

***Diversity and Cultural Setting:
Contextual Issues in Parent
Involvement and Student Achievement***

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School Based Challenges: Students' Opportunities to Learn

- Teacher Quality & Experience (Uhlenberg et al)
- Race & Track Placement (Oakes; Hallinan)
- Teachers' Expectations
- Race/Class School Segregation (Orfield; Bankston & Caldas; Roscigno)
- School Resource Disparities

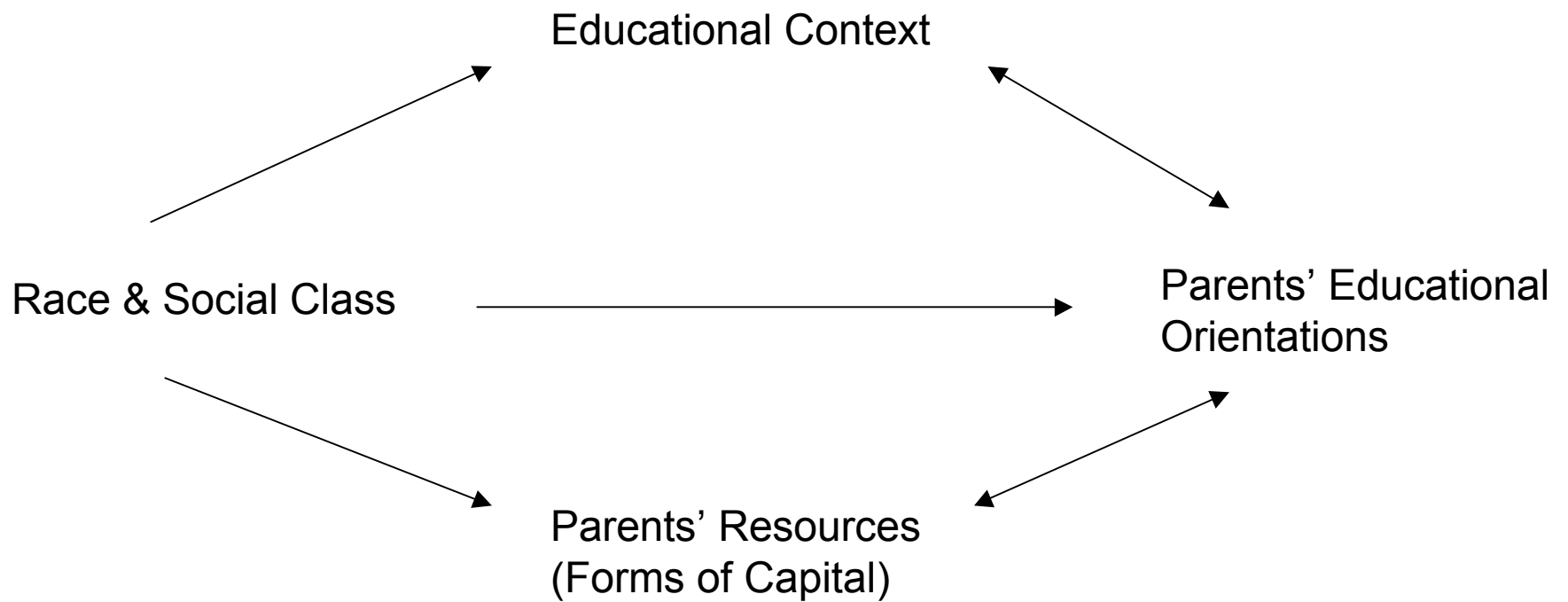
Societal Challenges

- Race, Class, and Wealth (Oliver & Shapiro; Conley; Shapiro)
- Residential Segregation (Bonilla-Silva; Massey & Denton)
- Beliefs About Race and Intelligence

Educational Orientations

- **Basic values, aspirations, and expectations**
 - **Sense of the instrumental value of education**
- **Home versus school-based involvement**
 - **(separation/interconnectedness)**
- **Customization of school experiences**
 - **(influencing course placement, managing transitions, compensating for weak teachers, choosing schools)**
- **Support or Confrontation**

An Alternative Approach to Parents' Orientations



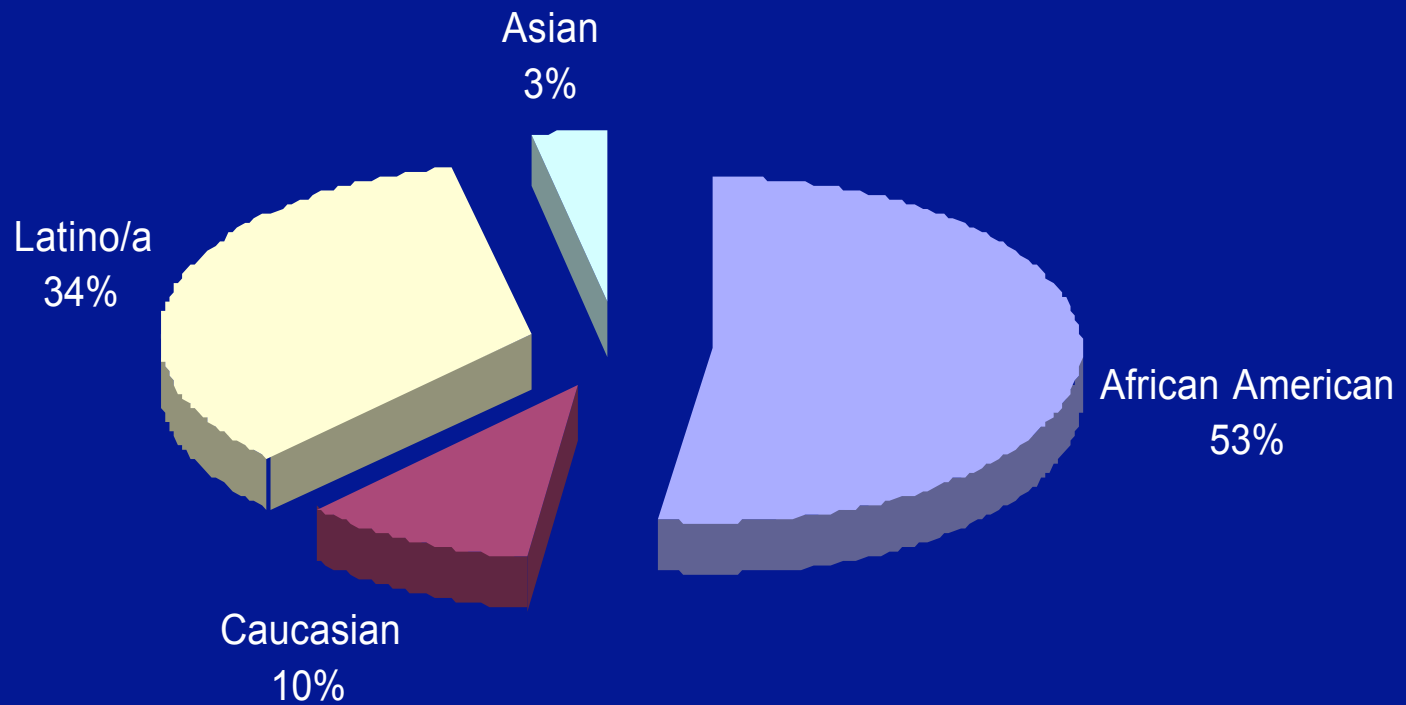
The Importance of Context

- Educational Terrain
 - Institutional Stratification (lower quality schools; Roscigno)
 - Organizational Habitus (lower expectations for certain parents)
 - Micro-political context of parent involvement (symbolic meaning of race and class; Lamont)

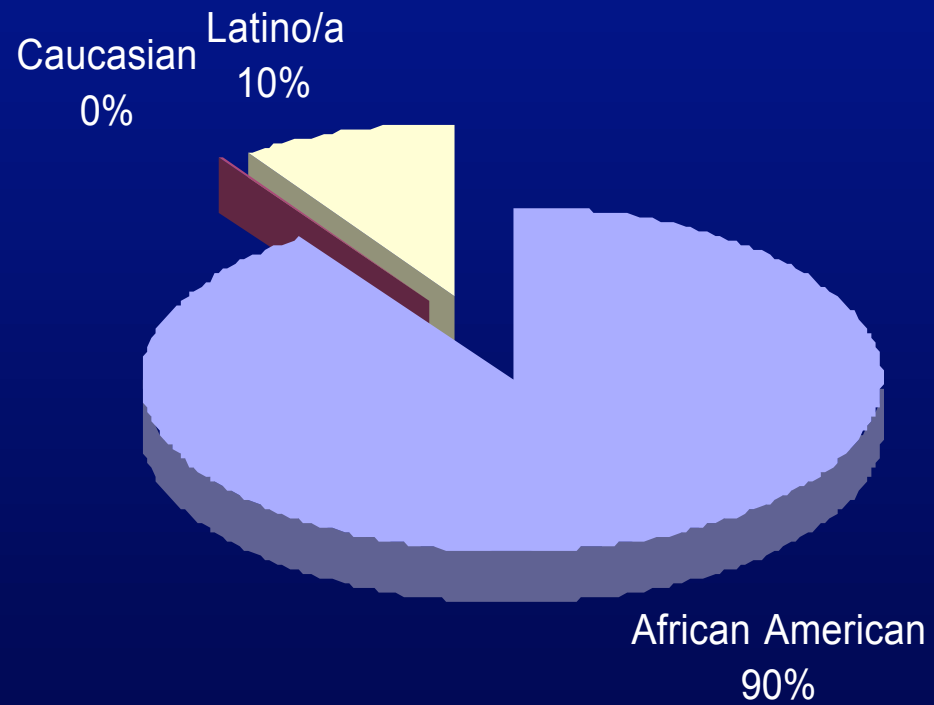
Institutional Stratification: Urban School “Types”

- Probation Schools (Below 15% at national norms on ITBS)
- Neighborhood Schools
 - High performing (More than 50% of students at national norms)
 - Low performing
- Magnet Schools

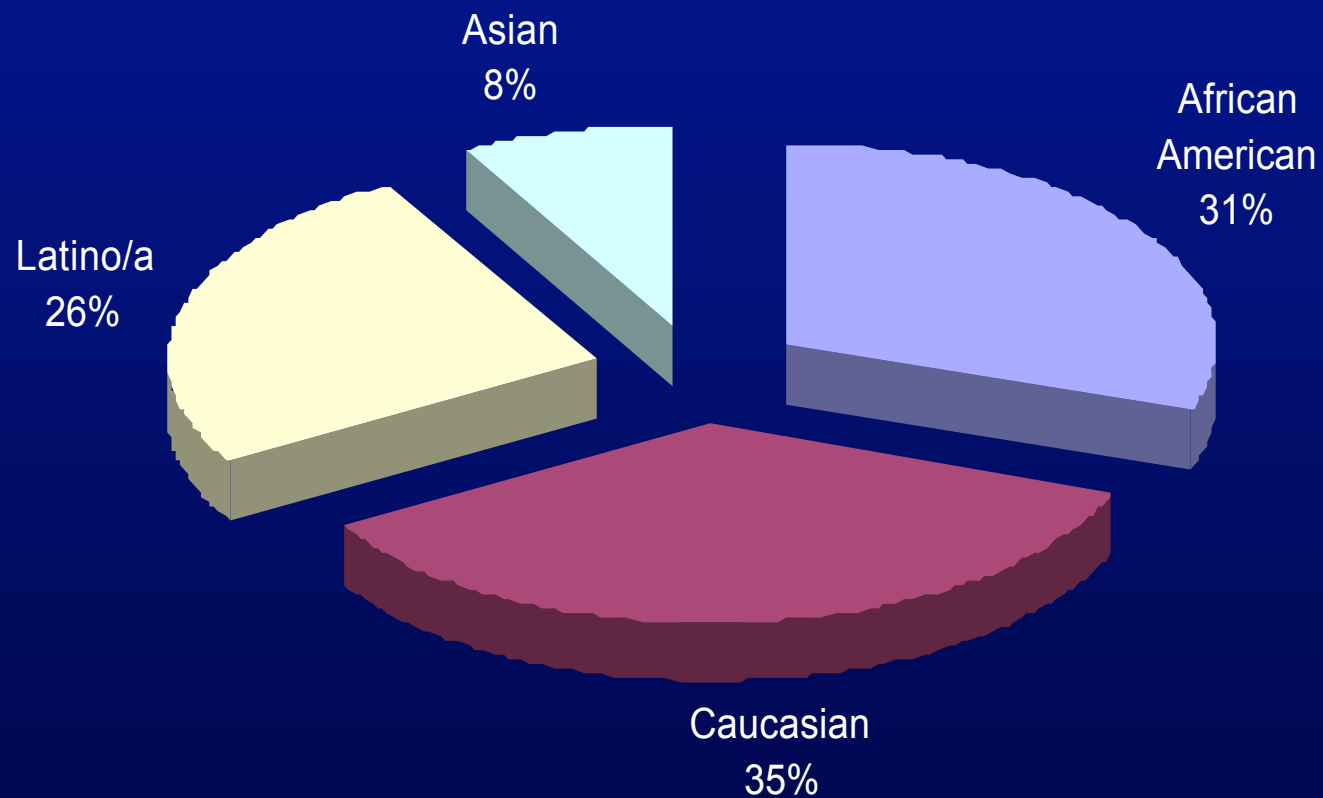
Overall Percentage of Students in Chicago Public Schools by Race



Mean Percentage of Students in Chicago Probation Elementary Schools by Race



Mean Percentage of Students in Chicago High Performing Elementary Schools by Race





Teachers' Expectations of Parents

Research Methods

- Ethnographic research
 - participant observation & semi-structured interviews in 10 urban elementary schools.
- Participant observation in formal and informal settings
 - Formal settings (classroom observations, professional development meetings, faculty meetings)
 - Informal Observations (lunch breaks, teacher breaks)
- 78 Semi-structured interviews (Year 1 data)
 - 2nd & 5th grade teachers
 - School leaders (positional leaders & those nominated by teachers as leaders)

Data Analysis

- Teachers' construction of parents
 - asset, deficit, and neutral categorization
- Two sub-dimensions of teachers' constructions
 - Material/Objective Resources
 - Cultural Characteristics
- Teachers responses and school composition

Teachers' and Administrators' Assessments of Parents by School

School	% Asset-based Assessments of Parents	% Deficit-based Assessments of Parents	% Neutral Assessments of Parents	N
School A	16.6% (1)	83.3% (5)	0% (0)	6
School B	7.6 (1)	61.5 (8)	30.7 (4)	13
School C	10 (2)	55 (11)	35 (7)	20
School D	0 (0)	100 (6)	0 (0)	6
School E	0 (0)	66.6 (4)	33.3 (2)	6
School F	0 (0)	66.6 (4)	33.3 (2)	6
School G	16.6 (1)	83.3 (5)	0 (0)	6
School H	0 (0)	57(4)	42.8(3)	7
School I	0 (0)	100 (2)	0 (0)	2
School J	0 (0)	83.3 (5)	16.6 (1)	6
Total	6%(5)	69%(54)	24%(19)	78

School Demographics

School	Low Income	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Limited English
School A	93%	100	0	0	0	0
School B	69%	7	47	22	24	38
School C	73%	8	40	19	34	48
School D	90%	100	0	0	0	0
School E	97%	3	0	97	0	46
School F	97%	100	0	0	0	0
School G	97%	100	0	0	0	0
School H	96%	4	3	88	5	29
School I	60%	100	0	0	0	0
School J	88%	100	0	0	0	0

Teachers' and Administrators' Assessments of Parents' Resources for Involvement

Characteristics Attributed to Parents	(6) Majority African American Schools	(2) Majority Mexican American Schools	(2) Racially Mixed Schools (white, Immigrant European & Asians, Latino/a Schools)
Education-Related Knowledge, Skills, & Resources			
Education	-	-	-
Language skills		-	-
Home-based educational resources	-	-	+/-
Time for involvement	-	-	-
Monetary resources	-	-	-

Teachers' and Administrators' Assessments of Parents' Culture/Values by School Racial Composition

Cultural and Value Related Characteristics Attributed to Parents by Teachers	Majority African American Schools	Majority Mexican American Schools	Racially Mixed Schools
Investment in Education	-	+/-	+
Work Ethic	-	+	+
Traditional Family Composition	-	+	+
Traditional Morality (anti-crime & drug stances)	-	+	+

Representative Statements About Parents' Culture/Values in the Racially mixed schools

Educational Investment:

The parents are really concerned. It's hard to get them involved because of language ... they don't feel comfortable. A lot of them are new immigrants and they don't have time to participate but they have the desire."

- Asian American Administrator (School C)

Work Ethic:

We need more parent involvement but the immigrant families work a lot."

- White Administrator (School B)

*Representative Statements About Parents Culture/Values in
Mexican American Schools*

Educational Investment:

“Parents are very cooperative. They want to help but have no time”

-2nd Grade Latina Teacher (School H)

Work Ethic:

“At home, the students get very little supervision. Mom and dad are at work so the TV goes on. Not a lot of time is devoted to reading homework in general.”

-5th Grade White teacher (School E)

Representative Statements About Parents in Racially Mixed and Mexican American Schools

Describing parents as “people like us”

We don't have the kind of parent involvement in the school that I would hope for. But at the same time I'm sympathetic to why that might be. I don't classify it as being apathetic or indifferent, I see they're just busy, we're all busy. I mean ultimately I'm responsible for teaching these children the skills, not the parent... a lot of these parents ... don't have the time. ... We don't live in a world where mom stays at home and dad works and mom's got all this free time, she doesn't have the time. So it's our responsibility.

- 3rd Grade White teacher (School B)

*Representative Statements About Parents Culture/Values in
African American Schools*

Lack of Educational Investment:

If the parents don't talk about graduating from high school, then the student doesn't see it as significant ...[pauses] that type of home influence is what I'm talking about.

- 5th Grade White male teacher (School J)

*Representative Statements About Parents Culture/Values in
African American Schools*

Family Composition and Lack of
Traditional Morality:

We have problems with children because they have such young parents. Most of them are single parents and they don't have the strong discipline that older and more mature parent would have. Plus they are still out there sowing their wild oats... Some of the children are practically raising themselves.

- 5th Grade Black Teacher (School G)

*Representative Statements About Parents Culture/Values in
African American Schools*

Describing parents as unlike us:

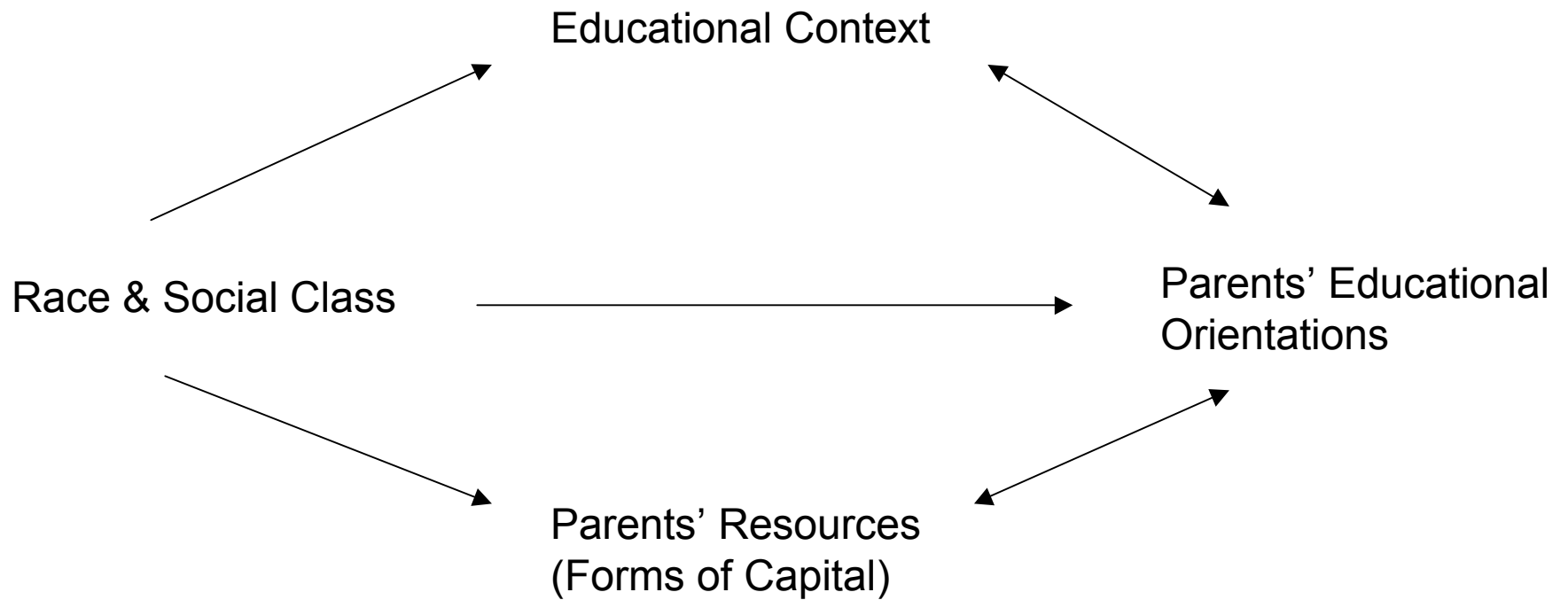
“...there is ... no “traditional family” who is supporting education the way that most of our parents did””

- Black Administrator (School D)

What's Wrong With This Picture

- Parents' investment in education is consistently high across racial groups (Henig et al., Solorzano)
- Black parents are no less involved (and no less effective as parents) than parents from other groups (Kerbow & Bernhardt; Steinberg)
- All parents have some resources with which to be involved (Diamond)
- The burden of involvement is placed on parents rather than schools

An Alternative Approach to Parents' Orientations



Class and Receptiveness to Parent Involvement

I find that the teachers seem to be so caring about the children, and the students, the well being of the students. And they're interested in the students' learning. They are not just there because it's a job. And an example of that is that Phillip was out of school for ten days. ...After it got to be over five or six days the teacher actually called me and initiated coming to my home to bring the work to me. So that was very impressive to me ...

(Middle-Class African American Mother)

Class and Receptiveness to Parent Involvement

**One [teacher] made the newspapers saying,
'How can you less educated people, who can't
barely complete high school, or did not
complete high school, can't read or write, tell
me how to effectively do my job?'**

(Working-Class Black Mother)

How Schools Can Support Parent Involvement

- Respect parents' culture, resources, and involvement styles
- Critically examine common sense notions about parents' investment in education and parenting styles
- Acknowledge the structural realities faced by parents and understand their frustrations
- Create school environments that embrace all parents
- Provide explicit information to parents about how to support their children's education

Research

- Study various forms of involvement across race and class groups
- Study what matters (rigorously)
- Study how structural inequalities impact parents' involvement efforts
- Study untapped parent resources
 - Religious involvement, communal orientations, extended family networks, co-ethnic networks