pretty much every day.  
I'm getting them at different times.  
I still pick them up.  
I let them be involved in sports and activities that would fall on the weekend.  
I still make them cut the grass and gather the wood when the trees break.  
- Generation 3

Between Generations 2 and 3, men in my family began to take on nontraditional gender roles. These men were involved in caring and nurturing behaviors, regularly maintaining the household and children. Growing up, my nuclear family consisted of two working heterosexual married parents earning a middle-class income and three close-in-age children. People would likely describe my father as very involved despite the fact that he was holding down a full-time job. My Black father was abnormal, when compared to the stereotypes about Black dads – absent, aggressive, and unemployed soldiers of the street life. My father was none of these things. He wasn't holding down the block; he was coaching little league. He was a nurturer and a thoughtful and measured authority. He was the type of man that could break your pubescent spirit and shame you with six words, "I am so disappointed in you." When asked for his opinion, he would encourage you to voice your ideas and helped you puzzle through your next steps. He listened, empowered, and trusted. He modeled fairness and rewarded effort regardless of success. I remember him as a feminist.

My father was actively involved in our care. He made dinner, helped with homework and projects, and chauffeured us to practice and Girl Scouts. While my mother attended college in the evening, my father was our primary caregiver. I would say that his greatest accomplishment was being a father. He thrived in these roles as mentor and coach. He was a dad to many of my friends who did not have relationships (or good relationships) with their fathers. I could tell multiple stories about high school friends who, years after high school, sought out my father to borrow a tie for a job interview or discuss an issue he was having with a girlfriend. Yet, I do not think my father ever fully understood his impact on the young people whose lives he touched. I believe he felt inadequate because he was not as financially successful as one of his younger brothers (an MIT graduate who retired as an IBM executive). My father's success is one not measured in dollars but in the number of young men he inspired and the number of young women who knew how to recognize a “good man” by his example.

I was lucky to find my own “good man” whose selfless care for me and our sons has made this dissertation possible. In his own words, he says:

I'm a very good father... a very, very good father.

Being selfless is central to being a good dad.

It's something that every father has and then develops.

He fine tunes his ability to be selfless.

Makes it more pronounced.

Maybe it's something that he doesn't readily recognize.

Maybe it's something that he feels he shouldn't be.

I think it's very rewarding.

Not just your children,

Your spouse,

Your household,

Whatever in your environment needs to be maintained.

It's maintained to the best of your ability.

A good dad is that person that fulfills every possible role or responsibility.

Whatever duty.

It means to participate unconditionally.

Everything involves family, whether you like it or not.

- Generation 3



Men in my family took on parenting and household responsibilities above and beyond what traditional fathers might.

### **Partnering**

Across generations, participants shared the similar memories about our parents and their relationships with their spouses. Participants shared stories about the communication – verbal and non-verbal - between partners. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements from participants about the ways couples interacted in my family:

They were committed to each other.  
 They communicated strangely.  
 They would argue.  
 I wouldn't like.  
 They would argue.  
 I didn't like it.  
 They always kissed afterwards and hugged.  
 My father would say something like, *'Do you want to go upstairs?'*  
 My mother would say, *'I'm not going to kiss you later.'*  
 It was very strange to me how people could argue with each other and still love each other.  
 - Generation 1

Daddy would tease Mom a lot.  
 He 'messed' with her.  
 Even the arguments were a little on the sarcastic side.  
 He would try to make her laugh.  
 They were goofy together.  
 They were very loving and playful.  
 They reminded me of Grandma and Grandpa.  
 They would do their little bickering, just a little back and forth.  
 I just thought it was cute.  
 I figured out what was happening.  
 I just put a smile on my face, *'Oh wow, they're up to it again.'*  
 I really appreciate them.  
 They were an inspiration to me.  
 I saw love all the time.  
 I always saw love.  
 I saw together in unity in your parents  
 They had a very happy marriage.  
 I can remember them dancing around in the kitchen.  
 - Generation 2

I wanted a relationship like that.  
 They could talk to each other like people.  
 They were very vulnerable with each other.  
 That's what made them have a strong relationship.

- Generation 2

I do get the PDA from them.  
*'Hey, stop touching my butt!'*  
 Our parents did that.  
 My husband is always copping a feel.  
 My husband is always pinching my butt.  
 Obnoxiously enough.  
 I definitely got that from our parents.  
 My children know, *'Mommy and Daddy love each other.'*  
 The love for each other is so strong  
 It consumes the rest of the household.  
 That kind of love for each other will trickle down to the children.

- Generation 3

My mom and dad as a couple are cool.  
 They love each other.  
 My dad has to go to work  
 My mom is up, so she can say bye to him.  
 They also kiss a lot.  
 They love each other.  
 They love their kids.

- Generation 3

My grandparents were an interesting couple. They certainly loved each other...but it was a love that was close to exasperation sometimes. My grandmother would simply be fed up with my grandfather's antics. Their playful banter, my cousin and I realized recently, was like foreplay usually resulting in a question about "later." I remember their slight bickering, but not the coy references to the bedroom. I may have been too young to pick up on these. My parents behaved similarly. Their commitment to each other extended beyond maintaining the household. I remember them as true partners. Their love and desire for one another was evident; their affection now is something I can look back on fondly. As a teenager I would roll my eyes; but as

an adult with my own marriage, I realize that I am equally as affectionate with my husband. We joke, bicker, and frequently get caught kissing in the kitchen by our kids.

Across generations, there is similarity in the way couples displayed physical intimacy in front of others, their children in particular. For me, I generally feel unaware that my children may be watching. I feel that the public displays of affection between my husband and I are evidence of our connection. I would suspect that this was true of my parents and grandparents as well. This connection may also explain couples' commitment to support one another.

My parent's song features the lyrics "I just want someone that I can talk to. I want you just the way you are" (Joel, 1977). These words were true of them. What cuts across as I think about my grandparents, parents' and my own marriage, is a sense of friendship. Within these three sets of couples, there is tremendous respect for the other person. For me, one of the things that facilitates egalitarianism is respect for the other partner's humanity. This does not mean a simple yielding to give someone their way. Rather, it is an understanding and recognition of the other person's needs and wants, and providing care – be it reassurance, advice, tangible support, or physical comfort.

### **Balanced Parenting**

Over generations, participants shared stories about the parenting they had received and practiced. Many participants reported that their parenting emphasized respect, high expectations, rules, and explanation. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements from participants about the parenting styles of their parents or grandparents:

Grandma always listened to me.  
She always wanted to hear my side.  
She never believed I did things for no reason.  
She was a reasoner.  
She would explain things to us.  
Help us to understand from cause and effect.

If I do this, this is the result.  
 She would say, *'I want to know why you did it...'*  
 She would ask, *'Is that really a reason?'*  
 She could see it in my face.  
 She said, *'You know what? I believe you. You're not in trouble.'*  
 She was the first adult that really listened to me and cared to hear what I had to say.

- Generation 1

I thought they were peculiar parents.  
 I had to have a talk with them.  
 I used to hear you call your dad, *'Dave.'*  
 I asked Dave.  
 I said, *'Why do you allow them to call you Dave?'*  
 And he said, *'That's my name.'*  
 I said, *'Yeah, but you're the parent and you're older and they should call you Mom or Dad.'*  
 And he asked me, *'Why?'*  
 I said, *'Because, it's respectful.'*  
 And he replied, *"Do you think my kids are disrespectful to me?"*  
 Your dad would say:

*"My children are people.*

*They're just little people and that's how I treat them.*

*That's how I talk to them, as if they're just small people."*

That struck a chord with me.  
 It influenced how I raised my children also...  
 To respect them as people.  
 I didn't understand that.  
 Dave respected even children.  
 As if they had all the rights of an adult.  
 It was difficult to understand that.

I benefited from that.

- Generation 2

I had a great foundation.  
 I came from good parents who had good parents.  
 He was my coach.  
 He was my best friend.  
 He taught me a lot in life.  
 He was always very easy to talk to.  
 He was always accessible.  
 He was gonna be there.  
 He would help me.  
 He always treated me like I was a grownup,  
 Even when I was a kid.  
 Mom too.  
 I always felt like they respected me as a person.  
 They didn't treat me like they were above me.  
 They treated me like I was my own individual

They respected me and allowed me to grow into who I wanted to be  
 Rather than who they wanted me to be.

- Generation 3

I need to interact with my kids.

I need to speak to my kids.

I need to understand.

I need to start tweaking now.

I talk to my kids.

I'm going to understand.

I'll learn that.

I'll be able to cater to them better.

- Generation 3

Men in my family were more often balanced parents than strict autocrats. Their comments reflect nurturing, listening, considerations for others' feelings, and providing their children opportunities for responsibility.

### **Intergenerational Parenting Similarity**

Across generations, participants shared stories about similarities between their parenting styles and those of their parents. The following generational pronoun-poems share statements from participants about what parenting styles or aspects were passed down to them:

I did a lot of the same things that my mother had done.

I used to read to my children,

Buy them books,

Take them to the library.

I tried to take them to things in the community.

I tried to be more involved with the school.

That's something my mom had never really done.

- Generation 2

I customized it.

I pulled from my experience.

I customized it,

Including all their different styles.

Some things I wasn't going to do.

Some things I definitely was going to do.

I did not want to be a disciplinarian like my father.

I pulled from each one what I liked,

Incorporated it into raising my three daughters.

I pulled from all those resources of family.

I did my best.

- Generation 2

He loved his dad.

He felt less close to his father.

His father was absent a lot when he was growing up.

He was working two full time jobs.

He wanted his dad to be there.

He was on the team.

His father didn't come.

He had missed out.

David became a father

He was very conflicted.

He wanted to be there.

He wanted to be present.

He didn't want to just be a provider.

Later, he was able to spend more time with his father.

He was able to come to terms with things.

- Generation 2

You're a reasoning person.

Your father was a reasoning person.

There was a lot of talking and reasoning out.

I've seen it.

I watched you with Marcus.

I just observed it.

I saw how David was teaching you.

Dave was a reasoning...

A reasoner.

He talked with you all.

I see that you talk with your children.

Marcus at the time.

You got the point across that you wanted to get across.

He understood it.

- Generation 3

I'm very strict.

My grandparents were equally strict.

I think it was a different type of strict.

Because of how times and environment has changed in comparison to 30-35 years ago,

I'm a little more guarded.

I'm a little more the watchful eye.

I'm conscious of what's going on around me.

I always tend to interject just because it's not the same as when I was my son's age.

I could be outside by myself and be in our backyard for endless hours.

I think we can do that today, but you find yourself kind of looking over your shoulder.

- Generation 3

I am the opposite of my father.

I chose to improve.

I'm exactly how my grandfather was.

I modeled it after my childhood.

- Generation 3

Across generations, participants shared what they had learned from the people who raised them.

In most cases, that person was a parent, and in some cases, it was a grandparent. Participants remarked on their intentions to compensate for undesirable parenting practices and model effective parenting practices they had observed over time.

These eight themes were further reorganized into the following three meta-themes: parental socialization, partnering socialization, and intersectional socialization. Socialization refers to the ongoing way that values, behaviors, and expectations are constructed and transmitted over generations through messages, behavioral reinforcements, relational approaches, and modeling (Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009). Within my family, I have been socialized as a worker, spouse, parent, and human. These multiple identities are interconnected.

Parental socialization refers to the values, behaviors, and expectations about what it means to be a parent that were communicated to me and others in my family. This includes mothering, fathering, and co-parenting expectations. This meta-theme includes the themes of balanced parenting and intergenerational parenting similarity. Partnering socialization refers to how men and women in my family have nontraditional gender-based parenting roles and share responsibilities. This meta-theme includes the themes of flexible gender roles (male and female), husband support, and partnering. Intersectional socialization refers to the development of my identity as a Black woman and includes the themes of social-historical context, flexible gender

roles (female), and education. These three meta-themes are discussed in conversation with the broader literature in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This autoethnographic study is a personal account of how my family constructed and transmitted parenting style over generations within specific historical time and space. This account reflects the self-analysis and self-reflection of a working Black mother who is pursuing a doctoral degree. Despite all that I had read about the vulnerability required to craft an autoethnography, I was unprepared to take on this task. The difficulty of putting “pen to paper” so to speak has been exceedingly more challenging than I would have ever expected. At the same time, there is therapy in this work; it is somehow cathartic and heartbreaking. There have been many tears, from my eyes and those of my participants; I have been undone and restored. That being said, this method speaks to me. Much like autoethnography as a method, I would describe myself as “vulnerable, rebellious, and creative” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 43). The findings may provide an example into how intergenerational ties in a Black family and context influence individual development.

### Summary of the Study

This study presented an autobiographical account of the intergenerational transmission of values and practices. The intention was to show how egalitarian parenting was constructed and transmitted over generations – from Generation 1 to Generation 2, from Generations 2 to 3, and prospectively from Generation 3 to 4.<sup>4</sup> My study was designed to answer the question: How did

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<sup>4</sup> Overall, little usable data was collected from Generation 4. At the time of their interviews, my sons were ages seven and 12 and did not share much regarding how they might one day be parents. Their responses are integrated in pronoun poems developed in Chapter 4.

the social-historical context, as filtered through previous generations, influence my conception and practice of egalitarian parenting?

Life course theory theoretically framed my study, as it relates to the principles of *linked lives* and *historical time and place*. African philosophical concepts of *sasa* and *zamani* also supported the theoretical framework. I used autoethnography, a qualitative research approach, to investigate my research questions. Autoethnography is a study of one's own culture and focuses on what is internal to the researcher. It narrates the researcher's lived experiences and is written using a first-person voice.

This study was conducted to add underrepresented voices to the family science literature, particularly Black families and their strengths-based processes. I occupied multiple spaces in this study. I was simultaneously the researcher collecting the stories of four generations of my family and a participant, providing my own experiences and stories. In a number of interviews, I was rehearsing stories that I had originally heard as a child, understood with an immature mind, and had new perspectives and considerations hearing them again as a wife, mother, and scholar. For this study, I situated myself inside the culture of my family. I reflected, listened, observed and analyzed the collected data to determine how the social-historical context influence my conceptions and practice of egalitarian parenting. The collected data consisted of 17 oral history interviews and audio-taped recordings of my own reflections, totaling over 11 hours of narration. My findings identified a number of themes that were shared across generations, including social-historical context, education, husband support, flexible female and male gender roles, partnering, balanced parenting, and intergenerational transmission. These themes were combined into three overarching categories – parental socialization, partnering socialization, intersectional

socialization. In the section below, I, first respond to the research question, then discuss the three overarching categories within existing literature.

### **Intergenerational Transmission of Egalitarian Parenting**

My conception and practice of egalitarian parenting was influenced by the social-historical context primarily through an active pursuit of what I saw was possible. Participants shared the direct impact of social movements and societal context on their development and drive for equity and inclusion. For example, my great-aunt discussed her self-advocacy with regard to being female in a male-dominated workforce during second wave Feminism and the Civil Rights Movement. My grandmother advocated for equal pay for women in factories during World War II. She was heavily involved in her community, lending a hand to the Civil Air Patrol, the American Red Cross, her church and youth organizations, and the launching of Head Start in 1965. My mother shared her inner turmoil at the societal pressure to be more than simply a mother in the 1980s when women were given accolades for managing work and family. Family members reported my father's unconventional approach toward parenting, trading in authoritarian values of mutual respect for strict obedience. Further, my father rejected the expectation that he would be a provider like his father and instead worked nontraditional hours in order to be present. My father was a nurturer when men were expected to be instrumental providers. Reflecting on my experiences and understanding allowed me to integrate other principals of life course theory.

Reflecting on my individual development helped me to realize that I actively sought to replicate my grandmother's traits and accomplishments. The life course theory principal of agency became particularly important as I continued with data collection. I stated:

For me, I intentionally followed my grandmother's example. For my siblings who also represent Generation 3 in my study, that transmission was not present. This could be because of individual differences and enacting something over time... In reflection, I think that I intentionally replicated my grandmother. As a Black woman – the most prominent Black woman in my life - she was a model for me. I have organized my family to replicate hers. I think the idea of *agency* and intergenerational transmission is interesting, especially the extent to which you can choose to value something or not. I chose to value egalitarianism by my parents and grandparents example; those were not salient values for my siblings.

Growing up in Albany, I had one Black female teacher in elementary school and one in middle school. There were few Black women in my life, with the exception of my grandmother and a handful of aunts who did not live in my town. I did not have regular interactions with any adult Black women. While I did not feel that I was treated differently in school by classmates or teachers, I generally felt uncomfortable around Black girls. I had been accused as an adolescent of “talking white” or liking only White boys. My grandmother represented something for me. She was who I could be. A fast-driving, independent, brave and determined, community-focused advocate who loved her family, was in-tune to the needs of others, and committed to lifting up everyone.

I did not realize until this study that I actively replicated her. Over time, I have noticed our similarities but failed to recognize my intentional imitation of her. I have marveled at the similarity of my husband and grandfather (her husband) whose birthdays were only days apart, like ours. I would blame our likenesses (ours and theirs) on astrology – the Aries and Libra pairings that were cosmically betrothed. My grandfather was the ultimate provider, working full-

time, part-time, and over-time to earn income for his family. After all her sons were school age, my grandmother wanted to go to college, work outside the home, see the world, be active in her church, and provide for her community. My grandfather was committed to making my grandmother's dreams come true. My grandparents demonstrated egalitarianism by supporting and encouraging my grandmother's pursuits, particularly those that were unconventional for women at the time. As a mother with school-age children in 1965, she had the opportunity to attend college, take on community initiatives, and work outside their home.

Throughout my upbringing, I believe that egalitarian partnerships and progressive attitudes on gender roles were prominent across generations. Between Generations 1 (my grandparents) and Generation 3 (myself), egalitarianism was constructed and transmitted. For my parents (Generation 2), an egalitarian approach to parenting may have been unintentional. My father, who did not wish to take on a provider role at the risk of not being present for his children, and my mother, who believed she needed to both care for her children and pursue a career, were well-matched. They both were able to pursue the lives they wanted through their partnership. From their example, I learned that parents did not have to enact strict gender roles. Both my parents were nurturers and providers who alternated playing a lead role in the care of their children. My mother was supported and encouraged to pursue her educational dreams while they were raising school-age children. College educated women were unusual in the 1980s, but I didn't know any other mothers who were going to college while raising school-age children. For me, my mother's educational pursuits were unconventional.

I believe my husband and I (Generation 3) have an egalitarian approach to all our familial and household responsibilities. As working parents who are committed to seeing a job well done, we regularly juggle professional work, parenting, and household maintenance, while supporting

our extended family from time to time. In addition, for nine of the last thirteen years, I have been pursuing graduate education. There is no adherence to traditional gender roles in our family and our negotiation of responsibilities often is not predetermined. Usually the person who is most able or available or flexible to take care of it in the immediate completes the responsibility. Our approach to parenting is egalitarian though it may not be ‘equal’ in the short-term.

From the data, three meta- themes influenced my development, construction, and practice of egalitarianism, including parental socialization, partnering socialization, and intersectional socialization. These themes can be integrated with the broader literature.

### **Parental Socialization**

#### ***Modeling and Compensatory Fathering***

Across generations, individuals and couples in my family shared responsibility, co-constructed values, and respected their spouses’ needs. Men exhibited ‘new fatherhood’ (McGill, 2014), demonstrating involvement in the care of their children, engaging in “more equal” parenting, and interactive and physical nurturing. Men’s perceptions of their fathers shape their relationships and level of involvement with their own children. The potential for father involvement is framed within two ideas: 1) *Modeling* proposes that men mirror their highly involved fathers, and 2) *Compensatory* suggests that men are more involved than their own fathers because of perceived deficient involvement in order to amend what he received as a child (Habib, 2012). This theory particularly focuses on measures of physical care and responsibility (Gaunt & Bassi, 2012). Modeling and compensatory fathering processes are based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) and the concept of intergenerational transmission. To a great extent, Generation 2’s fathering behaviors were intentionally focused on compensating for their experiences with my grandfather who worked all of the time during their childhood and

adolescence. In addition, my husband did not have a relationship with his father and also may be compensating for his absence. My father and husband were intentionally more involved with their children and maintained that involvement over time. For these men, their compensating behaviors were successful.

### ***Balanced Parenting***

In this study, men in Generations 2 and 3 displayed a balanced parenting style featuring respect, high expectations, rules, and explanation. Balanced parenting also is known as authoritative parenting. This parenting style is one of three concepts originally developed by Baumrind (1971) and is most frequently associated with positive child outcomes (Carlo, White, Streit, Knight & Zeiders, 2018; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987; Majumder, 2016). A fourth parenting style, uninvolved, was added later (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parenting styles refer to parents' approaches to interaction with their children.

Per Baumrind (1971), *authoritarian* parents are stricter and focused on obedience and control, while *permissive* parents are indulgent and lenient. *Uninvolved* parents are just that; they have detached and unfriendly relationships with their children. *Authoritative* parents are balanced in their interactions with children. Authoritative parents encourage individuality and independence, communicate, have high expectations, and recognize the rights of people (Baumrind, 1971). Men in Generations 2 and 3 of this study primarily demonstrated authoritative parenting as indicated by participants' disclosures about parents' reasonability, communication, and encouragement of independence. This parenting style is considered by researchers to be the gold standard for approaches to parenting. The parenting style of mothers in Generation 2 and 3 was not discussed at length by participants. It may be that differences in parenting style between

parents could impact the transmission of that style from one generation to the next, perhaps with regard to gender. Mothers may transmit parenting style to daughters and fathers to sons.

Over the years, researchers have attempted to identify the parenting style of couples by averaging parents individual scores (Steinberg et al., 1989; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1994), which was not found to be an effective method of determining the couple's parenting approach. Others have tried to calculate couples' parenting styles using a complicated scaling technique (Fletcher, Steinberg, & Sellers, 1999) or robust family parenting style typologies (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Further, the original conception of parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991) aligned closely to traditional gender roles, where the mother is nurturing and caring (permissive and authoritative parenting styles) and the father is controlling and strict (authoritarian and authoritative). This traditional view of the association of gender roles and parenting styles was not upheld in a more recent study (Simons & Conger, 2007). Fathers also had more authoritative parenting styles in households featuring egalitarian division of childcare (Sabattini & Leaper, 2004). It may be assumed that the communication required to maintain an egalitarian approach to parenting is well-suited to an authoritative parenting style. There are cross-cultural differences (Mowen & Schroeder, 2018; Sorkhabi, 2012; Weis & Toolis, 2010) in the parenting styles leading to positive child and youth outcomes.

Spanish adolescents with indulgent parents (Garcia & Garcia, 2009) showed the most positive outcomes on self-esteem, psychosocial maladjustment, personal competence, and problem behaviors. Though the authoritarian parenting style is generally accepted as an undesirable parenting style leading to more negative child outcomes, negative academic outcomes were not found for Asian adolescents with authoritarian parents (Chao, 2001). There also are differences in how researchers categorized the vigilance of Black mothers living in a



low-income neighborhood vigilance toward their adolescents, with some identifying their parenting style as authoritarian (Kerr, Stattin, Biesecker, & Ferrer-Wreder, 2003) and others interpreting similar mothers as authoritative (Jarrett, 2000). Culture and environment both moderate the degree to which particular parenting styles are effective (Mowen & Schroeder, 2018).

### **Partnering Socialization**

#### ***Ubuntu***

The analyses revealed that, for individuals in my family across generations, egalitarian parenting, featuring gender role flexibility and support was sustained despite social-historical movements. For members of my family, men and women were willing to enact nontraditional gender-based parenting roles and share responsibilities. Throughout this study, I have come to realize that the concept of egalitarianism does not well describe the partnership between spouses I hoped to convey. The term, *Ubuntu*, is more appropriate. *Ubuntu*, from South African philosophy, refers to interconnectedness, interdependence and shared humanity and involves support, harmony, and responsibility toward a communal achievement (Nussbaum, 2003; Swanson, 2007). Over the course of this study, I learned that, though egalitarian is how my parents and grandparents relationships might have been described, it was really more than that. Ubuntu is the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. It translates to, “I am because we are.” I feel that the idea that people support one another in pursuit of the common good makes sense for me. In my family, no one sought to equitably divide labor (e.g., cooking every other day); support was provided based on need and partners aimed to fulfill those needs. Moreover, I believe that spousal partners in my family have strong connections, exhibiting affection and communication.

### **Intersectional Socialization**

Finally, I realize through this study that my intersectional identity has developed over time. Intersectionality refers to the interconnected marginalized identities that create overlapped opportunities for discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). As a child, I knew I was a girl, but I was raised without seeing race as a systemic barrier. Race was simply not acknowledged nor was it part of my identity. Now, I would tell someone that I am a Black woman with a White mother. As I've aged and especially when I attended college, gender and race became part of my identity. This is consistent with developmental studies about the formation of racial identity (Csizmadia, Brunsmas & Cooney, 2012; Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn & Sellers, 2009), as racial identity begins to solidify during adolescence. I may have established my racial identity a bit later than most. Further, scholars (Csizmadia, Brunsmas & Cooney, 2012) have used life course theory to examine the racial identity of multiracial adolescents, including an examination of principles of historical time, human agency, and linked lives. Biracial youth in the Northeastern United States are more likely self-identify as multiracial or biracial than in the South (Brunsmas, 2006). Whereas, biracial youth in the Southern U.S. identify more strongly as Black because they believed that others view them as Black (Khanna, 2010). These findings are consistent with my own experience; I became Black in the south.

My grandmother was the closest adult Black woman to me. She modeled for me what it meant to be a worker, spouse, parent, and human. Black and brown grandmothers have been found to support the identity development of biracial children (Chancler, Webb & Miller, 2017) and studies support an intergenerational impact on the ethnic-racial identity of children of color (Huguley, Wang, Vasquez, & Guo, 2019; Neblett et al, 2009; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009). Before I was born, my grandmother traveled to Kenya and Tanzania with her Seventh

Day Adventist church. Throughout my childhood, she would take many other trips with her church family, a predominately Black congregation. When I visited my grandparents, I was primarily in the company of Black people, including family and friends of my family. I was socialized about Blackness by her example. While we never talked about prejudice or pride explicitly, she normalized what it meant to be Black.

Racial socialization has been shown to influence adolescent racial identity in Black youth (Neblett et al, 2009). My grandmother was a quilter who made replicas of quilts that were used to direct enslaved people escaping Southern work camps. She adorned photo albums and dish detergent bottles with African Kente cloth patterns. She had a copy of *The Negro Revolution* in her bookshelf, a book that I now have on mine. In addition, my grandmother was a proud woman, who was vocal about perceived inequity and broadcast her capabilities to do things as well as men. I remember stories about her donning a chauffeur's uniform to drive clients to the airport for my grandfather's limousine service. She was empowering. Gender also has been found to impact the relationship between parental racial socialization and adolescent racial identity (Neblett et al, 2009). Daughters may be receiving more frequent and intentional messages about race than sons (Neblett et al, 2009; Sanders Thompson, 1994). In these ways, she socialized me by imparting implicit positive and inclusive messages about race and gender. When we were together, intersectionality was in the room so to speak; she brought it in with her. She made my inclusive childhood bubble more colorful and her presence in my life likely helped me to further develop my identity.

### **Implications for Practice**

I hope that this study encourages others to use autoethnography to contribute their experiences to the larger body of family science literature. Black family processes, across the life

course, should be studied qualitatively. The stories Black families tell about resilience and strength need to be collected and shared to inform a narrative of how Black families operate. Black family interventions also should consider an increased emphasis on ancestors (extended family) and the role they play in family process. This study was an opportunity for me to write against deficit-based conceptions of Black fathers and families, describe the transmission of values over generations, and add my story.

### **Limitations**

This study aimed to collect information about how egalitarian parenting was passed down over generations by relying on individual interviews and singular reflections. Egalitarian refers to fairness and balance in the distribution of tasks between multiple individuals. This study could be improved by focusing on the negotiation between couples related to their construction of egalitarian partnerships. Missing from this study was evidence of the informal and formal negotiation processes couples use (Daly, 2002). My husband and I value time, which we find to be in short supply. We negotiate responsibilities based on expediency, emphasizing communication and trade-offs. Creating an egalitarian partnership is less about the division of labor and more about the couples' relationship related to relative status, attention, accommodation, and well-being (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). This study was limited in the degree to which it could respond to a couple's process. While it is interesting to share how a value was transmitted to me, I am only part of the decision-making team in my family. This study could be improved through the use of group interviews or focus groups.

Moreover, autoethnography is a research method that provides an opportunity for people to tell their stories and represent their truths, and can demonstrate how people live, struggle, and achieve (Bochner & Ellis, 2006). It is an intentionally subjective (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) study

of culture and should not be used to make conclusions about entire groups. Criticism of autoethnography as a research method include concerns that personal narratives are not research (Walford, 2004), it is a self-indulgent form of writing (Sparkes, 2002) and that primarily consist of only one data source. However, autoethnography provides a cultural understanding of a phenomena, in this case – egalitarian parenting, and connects perspectives of self to others in context (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010). This study does not make claims about the intergenerational transmission of parenting values, rather provides an opportunity to share alternative constructions of family, featuring issues of work-life balance, flexible gender roles, and intersectional experiences.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The scholar bell hooks (2000) predicted, “In the future feminist movement, we will spend less time critiquing patriarchal marriage bonds and expend more effort showing alternatives, showing the value of peer relationships which are founded on principles of equality, respect, and the belief that mutual satisfaction and growth are needed for partnerships to be fulfilling and lasting” (p. 84). This prediction has been borne out in more recent studies on egalitarian partnerships (Cowdery et al., 2009; Curenton, Crowley, & Mouzon, 2018; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). New egalitarian partnerships may be founded on principles focused on the wellbeing of individuals *and* the partnership, such as respect, mutuality, support, and flexibility. Modern couples struggling with work-family balance may need to focus more on their partnership and less on an equitable division of responsibilities. Today’s couples need to focus on effectively sharing responsibilities and distributing leadership to build mutually supportive relationships. Additional research is needed to understand how couples negotiate egalitarian

relationships, work together to achieve the collective good (Cowdery et al., 2009), maintain communication, and strengthen and respect their partnerships and relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Black families, across the life course, should be studied qualitatively using multiple approaches. The stories Black families tell about egalitarianism need to be collected and shared in order to inform a narrative of how Black families share responsibilities. This study was guided by life course theory and informed by the historical context of Black families. This study responded to research questions about how social-historical context, as filtered through previous generations, influenced my conception and practice of egalitarian parenting. Moreover, this inquiry sought to understand how multiple generations (G1, G2, and G3) constructed and practiced egalitarian parenting and how G4 would construct and practice egalitarian parenting. Research methods included critical reflection, journaling, in-depth individual oral history interviews, and the review of photographs and historical documents. Trustworthiness was ensured using repeated data collection, member checks, and the consultation of critical friends.

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**APPENDIX A: IN-PERSON AND TELEPHONE PLEA**



**In-Person and Telephone Plea**

Hi [PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT],

As you may know, I am a doctoral candidate in Montclair State University's Family Science and Human Development program. I am conducting a research study about our family. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are my [great-aunt, uncle, mother, sibling, spouse, child].

This study will require an in-person interview. After the interview, you will be invited to review your interview transcript and will be allowed to make modifications to the transcribed conversation. Participants will receive a \$25 gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation.

It will take about 1-2 hours of your time. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Jennifer Urban at 973-655-6884 or email her at [urbanj@montclair.edu](mailto:urbanj@montclair.edu).

Thank you for considering participation in this study. This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board, Study no. IRB-FY19-20-1590.

If you are interested in participating, could I please have your email address or phone number so that I can send you a copy of the consent form? I will send you a link to the consent form, which has more information about the study.

**APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS**

**Swann-Jackson Adult Interview Protocol – For Generation 1 (G1)**

Today is [DATE]. This is the start of an interview with [PARTICIPANT] at [HIS/HER] home at [ADDRESS] in [CITY/STATE]. My name is Rebecca Swann-Jackson and I'll be the interviewer. I am [RELATIONSHIP to PARTICIPANT] and this interview is being done in connection with the history of the Swann and Sisco families. We'll mainly be talking about my [PARTICIPANT'S RELATIONSHIP TO ME]'s recollection of our family experiences since [HIS/HER] childhood.

Tell me who you are.

How do we know each other?

Tell me about your childhood.

How would you describe [PARTICIPANT'S HOMETOWN] as a place to grow up in during the 1940s?

What was your childhood experience in this community?

I never met your grandparents. Tell me about them.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with your parents?
- What were they like with you?
- Tell me a story about them.

I never met your parents either. Tell me about them.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with you?
- Tell me a story about them.

What was an average day with your parents like?

My grandmother was your sister.

- What was she like as a young woman?
- What was she like as a mother?
- What were her goals in life?

Tell me about my grandparents from your perspective.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with you?
- What were they like as parents?

[Show photo of Priscilla Sisco Swann at the White House]

- What do you know about this?
- What are your memories of this event?

Tell me about my mom and dad from your perspective.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with you?
- What were they like as parents?

Thinking about yourself as a parent, what about the way you were a parent to your kids is similar to the way your parents were with you? What is different?

Are there things about me that remind you of your grandparents, parents, or my mom and dad? What are they?

**Possible probes:** When did that happen? Did that happen to you? What did you think about that? What are the steps in doing that? Can you give me an example of that? What happened next?

**Swann-Jackson Adult Interview Protocol – For Generation 2 (G2)**

Today is [DATE]. This is the start of an interview with [PARTICIPANT] at [HIS/HER] home at [ADDRESS] in [CITY/STATE]. My name is Rebecca Swann-Jackson and I'll be the interviewer. I am [RELATIONSHIP to PARTICIPANT] and this interview is being done in connection with the history of the Swann and Sisco families. We'll mainly be talking about my [PARTICIPANT'S RELATIONSHIP TO ME]'s recollection of our family experiences since [HIS/HER] childhood.

Tell me who you are.

How do we know each other?

How would you describe [PARTICIPANT'S HOMETOWN] as a place to grow up in during the 1960s?

What was your childhood experience in this community?

I never met your grandparents. Tell me about them.

- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with your parents?
- What were they like with you?
- Tell me a story about them.

Tell me about your parents.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with you?
- Tell me a story about them.

What was an average day with your parents like?

[Show photo of Priscilla Sisco Swann at the White House]

- What do you know about this?
- What are your memories of this event?

Tell me about my mom and dad from your perspective.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with you?
- What were they like as parents?

Thinking about yourself as a parent, what about the way you were a parent to your kids is similar to the way your parents were with you? What is different?

Are there things about me that remind you of your grandparents, parents, or my mom and dad?  
What are they?

**Possible probes:** When did that happen? Did that happen to you? What did you think about that?  
What are the steps in doing that? Can you give me an example of that? What happened next?

**Swann-Jackson Adult Interview Protocol – For Generation 3 (G3)**

*Today is [DATE]. This is the start of an interview with [PARTICIPANT] at [HIS/HER] home at [ADDRESS] in [CITY/STATE]. My name is Rebecca Swann-Jackson and I'll be the interviewer. I am [RELATIONSHIP to PARTICIPANT] and this interview is being done in connection with the history of the Swann and Sisco families. We'll mainly be talking about my [PARTICIPANT'S RELATIONSHIP TO ME]'s recollection of our family experiences since [HIS/HER] childhood.*

Tell me who you are.

How do we know each other?

Tell me about your childhood.

How would you describe [PARTICIPANT'S HOMETOWN] as a place to grow up in during the 1980s?

What was your childhood experience in this community?

Tell me about your Swann grandparents. What did they do?

- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with your parents?
- What were they like with you?
- Tell me a story about them.

Tell me about your parents.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with you?
- Tell me a story about them.

What was an average day with your parents like?

[Show photo of Priscilla Sisco Swann at the White House]

- What do you know about this?
- What are your memories of this event?

Tell me about my mom and dad from your perspective.

- What did they do?
- What were they like as a couple?
- What were they like with you?
- What were they like as parents?

Thinking about yourself as a parent, what about the way you were a parent to your kids is similar to the way your parents were with you? What is different?

Are there things about me that remind you of your grandparents, parents, or my mom and dad?  
What are they?

**Possible probes:** When did that happen? Did that happen to you? What did you think about that?  
What are the steps in doing that? Can you give me an example of that? What happened next?



**Swann-Jackson Adult Interview Protocol – For Generation 4 (G4)**

*Today is [DATE]. This is the start of an interview with [PARTICIPANT] at [HIS/HER] home at [ADDRESS] in [CITY/STATE]. My name is Rebecca Swann-Jackson and I'll be the interviewer. I am [RELATIONSHIP to PARTICIPANT] and this interview is being done in connection with the history of the Swann and Sisco families. We'll mainly be talking about my [PARTICIPANT'S RELATIONSHIP TO ME]'s recollection of our family experiences since [HIS/HER] childhood.*

Tell me who you are.

How do we know each other?

Tell me about your childhood.

What is it like in your town?

What is an average day with your parents like?

[Show photo of Priscilla Sisco Swann at the White House]

What do you know about this?

Tell me about your mom and dad.

- What do they do?
- What are they like as a couple?
- What are they like with you?
- What are they like as parents?

What do you think you'll be like when/if you are married? Why do you think so?

What things do you think will be important to you when/if you are married?

What do you think you'll be like when/if you're a dad? Why do you think so?

What things do you think will be important to you when/if you're a dad?

**Possible probes:** When did that happen? Did that happen to you? What did you think about that? What are the steps in doing that? Can you give me an example of that? What happened next?

**APPENDIX C: ADULT CONSENT FORM**



*College of Education and Human Services*  
Department of Family Science and Human  
Development  
Voice: 973-655-4171  
Fax: 973-655-6795

## ADULT CONSENT FORM

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

**Title:** Using Memory as Method: Studying the Intergenerational Transmission of Egalitarianism in my Black Family

**Study Number:** IRB-FY19-20-1590

**Who am I?** I am Rebecca Swann-Jackson. I am a student at Montclair State University in the Family Science and Human Development department.

**Why is this study being done?** I want to learn about whether or not people in our family work together. If they do, I want to know how. I will be doing interviews with our family members. I also will be looking at historical documents.

**What will happen while you are in the study?** If you choose to be in this study, I will interview you. This means, I will ask you questions about our family. I want to know what you have seen our family do and how that influenced the things you do or not.

The first thing you have to do is read this paper. Then, you will decide if you want to participate or not. If you agree to participate, I would like to tape your interview with an electronic recorder. If you agree, I will turn on the recorder and ask you questions. You can ask me questions too. After the interview, I will transcribe the interview. This means that I will type up all the words you and I said so that I can read them later. This is called a transcript. When I am done with all the interviews, I will read all the transcripts. Then I will figure out the things that were similar or different from all the transcripts. After this study is done, I will delete the interviews and transcripts.

**Time:** Your interview will take about 1-2 hours.

**Risks:** You might feel sad when we talk about family members who have passed away. You also might feel bored because you think I know the answers already. You can ask to stop the interview at any time. At a later date, you can ask me not to include things you've told me in the interview. The risks are no greater than those in ordinary life.

**Benefits:** There are no benefits to you being in this study but I want to hear all of your ideas. Other people who read my study might benefit because they will learn more about how families work.

**Compensation:** To compensate you for the time you spend in this study, you will receive a \$25 gift card. You will receive this compensation even if you stop the interview or withdraw from this study.

**Who will know that you are in this study?** Your name will not be linked to any presentations or reports. I will keep who you are confidential. When I write about my study, I will talk about you but I will not mention you by name. We will make up a secret code word to disguise who you are, but someone might be able to figure it out.

You should know that New Jersey requires that any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report the same immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services.

**Do you have to be in the study?** You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be included in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

**Do you have any questions about this study?** If you have any questions about this study, call Dr. Jennifer Urban at 973-655-6884 or email her at urbanj@montclair.edu.

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** Call or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Dana Levitt, at 973-655-2097 or reviewboard@montclair.edu.

It is okay to use my data in other studies: Please initial:  Yes  No

It is okay to audiotape me while I am in this study: Please initial:  Yes  No

**One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.**

---

**Statement of Consent**

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____	_____
Print your name here	Sign your name here	Date
Rebecca Swann-Jackson	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date
Dr. Jennifer Urban	_____	_____
Name of Faculty Sponsor	Signature	Date

**APPENDIX D: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM**

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you fill in this form.

**Title:** Using Memory as Method: Studying the Intergenerational Transmission of Egalitarianism in my Black Family

**Study Number:** IRB-FY19-20-1590

**Who am I?** I am Rebecca Swann-Jackson. I am a student at Montclair State University in the Family Science and Human Development department.

**Why is this study being done?** I want to learn about whether or not people in our family work together. If they do, I want to know how. I will be doing interviews with our family members. I also will be looking at historical documents.

**What will happen while your child or dependent is in the study?** If your child chooses to be in this study, I will interview him. This means, I will ask him questions about our family. I want to know what he has seen our family do. I want to know what he might do when he is older.

The first thing your child will do is read this paper. Then, your child will decide if he wants to participate or not. If your child agrees to participate, I would like to audio record the interview with an electronic recorder. If your child agrees, I will turn on the recorder and ask him questions. He can ask me questions too. After the interview, I will transcribe the interview. This means that I will type up all the words your child and I said so that I can read them later. When I am done with all the interviews, I will read all the transcripts. Then I will figure out the things that were similar or different from all the transcripts. After this study is done, I will delete the interviews and transcripts.

**Time:** Your child's interview will take about 1 hour.

**Risks:** Your child or dependent may feel sad when we talk about family members who have passed away. Your child also might feel bored because he might think I know the answers already. Your child can ask to stop the interview at any time. At a later date, your child can ask me not to include things he's told me in the interview. The risks are no greater than those in ordinary life.

**Benefits:** There are no benefits to your child being in this study but I want to hear all of your child's ideas. Other people who read my study might benefit because they will learn more about how families work.

**Compensation:** To compensate your child for the time he spends in this study, he will receive a \$25 gift card. He will receive the gift card even if he stops the interview or tells me that he doesn't want to participate anymore.

**Who will know that your child or dependent is in this study?** You and our family will know that your child might be in this study.

Your child’s name will not be linked to any presentations or reports. I will keep who he is confidential. When I write about my study, I will talk about him but I will not mention him by name. Your child and I will make up a secret code word to disguise who he is, but someone might be able to figure it out.

You should know that New Jersey requires that any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report the same immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services.

**Does your child or dependent have to be in the study?**

Your child or dependent does not have to be in this study. He is a volunteer! It is okay if he wants to stop at any time and not be in the study. He does not have to answer any questions that he does not want to answer. Nothing will happen to your child or dependent. He will still get the things that were promised.

**Do you have any questions about this study?** If you have any questions about this study, call Dr. Jennifer Urban at 973-655-6884 or email her at urbanj@montclair.edu.

**Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant?** Call or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Dana Levitt, at 973-655-2097 or reviewboard@montclair.edu.

It is okay to use my child’s data in other studies: Please initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

It is okay to audiotape my child while he is in this study: Please initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.**

**Statement of Consent**

I have read this form and decided that I agree to my child’s participation in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that my child can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form. If you choose to have your child or dependent in this study, please fill in the lines below.

Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____	_____
Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date

**APPENDIX E: ASSENT FORM**





*College of Education and Human Services*  
Department of Family Science and Human Development  
Voice: 973-655-4171  
Fax: 973-655-6795

### ASSENT FORM

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you fill in this form.

**Who am I?** I am Rebecca Swann-Jackson. I am a student at Montclair State University in the Family Science and Human Development department.

**Why is this study being done?** I want to learn about whether or not people in our family work together. If they do, I want to know how. I will be doing interviews with our family members. I also will be looking at other old photos (from before you were born.)

**What will happen while you are in the study?** I will interview you if you choose to be in this study. This means, I will ask you questions about our family. I want to know what you have seen our family do. I want to learn about what you might do when you are older.

The first thing you have to do is read this paper. Then, you will decide if you want to participate or not. I would like to tape your interview with an electronic recorder if you participate. I will turn on the recorder if you say it's okay. Then I will ask you questions. You can ask me questions too. After the interview, I will transcribe the interview. This means that I will type up all the words you and I say so that I can read them later. This is called a transcript. I will read all the transcripts when I am done with all the interviews. I will figure out the things that were the same or different from all the transcripts. I will delete the interviews and transcripts after this study is done.

**Time:** Your interview will take about 1 hour.

**Risks:** You might feel sad when we talk about family members who died. You also might feel bored because you think I know the answers already. You can ask to stop the interview at any time. Later, you can ask me not to include things you've told me in the interview.

**Benefits:** I want to hear all of your ideas. Other people who read my study might learn more about how families work. There are no benefits to you personally.

**Compensation:** You will receive a \$25 gift card. You will receive the gift card even if you stop the interview or tell me that you don't want to participate anymore.



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