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Gustavo Carlo
Editors

Rural Ethnic Minority Youth and Families in the United States

Theory, Research, and Applications

Springer

Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development

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Preface

The shifting demographic profile of the United States and a growing recognition of the developmental implications of race, social class, historical experiences, and ethnicity have led to increased interest in studies of children from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. To date, most research on racial and ethnic minorities has been conducted in metropolitan areas. However, nearly 20 % of the US population lives in rural areas, and many rural residents are from racial and ethnic minority groups. For some groups, especially Latino/as, population numbers are increasing rapidly both nationally and in rural areas. Indeed, minorities were responsible for three-quarters of the population growth in rural areas between 2000 and 2010. Despite the changing demographics of rural areas and the presence of substantial minority populations, the intersection of rural location and ethnic minority status has received scant attention in the developmental literature. This book was undertaken to illuminate the experiences of racial and ethnic minority youth and families in the rural United States and to explore the challenges of conducting research with these populations.

Living in rural settings brings distinct challenges such as low-wage, labor-intensive jobs, lack of public transportation, and limited access to services. In recent decades, many rural areas have experienced economic declines, population loss, and out-migration, although others have shown increased prosperity and population gains. Child poverty rates are higher in rural than in urban areas, and educational levels tend to be lower. These challenges may interact with and exacerbate the challenges associated with racial and ethnic minority status. For example, rural Latino/a residents may have less access to bilingual services and resources than those in urban areas and may lack the social support provided by a well-established Latino community. Children from minority groups also face a complex set of issues beyond those related to rural location, including challenges related to acculturation, enculturation, prejudice, and discrimination. These complexities result in potentially unique profiles of physical, psychosocial, and educational risk for rural minority youth.

Each racial and ethnic minority group in the United States has a distinct history and cultural heritage. The African American history of slavery and segregation and the American Indian experience of land loss, forced migration, and cultural dismantlement contrast with the experience of groups such as Latinos and Asian Americans who typically migrated to the United States on a voluntary basis, fleeing sociopolitical upheavals in their home countries or seeking economic opportunities. Apart from distinct cultural traditions and world views, these latter groups initially spoke languages other than English, creating additional barriers to acculturation. The unique cultural traditions and histories of racial and ethnic minority groups may interact with the features of rural settings in distinct and diverse ways; thus, it is critical to consider the experiences of each ethnic minority group. For groups such as Latino/as and Asian Americans, it is also important to recognize that these groups include multiple subgroups with distinct national origins and migration histories. Likewise, American Indians encompass myriad tribes with distinct experiences, beliefs, and cultural traditions.

The intersection of rural location and ethnic minority status also creates unique challenges for researchers seeking to conduct developmental research to improve our understanding of these children and their families. Some challenges relate to the geographic isolation of many communities which creates logistical challenges related to participant recruitment and data collection. There is also the challenge of building collaborative relationships with communities to create viable research sites. There may be a distrust of outsiders, especially researchers, as well as stigma associated with participating in some kinds of research. These issues are compounded by the challenges associated with conducting research with ethnic minority groups who may be unfamiliar with and wary of university research, who often have different cultural frames of reference than the researchers, and who may speak different languages.

The seeds of this volume were planted a number of years ago as part of a larger initiative started by a group of scholars at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that focused on understanding issues surrounding Latino/a populations. The group spent countless hours discussing research ideas and findings and writing manuscripts and grant proposals and, eventually, obtained a National Science Foundation grant that supported our continuing work. As we began work on the funded project, we encountered several challenges that we thought might be somewhat unique to conducting research on rural minority populations. Therefore, we proposed a roundtable discussion at the Society for Research in Child Development conference in 2013 in which invited panelists Velma McBride Murry, Les Whitbeck, Marcela Raffaelli, and Lynne Vernon-Feagans discussed their challenges, strategies, and experiences in conducting research with particular minority groups in rural locations. The roundtable discussion proved to be stimulating and productive and provided the impetus to pursue a volume dedicated to extending those discussions to research on other rural minority populations. This volume evolved out of those experiences.

The coeditors of this book would like to thank the many colleagues and students who offered their support, ideas, and encouragement to pursue this project. We greatly appreciate the support of Roger Levesque and Judy Jones from Springer for their interest and investment in this volume. The team from Springer provided invaluable support, especially Michelle Tam. We owe special thanks to Chelsie Temmen of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for her editorial assistance. We are also grateful for ongoing research support from the National Science Foundation. And, of course, this book benefits tremendously from the many contributors to the volume. Their wisdom, insights, and experiences enrich this volume so that future researchers and scholars working with rural populations will benefit. Each chapter serves to illuminate the experiences of racial/ethnic minority youth and families in the rural United States. Moreover, several of the contributors describe practical considerations and strategies for future researchers who seek to conduct studies with these populations. We hope that the conceptual and practical information provided in the volume will focus attention on rural settings as unique developmental contexts for youth and spur further research on rural minority populations.

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About the Editors

Lisa J. Crockett, Ph.D. is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is an expert on adolescent development, risk behavior, parenting, and ethnic group differences. Her work on rural youth includes a 10-year longitudinal study extending from early adolescence to early adulthood and a study of the psychological, cultural, and contextual factors that contribute to adjustment among Latino/a youth from rural and urban communities. Her research has been funded by NIH and NSF and published in numerous journal articles and books. Her co-edited volumes include *Negotiating Adolescence in Times of Social Change*, *Asian American Parenting and Parent-Adolescent Relationships*, and *Health Disparities in Families and Youth: Research and Applications*.

Gustavo Carlo, Ph.D. is the Millsap Professor of Diversity and Multicultural Studies, the Director of the Center for Family Policy and Research, and the Co-Director of the Center for Children and Families Across Cultures, at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO. He is an expert on child and adolescent development, cultural studies, parenting, and personality. His research on prosocial competencies in diverse children and families has been published in well over 100 peer-reviewed articles, and he has co-edited several volumes (e.g., *Handbook of U.S. Latino Psychology*; *Health Disparities in Youth and Families: Research and Applications*; *Moral Development Across the Life Span*). NSF and NIH have funded Dr. Carlo's research. He has also worked on education programs and evaluation focusing on Latino/a children and is currently PI or Co-PI on several programs focusing on early childhood education in low-SES families.

Chapter 1
Ethnic and Racial Minority Youth in the Rural United States: An Overview

Lisa J. Crockett, Gustavo Carlo, and Chelsie Temmen

The United States is fast becoming a majority–minority nation in which individuals from ethnic or racial minority groups (hereafter referred to as minority groups) outnumber non-Hispanic Whites. Minorities currently comprise about 37 % of the US population (Johnson, Schaefer, Lichter, & Rogers, 2014), and US Census estimates indicate that by 2043 minorities will comprise 50 % of the population. For children under 18 years of age, the demographic shift is occurring even faster, as nearly half are already from minority backgrounds (46 %; Johnson, 2012). The demographic shift is also playing out in rural communities across the country where nearly one-fifth of the US population (51 million) resides, including approximately 12 million children under the age of 18 (Johnson, 2012). Although the proportion of minority children in rural areas is lower than in the United States as a whole, about 28 % of nonmetropolitan children are minority group members, with the largest number being Hispanic (of any race), followed by African Americans, native peoples, others (other non-Hispanics, including multiracial), and Asian Americans. Furthermore, because minority children (and adults) are concentrated in particular regions, counties, and localities, their impact on communities in those areas is likely to be substantial. In 2010, minority children under 18 years of age outnumbered non-Hispanic White children in 591 US counties; over half (60 %) of these "majority–minority" counties are nonmetropolitan (Johnson, 2012). At the community level, the number of majority–minority rural communities more than doubled between 1990 and 2010, and minority residents represent the numeric majority in

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over 12 % of nonmetropolitan communities (Lichter, 2012). Thus, just as rural communities comprise distinct developmental contexts for minority youth and families compared to metropolitan or urban areas, the presence of minority residents has profound implications for rural communities. Although considerable psychological research has focused on the development of minority children in the United States and a separate, largely sociological, literature has examined rural populations and places, relatively little attention has focused on individuals with both designations, that is, on members of ethnic or racial minority groups who live in rural areas.

The designations of rural and ethnic/racial minority are each associated with recognized challenges and risks, as reflected in recognized health disparities (Burton, Lichter, Baker, & Eason, 2013; Carlo, Crockett, & Carranza, 2011). Minority individuals have higher rates of poverty on average and are exposed to stress associated with prejudice and discrimination; immigrants often have the added burden of language barriers and lack of familiarity with US institutions and customs. However, minority families also have cultural resources that help them adapt, including close family ties, particular cultural values and practices, and religious beliefs. Rural communities, while varied, are often faced with such challenges as higher poverty rates, lower levels of education, sparse resources, out-migration, less diversified economies, and geographic isolation. The implications of these multiple interacting factors is understudied, but the situation for youth and families at the intersection of "minority" and "rural" is complex and likely unique. In theory, the challenges of living in rural areas could be compounded, exacerbated, or even mitigated by minority status. Understanding the intersection of these two demographic designations, corresponding to community context and sociocultural identity, and how it plays out in the lives of rural ethnic minority youth and their families is the focus of this book. The chapters integrate what is known about these youth and families and shed light on their experiences, challenges, and sources of resilience.

To set the stage for this larger discussion, we take up three issues in this introductory chapter. First, we provide definitions of minority and rural, noting the challenges and complexities of defining each of these groups. We also attend to the geographic distribution of these individuals and note the large variation in rural communities and their features. This discussion is followed by a brief overview of several challenges associated with being rural and minority. Finally, with this background in place, we highlight the contributions and focus of each of the chapters.

Rurality, Ethnicity, and the Changing Ethnic/Racial Profile of Rural Places

What Is Rural? "Rural" has been defined in various ways historically by government agencies and by different scholars, and no single definition prevails. Aspects such as population density, community size, land use (e.g., farming, mining, log-

ging), and geographic isolation (distance from a large metropolitan area) have been used to identify places as rural (Crockett, Shanahan, & Jackson-Newsom, 2000). Furthermore, places designated as rural differ from each other in these and other characteristics (e.g., demography, economics, landscape, culture), making for substantial diversity among rural communities (Chap. 2; Hart, Larson, & Lishner, 2005). These myriad characteristics can change over time, both separately and together, and are sometimes linked. For example, from 2000 to 2010, high-amenity rural areas in the West and Southwest experienced relatively high population growth, whereas farming counties in the Great Plains, Corn Belt, and Mississippi Delta often experienced population declines (Johnson, 2012). The ethnic and racial characteristics of the local population contribute to the heterogeneity of rural places, and these aspects, along with other features of rural ecologies, are central to this volume. Notably, ethnic and racial characteristics and other features of particular rural communities likely interact; for example, local economic and cultural factors may affect how communities respond to, interact with, and incorporate particular ethnic and racial groups.

The lack of a uniform definition of rural creates challenges for mapping and studying the rural population. As Hart et al. (2005) state, "depending on which definition is used, roughly 20 % of the US population resides in rural areas. Approximately three fourths of the nation's counties are rural, as well as 75 % of its land mass" (p. 1149). The two primary federal agencies, the US Census Bureau and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), define rural differently and thus identify somewhat different populations as being rural. The US Census Bureau distinguishes urban and rural areas based on census tract data and further classifies urban areas into urbanized areas (core populations of 50,000 or more) and urban clusters (core populations of 2500–49,999). Areas outside urban areas are classified as rural. In 2010, over 51 million US residents were classified as rural, including 12 million youth (Johnson, 2012). In contrast, the OMB focuses on the county level and distinguishes metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. Since 2003, areas considered to be metropolitan include central counties that contain at least one urbanized area (a city with a population of 50,000 or more) along with surrounding counties having economic links to the urban core (Hart et al., 2005). The remaining counties are considered nonmetropolitan: these include micropolitan areas (counties with a "rural cluster" of 10,000 people or more) and noncore counties (the rest).

These primary definitions from the Census and the OMB may classify the same people differently and often gloss over the wide variations that exist in rural areas. For example, in 2000, about 21 % of the US population and over 95 % of the land area were classified as rural using the Census definition, whereas about 17 % of the population and 74 % of the land area were classified as nonmetropolitan using the OMB definition (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). According to one comparison, nearly 18 % of the US population was classified differently by the OMB and the Census Bureau (i.e., classified as metropolitan but also as rural; classified as nonmetropolitan but also as urban) (Hart et al., 2005). In fact, "depending on how the categories are combined, the rural population can vary from 10 % to 28 % of the nation's total" (p. 1150). It should also be noted that both the Census

and OMB definitions of rural can change over time complicating the identification of rural population trends. Because rural (nonmetropolitan) has been defined as areas that are not urban, refinements to the definition of urban (metropolitan) have resulted in changes in what counts as rural and who is included in the rural population.

What Are Ethnicity and Race? Ethnic and racial classifications are also fraught with challenges. In 1997, the OMB mandated that race and ethnicity are distinct concepts and that separate questions are required to capture these two aspects of self-identification (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). At minimum, two options are required to represent ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino origin and not Hispanic or Latino origin. At the same time, the OMB mandated that federal agencies (including the US Census Bureau) use a minimum of five race categories to classify US residents based on self-identification; these include White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. A sixth option, "some other race," was added in 2000 to accommodate people who did not identify with any of the five main race categories (Humes et al., 2011). In addition, beginning in 2000, individuals could self-identify with more than one race on the census forms. In 2010, the census form included 15 separate race categories: White; Black, African American, or Negro; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian Indian; Chinese; Filipino; Japanese; Korean; Vietnamese; other Asians; Native Hawaiian; Guamanian or Chamorro; Samoan; other Pacific Islander; and some other race. These categories can be combined to reflect the five general categories mandated by the OMB; they also allow for 57 combinations of multiracial identifications (Humes et al., 2011).

Based on these designations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website defines the major race and ethnic groups as follows: Asian (origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or Indian subcontinent), Black or African American (having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa), Hispanic or Latino (a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South/Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands), American Indian or Alaskan Native (people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America, including Central America, who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment), and multiracial (two or more of the federally designated racial categories) (CDC, 2014). This classification system includes both racial (e.g., Black, White) and ethnic designations, with Hispanics/Latinos defined solely based on ethnic origin, regardless of race.

The current approach used by the Census Bureau and other federal agencies creates confusion because aspects that may be considered ethnic as well as racial (e.g., Asian) are classified as race, and only Hispanic/Latino origin is recognized as ethnic. Designating Hispanic/Latino as ethnicity only (regardless of race) is also potentially confusing because some Latinos view their race as Latino or Hispanic and others view their race as White; as a result Latinos often choose "some other race" as their racial group (37 % in the 2010 census; see Humes et al., 2011). Some

cultural scholars, therefore, prefer to use race to refer to physical characteristics (often skin color, such as Black, Mulatto, and White) and ethnicity to refer to cultural heritage (e.g., African, Hispanic or Latino, Asian). However, this is the subject of much debate and discussion, as research demonstrates that race and ethnicity are often intertwined and that both constructs have a strong sociocultural basis (see Adler & Rehkopf, 2008; Entwisle & Astone, 1994; Quintana et al., 2006). Changes in US Census questions on race and ethnicity have implications for how individuals are counted in different census years.

Changes in the Ethnic/Racial Composition of Youth in Rural Places Despite inconsistencies and complexities related to the definitions and measures of "rural" and "race/ethnicity," demographic analyses have documented a growing presence of ethnic/racial minority children in rural counties since 2000. This growing presence has been fueled by increases in the number of minority children coupled with a decrease in the number of non-Hispanic White children. Between 2000 and 2010, the absolute number of non-Hispanic White children in nonmetropolitan counties dropped by nearly one million, a loss of 10 %; similarly, the number of African American children dropped by 11.6 % (Johnson, 2012). In contrast, the number of Hispanic children increased by 434,000 (45 %), which partially offset the population loss in other groups. The number of non-Hispanic Asian children and other (i.e., non-Hispanic multiracial) children also increased by nearly 20 % each, but their absolute numbers remain small. Thus, it is primarily the growth of the Latino population, combined with the decline in the non-Hispanic White population, that is driving increasing diversity within rural communities. This pattern in nonmetropolitan counties mirrors national trends which show that growth in the Hispanic and other minority populations, in conjunction with a decrease in the number of non-Hispanic White youth, caused the proportion of White youth under age 20 to drop from 61 % in 2000 to 53 % in 2012 (Johnson et al., 2014).

Growth in the minority population has played a major role in rural population growth as a whole. From 2000 to 2010, the nonmetropolitan population grew by 2.2 million, and 83 % of this gain came from growth in the minority population; indeed, Hispanics accounted for over half the rural population gain (Johnson, 2012). Growth in the minority population has been an economic and social capital boon to many rural communities that were losing residents; without growth in the Hispanic population in the early 2000s, an estimated 221 nonmetropolitan counties would have declined in population size (Johnson & Lichter, 2008, cited in Lichter, 2012). The presence of minority residents has important implications for rural communities, demographically, economically, and culturally.

Dispersion of Ethnic Minority Youth Across Rural America

A key feature of minority settlement in the rural United States is its uneven geographic distribution (Johnson, 2012). Rural ethnic and racial minorities are concentrated in particular regions such as the Southwest (Rio Grande area), the Mississippi Delta, and the Northern Great Plains where there is a history of long-term settlement. More recently, new concentrations have appeared in parts of the Southeast and Midwest, which have been termed "new destination" communities. Many other rural counties, however, have no significant numbers of minority residents. Likewise, the growth in ethnic and racial diversity has been uneven, being minimal in some rural communities and dramatic in others (Johnson et al., 2014). In Nebraska, for example, the number of Latinos doubled from 92,836 in 2000 to 173,909 in 2010 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013), and the Latino population in rural counties increased by an estimated 80.1 % (Bailey & Preston, 2011). However, this increase was felt most strongly in small communities that experienced a relatively large influx of Latinos. In the small town of Lexington, Nebraska, the school population shifted from being largely English speaking to being largely Spanish speaking over of short period of time, a shift for which the district was ill prepared (Carlo, Carranza, & Zamboanga, 2002).

The spatial distribution of minority youth across the United States is shown in Fig. 1.1 (reprinted from Johnson et al., 2014). The figure shows metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties where youth from one or more ethnic or racial minority groups constitute at least 10 % of the population under age 20. The figure reflects historically based concentrations of Blacks in the Southeast and Latinos in the border states of the Southwest, as well as clusters of American Indians on reservation lands in the North and Southwest. The figure also shows more isolated pockets of minority populations in other locations (e.g., Latinos in Nebraska, Missouri, and Georgia), as well as counties where two or three minority groups each comprise 10 % or more of the youth population (e.g., Blacks and Latinos in North Carolina) reflecting a combination of traditional settlement patterns, recent immigration (e.g., of Latinos to "new destination areas"), and natural population increase Fig. 1.1.

As suggested by Fig. 1.1, the areas with substantial concentrations of minority youth also differ from each other in important ways. The traditional settlement areas have a historical basis tied to specific ethnic groups. For example, much of the Southwest was once part of Mexico and has a long-standing indigenous population of Mexicans; the South includes large numbers of African Americans, part of the legacy of rural slavery; the East Coast includes dense clusters of Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Cubans, reflecting settlement patterns over the past century. Many of these traditional settlements are in metropolitan areas. However, new destination settlements have developed in response to more recent job opportunities in the agricultural, food processing, and related industries, often in rural areas (e.g., in the Midwest, Georgia, and the Carolinas). The minority population is often small in these areas, and there is less of an established infrastructure in place to support the arrival of newcomers, especially those who speak a language other than English.
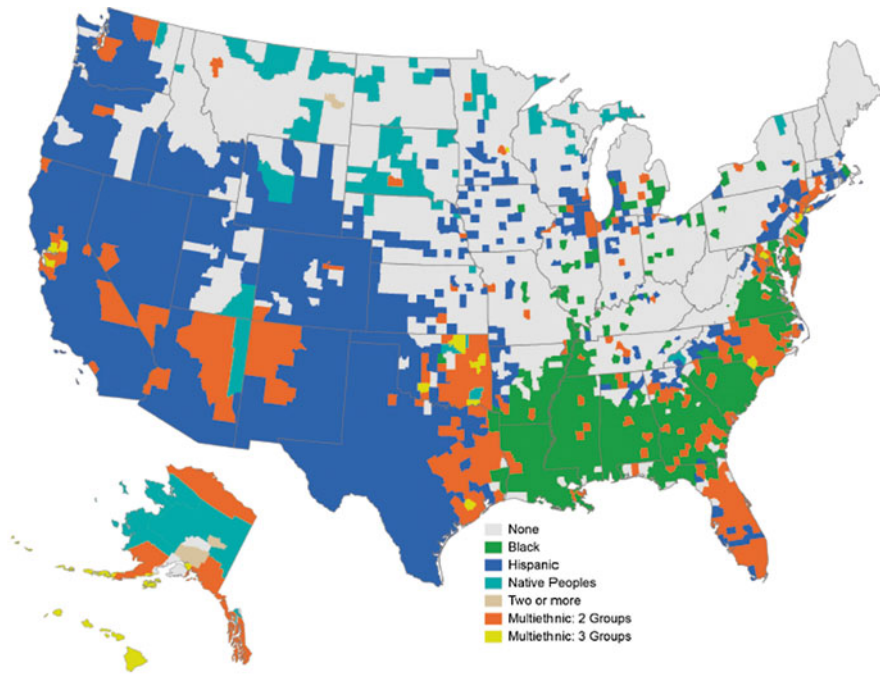
Source: U.S. Census Population Estimates (2012)

Fig. 1.1 Distribution of the US minority population under age 12. Reprinted with permission from Johnson, K. M., Schaefer, A., Lichter, D. T., & Rogers, L. (2014). The Increasing Diversity of America's Youth, National Issue Brief, No. 71. Durham, NH: The Carsey Institute

Although some nonmetropolitan communities are expanding economically, others are in decline, and local economic conditions may affect the attitudes of long-term residents toward newcomers. The size of the receiving community and the relative proportions of minorities also matter. For instance, adding 1000 newcomers to a rural community of 5000 residents has a much larger impact than adding the same number to a community of 20,000 residents. Finally, newcomers to rural areas differ in their race, ethnicity, and cultural heritage, and even within the same minority group there are differences in immigration histories, acculturation, and socioeconomic status (Carlo et al., 2002). Thus, the particular characteristics of the minority residents and the specific features of their communities need to be considered in tandem.

Challenges Associated with Race/Ethnicity and Rural Places

As both minority status and rural location are linked to health disadvantages, rural minority youth and families may experience higher levels of cumulative risk, and their vulnerabilities related to one designation may be aggravated by features of the other. Alternatively, minority families may possess protective factors that mitigate some of the challenges of living in rural areas, and rural communities may provide supports that ameliorate the risk of minority status. It is also critical to keep in mind that ethnic minority groups may not all respond similarly to rural residence, owing to their distinct cultural traditions and position in US society. For example, stereotypes of Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans differ, perhaps leading to distinct experiences and interactions with local communities. Moreover, ethnic and racial groups are not monolithic, and both subgroups and individual members may respond differently to particular challenges related to rural residence. Rural communities also vary tremendously (Chap. 2), despite having some common characteristics. Thus, it is important to look at experiences of distinct ethnic groups living in rural areas and ideally at the experience of particular ethnic groups in more than one rural location.

Poverty Cutting across the rural population, minority and nonminority, is the specter of poverty. Child poverty rates tend to be higher in rural than urban areas: in 2010, over 25 % of rural children were poor compared to 22 % nationally. Furthermore, counties with persistent child poverty (where child poverty rates exceeded 20 % from 1980 to 2009) are disproportionately rural; 81 % of these counties are rural, although only 65 % of US counties are rural (Mattingly, Johnson, & Schaefer, 2011). Currently, over one in four rural children (26 %) live in such counties, compared to 12 % of urban children (Johnson, 2012). However, the spatial distribution of child poverty is uneven, with long-standing concentrations found in particular areas, including Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, the Texas–Mexico border region, and pockets of the Northern Great Plains that are home to American Indians (Mattingly et al., 2011). Poor children who live in persistently poor rural counties may experience double jeopardy because communities have insufficient resources to address the educational, economic, and health-related needs of these children and their families.

Minority children are more likely than other children to be poor. In 2009, 36 % of Black children and 31 % of Latino children lived in poverty, compared to the national rate of 22 % (Mattingly et al., 2011). Given higher levels of poverty among rural children and racial/ethnic minority children, it is not surprising that rural minority children are especially likely to be poor. Poverty rates for rural minority children are considerably higher than national rates (and the rates for other rural children), and more than 80 % of these children live in counties with high poverty levels (Lichter & Johnson, 2007). However, poverty is not limited to rural areas with high minority concentrations: although many poor areas include large numbers of minority children, other areas, such as Appalachia, are predominantly White.

Education Adults from rural areas tend to have somewhat lower average education levels than adults from urban areas (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2013). This may reflect both out-migration of young people who have or wish to acquire higher levels of education and the nature of the rural economy, where many jobs do not require high levels of education and opportunities for highly educated individuals are few. The confounding of SES, ethnicity, and race is a common problem in research on minority families and also needs to be carefully considered when conducting research on rural families. Acknowledging the impact of poverty (or SES) and disentangling its effects from those of ethnicity, race, and rurality would seem particularly useful.

Organization of the Book

This initial chapter has provided a demographic overview of the intersection of ethnicity/race and rurality in the United States, including the percentage of rural minority youth and the spatial distribution of minority populations across America. The remaining chapters are divided into three main sections. The first section offers theoretical innovations that extend existing theoretical models and perspectives of minority youth development to youth in rural locations. In Chap. 2, Conger, Reeb, and Chan describe rural communities as contexts for youth development that differ from each other in myriad ways; they also offer an innovative integrative model for examining minority youth in these myriad rural contexts. In Chap. 3, Stein and colleagues extend the well-known integrative model of minority child development (Garcia Coll et al., 1996) to Latinos in rural areas, identifying foreigner status, undocumented status, and migrant farm worker status as key characteristics for Latino children in new destination settlement areas. In Chap. 4, Cunningham and Francois draw on Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective and Spencer's phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory to illuminate how contextual features of rural communities may influence the experiences and development of rural African American youth. They also present empirical findings showing that specific individual factors (e.g., racial identity) buffer the effects of stressful events and race-related stressors for rural African American youth. In Chap. 5, Kiang and Supple turn attention to the small but growing population of rural Asian Americans. They outline the complex array of individual, community, and culturally based factors that need to be considered when conceptualizing the development of Asian American youth and families in rural and new immigrant destinations and discuss topics for future research on this largely unstudied population.

The second section of the book focuses on empirical findings regarding rural racial and ethnic minority youth and families. In Chap. 6, Raffaelli, Iturbide, and Fernandez describe what is known about the health and development of rural Latino youth, pointing to the sparseness of research on this population and identifying specific challenges to conducting such research as well as strategies that can be used to surmount them. In Chap. 7, Markstrom and Moilanen describe the unique historical experiences of American Indians and associated trauma as factors that

contribute to high rates of some adjustment problems among adolescents. They also identify potential protective factors, highlighting the important role of social connections. Next, Cutrona, Clavél, and Johnson document the effects of key neighborhood, financial, and interpersonal stressors on the relationship quality of African American couples, drawing on data from a large longitudinal study of nonurban African American families (Chap. 8). In Chap. 9, Bratsch-Hines, Baker, and Vernon-Feagans discuss the transition to school for rural minority children, focusing on ecological factors (community level and familial) that have been linked to school readiness in this population. In Chap. 10, Carlo, Crockett, Streit, and Cardenas present an ecological model for studying Latino youth in the Great Plains and provide initial results from an ongoing study to test aspects of this model. Their preliminary findings support the notion that ecological factors predict adjustment in Latino/a youth via sociocognitive tendencies.

The third section of the book highlights applied work and interventions designed to improve the health and well-being of rural minority children, youth, and families. In Chap. 11, Allen, Beehler, and Gonzalez review community efforts to reduce substance use and suicide among rural American Indian and Alaska Native youth and identify effective approaches, critical shortcomings in current work, and promising directions for future work. In Chap. 12, Murry, Liu, and Bethune focus on contextual factors that contribute to resilience among rural African American adolescents and identify protective aspects of person-context relations that may help reduce racial/ethnic disparities in academic achievement and behavioral health. Next, Knoche and Witte highlight the key role of home–school partnerships in educational interventions for rural children, including rural minority children (Chap. 13). They describe successful interventions based on this principle and discuss methodological challenges to, and strategies for, conducting educational interventions in rural communities. In Chap. 14, Farmer and Hamm consider how educational and developmental contexts in rural, high-poverty areas constrain minority students' school experiences and academic outcomes. They present a professional development model that supports teachers in the use of instructional and classroom management strategies and summarize the impact of this approach on indicators of school engagement and achievement. In the final chapter (Chap. 15), White, Burleson, and Knight evaluate the strengths and limitations of research on rural minority youth, as exemplified in this volume, and offer recommendations for future theorizing to improve our understanding of these youth. They argue that theorizing needs to be both culturally and contextually informed in order to capture the experiences of youth from specific ethnic and racial backgrounds who are growing up in particular rural settings, and lay out an approach to advance such theorizing.

Conclusions

Racial and ethnic minorities comprise a substantial and growing portion of the rural US population. Compared to urban areas, rural communities afford distinct developmental settings for children and families; however, despite some commonalities, rural communities vary on multiple dimensions, including their natural environments, economic fortunes, histories of interactions with minorities, proximity to metropolitan areas, and so forth. Particular minority groups live in (and move to) particular rural areas, creating a variegated pattern of diversity across the rural United States, with heavy concentrations of particular groups in some places, concentrations of other groups (or multiple groups) in other places, and large areas with little ethnic and racial diversity. The diversity of rural settings and the heterogeneity of racial and ethnic minorities mean that the implications of rural residence for minority youth and children will depend both on their individual (and group) characteristics and on the specific features of the rural communities they inhabit. This volume represents an initial attempt to consider these complexities in detail, to focus on this understudied segment of youth and take stock of what is known about them, and to lay the foundation for future research that will more fully explore the dynamic interplay of race/ethnicity and rural location that is unfolding across rural America.

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Chapter 2
Racial–Ethnic Minority Youth in Rural America: Theoretical Perspectives, Conceptual Challenges, and Future Directions

Katherine Jewsbury Conger, Ben T. Reeb, and Sut Yee Shirley Chan

> *"Rural and urban taxonomies, researchers, policy analysts, and legislation generally view all rural areas as uniform in character. However, there are, in fact, huge variations in the demography, economics, culture, and environmental characteristics of different rural places."*
> Hart, Larson, and Lishner (*2005*, p. 1149)
> *"Of the 353 most persistently poor counties in the United States—defined by Washington as having had a poverty rate above 20 percent in each of the past three decades—85 percent are rural. They are clustered in distinct regions: Indian reservations in the West; Hispanic communities in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas; a band across the Deep South and along the Mississippi Delta with a majority black population; and Appalachia, largely white, which has supplied some of America's iconic imagery of rural poverty since the Depression-era photos of Walker Evans."*
>
> Gabriel (*2014*)

These two quotations exemplify just one of the challenges of studying racial–ethnic minority (REM) youth in rural America. Not only are the youth themselves quite diverse, but the settings they and their families inhabit are diverse as well. That diversity includes the historical, cultural, economic, and social conditions of the rural settings, as well as the family history and racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage of each child. Our goal is to describe how social scientists go about making sense of the dynamic interplay between the multiple environments and complex life

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experiences that shape the individual development and well-being of REM children and adolescents, and their families, living in rural America today. We start by outlining the changes taking place in rural America and describing the complex and multidimensional concept of rurality. Next, we propose a conceptual model, which brings together two parallel streams of research that have been developing over the past 2–3 decades. The first represents the research being conducted by rural sociologists, economists, and demographers who address the complex changes happening across rural regions of the United States, and the second represents the increasing awareness of the myriad issues that need to be addressed in furthering our understanding of the development of REM youth.

A Changing Rural America

Depending on what part of the country you are in, when you hear the word "rural," it can conjure images of small towns set in rolling fields of corn in the Midwest, farms dotting the landscape in the Deep South, two-lane roads leading to isolated ranches, or the vast irrigated fields in the West. However, "rural" has come to represent a wide range of individuals and families as well, from Latino migrants working in meatpacking plants in the Midwest to African American farmers in the "Southern Black Belt" (Wimberley & Morris, 1997) to miners in small towns in the valleys of West Virginia.

Sociodemographic Changes The story of rural America at the beginning of the twenty-first century can be summarized with one word: change (as long-time inhabitants cope with larger farms but fewer farmers, the loss of well-paying manufacturing jobs in exchange for lower-paying positions in agricultural and food processing, a widespread shift from full- to part-time employment, and significant declines in mining and timberwork as businesses lose ground or close completely) (McCrate, 2011). Over the past three plus decades, social scientists have documented a changing economy characterized by diminishing employment opportunities and the outmigration of young, college-educated workers, or "brain drain," from many of the nation's rural regions (see Carr & Kefalas, 2009). However, in other places, change may have a more positive connotation as retirees move into slower-paced rural areas, bringing with them an infusion of economic resources and an increased demand for goods and services (Hamilton, Hamilton, Duncan, & Colocousis, 2008).

Historically, rural America (outside of the South and the Southwest) has represented a racially and ethnically homogeneous segment of our nation, inhabited almost exclusively by white people. However, along with the economic shifts in recent decades are the changing faces encountered on the Main Streets of small town rural America, with many more faces of color (i.e., brown, black, and tan faces) in some regions, such as the Midwest, than in the past (Brown & Schafft, 2011). These sociodemographic changes vary dramatically by region of the country. Some rural areas have become destination communities for ethnic minority workers

and their families by providing financial opportunity and steady jobs; other areas have populations that are older and whiter, have fewer jobs, and are in decline. Many more diverse rural areas are also stagnating, with many residents living at or below the poverty line (see Brown & Schafft, 2011; Hamilton et al., 2008; Lichter & Graefe, 2011; Sherman, 2009).

Poverty is often quite high in rural settings (see Duncan, 1999; Gabriel, 2014; Lyson & Falk, 1993), but is also highly variable depending on the decline or growth of jobs in an area. In keeping with the focus on diversity, Lichter and Brown (2011) identified "10 common conceptions of rural America that reflect both its social and economic diversity and changing spatial and social boundaries" (p. 37). The ten conceptions include factors such as economic issues, cultural issues, and mobility issues and range from "rural areas as cultural touchstone (the idyllic repository of American values)" to "rural America as food basket"; they also include "rural America as dumping ground" (areas seen fit to house prisons, slaughterhouses, feedlots, landfills, and hazardous and toxic waste sites). Indeed, in many regions, rural America has "become a dumping ground for urban America" (Lichter & Brown, 2011, p. 18).

Defining Rural America

One might think that defining rural is quite straightforward; indeed, agencies of the local, state, and federal government often use a rural/non-rural designation in determining how money and resources are allocated (see Brown & Schafft, 2011; Hamilton et al., 2008; Hart et al., 2005). Despite the popular portrayal of rural and non-rural as a simple categorical, often dichotomous, variable, the concepts associated with this distinction are much more complex and multifaceted (e.g., Crockett, Shanahan, & Jackson-Newsom, 2000). Moreover, understanding the complex nature and type of a rural setting has important implications for both adult and youth choices and opportunities (Hamilton et al., 2008).

One of the biggest challenges in conceptualizing rural America is that the concept of rurality is not easily or consistently defined by any governmental or research entity and is often viewed only as those areas of the country that are not urban (for detailed discussion, see Brown & Schafft, 2011). "Rural" is variously defined as the number of people per square mile, by a region's location relative to a larger population center or by distance to services such as health care and grocery stores (Hart et al., 2005). Indeed, even within the US government, there is little agreement on the definition of "rural"; the USDA, the US Census, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) do not agree on what constitutes rural/urban/suburban or metropolitan/nonmetropolitan (see Brown & Schafft, 2011; Hart et al., 2005). Often, when two categories are used, the variability within both urban and rural areas is drastically underestimated: "Depending on how categories are combined, the rural population can vary from 10 % to 28 % of the nation's total (i.e., a population of 29–79 million)" (Hart et al., 2005, p. 1150).

While most common definitions of "rural" use population size and density along with other factors such as commute distances to major cities, there are many other aspects of rurality such as access to education, jobs, health care, and social services. In addition, social scientists and policy makers need to consider a variety of characteristics, such as economics, culture, demographics, and physical features of the environment, that help define specific types of rural settings and, in turn, help us make important distinctions within the broad term of "rural." These distinctions are important for researchers attempting to understand the effect of context or place on youth, in particular, REM youth. Hart et al. (2005), who looked at definitions in relation to health research and policy, even suggest that researchers need to use specific definitions depending on the research or policy questions: "Careful attention to the definition of 'rural' is required for effectively targeting policy and research aimed at improving the health of rural Americans" (p. 1149).

The Four Rural Setting Types Hamilton et al. (2008) suggest that a more inclusive definition provides a better way of thinking about and classifying rural areas in the United States. Using an extensive survey of different regions in the United States, they found that rural areas were diverse and complex and that this diversity could be better represented by typologies that incorporated economic, political, and environmental changes, in conjunction with the diversity of inhabitants. In other words, the definition was neither simple nor one dimensional! Through interviews conducted with 7842 rural residents in nine states, Hamilton et al. (2008) identified four types of rural settings which incorporate economic, demographic, community, and environmental factors. In addition, they addressed the key issue of how residents saw the future of their rural region. The four types that emerged are as follows: (1) amenity-rich rural America (such as the rural Colorado Rocky Mountain region where population grew 71 % between 1990 and 2005 and poverty was low [10 %]), (2) declining resource-dependent rural America (such as rural Kansas where the population has continued to drop, especially among young adults aged 25–34), (3) chronically poor rural America (such as Appalachia, Mississippi, and Alabama, which saw a large out-migration of young adults and has an average poverty rate of 26 %), and (4) amenity/decline rural America (represented by the Pacific Northwest and the Northeast—regions with natural amenities but declining economies).

We believe the four categories developed by Hamilton et al. (2008) may prove to be a useful tool in capturing the evolving sociodemographic complexity of rural regions of contemporary America and attempting to advance our understanding of the lives of REM youth in rural places. Understanding these issues is crucial if we, as developmental researchers, are to address some of the unique challenges of (a) conducting research on REM youth in rural settings, (b) identifying and accessing representative samples, and (c) producing comparable results from studies across different regions of the country. In addition to the inherent difficulties of adequately defining rural places, there are specific challenges regarding the multiple theoretical perspectives and concepts such as generational status, culture, language use, and ethnic identity that must be considered when designing and implementing research on REM youth in rural America; the next section addresses these issues.

Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Challenges

The second stream of research used to inform this chapter draws from a wide array of theoretical perspectives and concepts used to examine youth development, social processes, and contexts in disciplines such as sociology, economics, psychology, demography, ethnic studies, political science, anthropology, and human development. For this section, we reviewed over 200 articles, chapters, and books focused on ethnic minority youth and families (e.g., Gershoff, Mistry, & Crosby, 2014; Parke, 2013; Quintana et al., 2006). Our review demonstrates that in order to address the complexity of studying REM youth in today's society, researchers, educators, and policy makers need to take into account family history, culture, interpersonal processes, and social contexts while remaining mindful that all of these elements may change over time. Many researchers have addressed this complexity by using an ecological approach that considers the processes and conditions that govern the course of human development across the life span (e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Marks, Godoy, & Garcia Coll, 2014; Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Before turning to the theoretical perspectives that inform our conceptual model, we address some of the concepts and issues that we have found repeatedly in the literature and that are central to any examination of REM child and adolescent development (hereafter referred to as REM youth development) in rural places; we start by considering the issue of race and ethnicity.

Studying Racial–Ethnic Minority Youth: Why Race *and* Ethnicity Matter

"The distinction between racial and ethnic criteria of group membership, although analytically important, should not be understood to mean that the groups to which they refer are mutually exclusive. . . . Nonetheless, phenotypical differences (that is, anatomical features such as skin color and body and facial shape) between groups have been far more salient in the United States as an organizing principle in social relations than cultural ones, and groups socially defined as racial ethnics [sic] have historically been at a considerable disadvantage in their treatment in American society (Leiberson and Waters 1988; Omni and Winant 1986). Moreover, family life has been profoundly affected by the experience of and response to such structured disadvantage."

                                                                                        Taylor (2002, p. 3)

In order to conduct reliable and valid research on REM youth in America, researchers need to consider a variety of factors that define and affect their research population. To begin, researchers should be aware that a simple designation of REM group status is never truly simple. Clear definitions of each component—race, ethnicity, and minority—need to be discussed, defined, and agreed upon by researchers from multiple disciplines interested in understanding the factors that affect REM youth in America and how REM youth affect those factors in return. We do not attempt a comprehensive review here of the literature on these three

factors; however, we briefly discuss why it is crucial for researchers to develop a common or shared understanding about the key definitions in order to create results that may be compared across studies and disciplines and over time.

Researchers working in this area need an understanding of the differences and similarities that exist among ethnic minority groups and across heterogeneous racial groups, as well as the need for REM youth to be studied in their own right and not always in comparison to majority youth (for a detailed discussion, see Fuller & García Coll, 2010). In most studies that include race as a factor, the majority group (i.e., White American) is often used as the reference group for minority group comparisons; this is a problematic method because it obscures the incredible diversity between ethnic groups that, for the purposes of the study, have been aggregated into racial group categories. In particular, researchers (and reviewers) need to acknowledge that truly representative research is challenging due to the vast number of ethnic minority groups in the United States as well as the potential intragroup differences within any ethnic minority group designation, which are often left unexplored (see García Coll et al., 1996). For example, it is estimated that, in 2014, there are about 54 million Hispanic/Latino individuals in the United States; for ease of reading, the term Latino will be used throughout for individuals of Spanish cultural heritage (Carlo, 2014). Of those 54 million, Mexican origin individuals comprised 34 million (66.6 %) of the total. The next largest group at 5 million (9.3 %) were of Puerto Rican origin; the remaining 25 % comprised 21 different groups (Brown, 2014). This illustrates the potential for finding significant intragroup differences within the fastest-growing ethnic minority group in the United States, namely, Latinos. Similar diversity is seen within the Asian American population; they make up about 5 % of the US population and are comprised of more than 14 different REM groups such as Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Cambodian, Asian Indian, and Korean (Le, 2014). Over half of the Asian American population lives in metropolitan areas, but some groups with agricultural roots (such as Cambodians and Hmong) may be more likely to live in rural areas. There are also strong historical ties to the land among African Americans in the South and Latinos in the Southwest; these ties underlie some of the continuing involvement in agriculture and food production among these groups in rural America (Irwin & O'Brien, 1998; Mohl, 2003). Thus, identifying the heterogeneity of ethnic minority children and families is a complex undertaking and may present particular challenges for researchers interested in REM youth in rural settings (see Brown & Swanson, 2003). For example, some REM youth and families may be reluctant to disclose ethnic group membership in fear of consequences related to immigration status. Researchers will need to carefully define their sampling frame and obtain unambiguous information from study participants as to their ethnic identity in order to interpret their results with confidence and clarity (see methodology discussion by Quintana et al., 2006).

Furthermore, researchers are starting to acknowledge that studying REM youth in America, regardless of context, requires that we explicitly acknowledge and thoughtfully measure race or racial identity. Although most acknowledge that racial group membership does not have a solid basis in biology or genetics (see American Sociological Association, 2003; Smedley & Smedley, 2005), Taylor (2002) and

many others (e.g., Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Brody et al., 2006; Sellers & Shelton, 2003) conclude that racial group membership (categorizing individuals by physical characteristics, especially skin color) has influenced social relations and economic opportunities for youth and families throughout the history of the United States. Simply put, race is a social and cultural address which affects the attitudes, expectations, and experiences of minority and majority youth alike, and concepts such as racial identity, racial privilege, and racial discrimination must be considered in order to understand the ongoing dynamics and consequences of race and racial identity for youth development (e.g., Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Crocker, Blaine, & Luhtanen, 1993; Pahl & Way, 2006). Indeed, an examination of news stories in 2014 reveals the ongoing issue of black, brown, and white relations in the United States. Examples include (1) the racial animus toward Barack Obama, the first black President of the United States (see Segura & Valenzuela, 2010), (2) the public reactions to and media coverage of the death of young black youth at the hands of white police officers (such as the 2014 case of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri), and (3) ongoing efforts to disenfranchise African Americans and Latinos (i.e., people of color) from participation in the political process (e.g., Cobb et al., 2012).

> "Though slavery ended nearly 150 years ago, young black men have been treated as second-class citizens by politicians and police ever since. You would think the election and re-election of our first black president would've signified that the United States has defeated racism and prejudice. On the contrary, President Barack Obama's election has brought racism to the forefront, as many refuse to acknowledge, respect or work with him as commander in chief, as if a black man couldn't possibly be worthy to lead our nation." (Sistrunk, August 30, 2014)

Given the racialization of many ethnic minorities in the United States, researchers will want to design studies to obtain both the ethnic identity and racial identity of study participants and their family members; this information will assist in the investigation of issues such as racial discrimination and economic stratification (Dressler, Oths, & Gravlee, 2005). This approach is in keeping with the policies and practices of the US government which added and allowed respondents to identify membership in multiple racial and ethnic identity categories, including mixed race, on the US Census in the year 2000. The same approach is explicitly acknowledged by many researchers who have worked to include these considerations in their research (see Quintana et al., 2006; Weisner & Duncan, 2014 for detailed discussions). By disentangling ethnic identity and racial identity, researchers will be in a better situation to advance the understanding of the etiology of health disparities among diverse populations.

Finally, researchers need to convey a clear message regarding the use of the term "minority." Often confused with a numerical count, the terms minority and majority, as used by social scientists in studies of youth and families in the United States, refer to status based on the relative access to power, prestige, and resources within society. Minority status, or social standing, is also used within social stratification theory to represent the experiences of less privileged groups relative to more privileged groups (for a discussion, see García Coll et al., 1996). Baca Zinn (1983) states

that, "Racial–ethnic families are distinctive not only because of their ethnic heritage but also because they reside in a society where racial stratification shapes family resources and structures in important ways" (p. 20). Thus, there needs to be a clear understanding that minority youth and families have had a long history of discrimination and unequal status in the United States (e.g., Harris & Worthen, 2003; Taylor, 2002), and social scientists need to address this fact in studies of REM youth and families. Furthermore, social scientists also need to keep in mind that "minority" status is not necessarily static but may shift as some racial–ethnic groups obtain more power, prestige, and resources and that this may change perceptions of and expectations for members of particular groups. For example, the "model minority" designation of Asian American (such as Japanese, Chinese, and Asian Indian) students' educational achievements puts pressure on all students identified as members of this group (e.g., Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean) even though the histories and experiences of various Asian American groups may vary widely (e.g., Chao, 2001; Chao & Tseng, 2002; Chou & Feagin, 2008; Dunham, Baron, & Banaji, 2006).

Theoretical Perspectives

In preparing this chapter, we consulted a number of theoretical perspectives that have been used to study family processes and individual development in context, with a specific focus on research on REM youth and families. Based on our review of the literature and relevant theoretical frameworks, we propose a conceptual model that represents the reciprocal nature of the transactions between individuals and the multiple contextual elements and environments in which they are embedded over the life course. Individual characteristics, social and family processes, and contexts are represented not in a linear, time-ordered fashion, or causal model, but in a continuous feedback loop that illustrates the interconnected nature of—and dynamic interaction between—individuals and contexts. Figure 2.1 presents the overarching conceptual model of REM Youth in Context (REMYC), and Table 2.1 presents specific variables and concepts relevant to understanding REM youth in rural American today. As shown in Fig. 2.1, the four principal constructs in the REMYC model are (1) racial–ethnic minority status (i.e., youth characteristics, experiences, and social location), (2) economic and social contexts (i.e., ecological micro-/meso-/macro-contexts of youth and family including the specific rural settings as discussed in this chapter), (3) transactional relations of youth (i.e., interpersonal relations over the life course), and (4) youth development (i.e., individual developmental outcomes).

Building a theoretical foundation and related set of constructs that will enable researchers to conduct basic and applied research on the linkages between youth, important individuals in their lives, and economic and social conditions will further the understanding of REM youth development and factors associated with better or worse outcomes. Quintana et al. (2006) stated the issue concisely, "The need for a
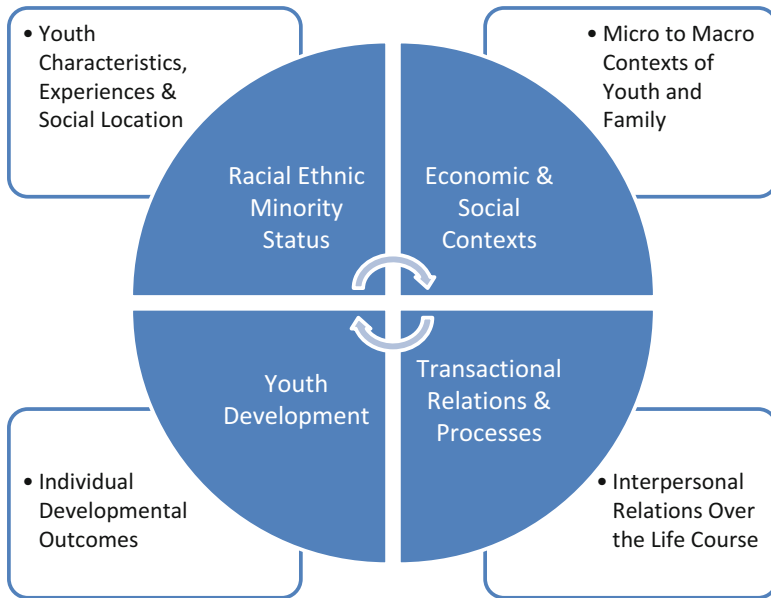
Fig. 2.1 Racial–ethnic minority youth development in context (REMYC) conceptual model. See Table 2.1 for a detailed list of concepts based on existing research and recommendations for future directions

Table 2.1 Concepts related to the racial–ethnic minority youth in context (REMYC) model

Concept	Indicators
Youth characteristics, experiences, and social location	
Racial–ethnic minority group membership	Race; ethnicity; minority status; legal status of youth; legal status of parents; siblings; and extended family members
Personality	Personality and temperament of youth
Generational status	Generational status of youth and parents
Family structure	Household composition; presence of extended family members
Racial–ethnic identity	Racial–ethnic identity formation in youth; negative stereotypes; salience of identity
Bicultural identity	Bicultural identity formation; acculturation; enculturation; assimilation; marginalization
Language proficiency and preference	English proficiency; bilingual capability; preferred language; language barriers in parent–child communications; language spoken at home
Cultural considerations	Importance of family, *respeto*, collectivistic orientation, filial piety
Experiences of discrimination	Racial–ethnic discrimination experienced by youth and parents; racial–ethnic socialization practices
Family socioeconomic status	Family income; family assets; parent education and occupation status

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Concept	Indicators
Migration history	Timing of arrival in current rural location
Economic and social contexts	
Rural setting type	Amenity rich; declining resource dependent; chronically poor; amenity poor
Rural/urban classification	US Census classification
Locality concerns	Local economy; political climate
Racial history in regional area	Historical patterns of race relations in regional area; neighborhood violence; racial segregation; racial–ethnic composition
Education system	Type of school system (public or private); quality of education; funding structure of educational institutions; racial–ethnic composition of students
Religion	Churches; relief programs run by religious organizations
Social services/community resources	Access to community resources; availability of social services; language assistance in accessing services
Family economic status	Parent employment history; employment opportunities; migration patterns based on employment (voluntary or involuntary); support and resources shared with extended family members
Family health care	Access to health care; service utilization
Cultural considerations	Institutional racial–ethnic discrimination; historical patterns of migration in regional area
Transactional relations and processes	
Socialization agents during childhood and adolescence	Parents; siblings; extended family; mentors
Interactions with parents and siblings	Parent–child interactional processes; siblings interactional processes; quality of parents' mental and physical health
Interaction outside of family	Peers/schoolmates; teachers; coaches; authority figures including religious leaders, police, community leaders; parent–teacher interactions
Role of youth in family	Youth as caregiver to siblings or other family members
Cultural considerations	Parent–child racial–ethnic socialization; parent–child emotion socialization; youth and parents' cultural attitudes and beliefs; youth as cultural broker and interpreter for siblings and parents; racial–ethnic and cultural expectations of normative development
Individual developmental outcomes	
Self-concept and self-schema	Individualistic vs. collective; racial identity; ethnic identity
Emotion and motivation	Self-regulation and control; social–emotional development
Personality	Psychological mastery; problem-solving skills; locus of control
Physical health	Physical health status; cognitive development; risky behaviors
Mental health	Psychological well-being; cultural adaptation
Educational outcomes	Academic motivation, achievement, and attainment

stronger theoretical foundation seems particularly acute for investigations of complex interactions involving context and development. . . . we need to have a theory of context that predicts the ways development is influenced by contextual factor." (p. 1138). A relevant and comprehensive theoretical framework also needs to acknowledge the ongoing changes of the contextual factors themselves, such as the changing demographics and rural economy discussed previously. The following sections focus on the individual characteristics, family processes, and other social and community contexts relevant to understanding the complex processes influencing REM youth development.

Social and Economic Contexts

One theoretical framework frequently used in research on REM youth is the ecological approach to studying development (e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Marks et al., 2014). Consistent with Quintana et al. (2006), we believe that understanding REM development requires identifying and examining the transactional nature of associations between context and development over time. Toward that end, we propose that the interconnectedness of individuals proposed by ecological systems theory could be complemented by incorporating theoretical linkages between economic factors, family relations, and youth outcomes presented in the Family Stress Model (FSM) (Conger et al., 2012; Conger & Conger, 2002). Specifically, the FSM has identified economic hardship (e.g., can't make ends meet, work instability) and low income as salient markers of stress that impact marital, sibling, and parent–child relationships, which, in turn, affect the health and well-being of youth and their families.

In addition to the FSM, we utilize ideas from family systems (Cox & Paley, 1997), social stratification (see García Coll et al., 1996), cumulative stress (Vernon-Feagans & Cox, 2013), stage–environment fit (Eccles et al., 1993), and transactional systems theory (Sameroff & MacKenzie, 2003). In addition, we draw from the interactionist model (Conger & Donnellan, 2007) which incorporates the dynamic relationship between social causation (the role of environmental conditions in predicting parental behaviors and child outcomes) *and* social selection (the notion that individual characteristics affect both parental behaviors *and* youth outcomes) as explanations for developmental processes and outcomes over time. Also included are the midrange theories designed to study specific aspects of the REM experience such as biculturalism (e.g., LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Whitesell, Mitchell, Kaufman, Spicer, & The Voices of Indian Teens Project, 2006), racial–ethnic identity (e.g., Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Quintana et al., 2006), and acculturation and adaptation (e.g., Berry, 2003). Taken together, these theoretical approaches provide a framework for a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural processes that link these youth and families to one another and to their economic and social contexts.

Poverty and Economic Hardship

Socioeconomic status (SES), economic stress, and poverty are important factors to consider in research on families living in rural regions of America (Conger, 2011). In general, rural children are more likely to live in poverty than their urban counterparts, and this is especially true for REM rural youth (e.g., Bauer et al., 2012; Conger et al., 2002; Duncan, 1999; Lee, 2011; Walker & Reschke, 2004). The use of large-scale surveys and aggregate data is very useful in quantifying the nature and scale of the socioeconomic problems faced by many rural families. However, the experience of poverty by children and their families is complex and multidimensional. A special issue of Children and Society (Crivello, Camfield, & Porter, 2010) focused on "the daily lives of individual children experiencing economic and other forms of disadvantage, within the context of resource-poor families, communities and countries…" (p. 256). Perspectives from multiple social science disciplines including sociology, human development, psychology, and economics all contribute to the understanding of the social–emotional, physical, and psychological consequences of living with poverty and help us better identify possible causal linkages and points of intervention for researchers, program providers, and policy makers (e.g., Conger et al., 2012; Spicer & Sarche, 2012; Vernon-Feagans, Garrett-Peters, Marco, & Bratsch-Hines, 2012).

Indeed, the literature consistently finds that living in poverty and economic hardship can have immediate as well as long-term effects on the individual health and well-being of children and adults (e.g., Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Conger et al., 2012; Donnellan, Conger, McAdams, & Neppl, 2009; Maholmes, 2012). For example, there is evidence that poverty or economic disadvantage can disrupt parent–child interactions and family relationships, which, in turn, impact both child and adult development (e.g., Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010; Gershoff, Aber, Raver, & Lennon, 2007; Martin et al., 2010; McLoyd, 1990). Moreover, findings from research on child and adolescent mental and physical health demonstrate clear connections between (1) poverty and mental health (e.g., Ackerman, Brown, & Izard, 2004; Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2001; McLeod & Shanahan, 1996), (2) SES and cognitive development (e.g., Ackerman et al., 2004; Burnett & Farkas, 2009, Hoff, 2003), and (3) social class position and physical health and well-being (e.g., Evans & English, 2002; Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002; Repetti, Taylor, & Seeman, 2002).

While it is important to consider the SES of a family on its own and in comparison to other REM groups, to fully understand the impact of income and social status, SES must also be considered relative to where a family resides within the social structure of a community and within a region of the country. For example, youth growing up in a rural region that is declining will have fewer opportunities than youth living in a region that is resource rich and growing (see Hamilton et al., 2008). Furthermore, residential and social class locations (i.e., social address) may be experienced quite differently by members of different racial–ethnic groups; therefore the social address of REM youth must be carefully defined and validated.

For example, Whitesell et al. (2006) make the case that measures of income and education used in most studies to establish a family's social and/or economic standing may not be a useful measure when evaluating the standing of American Indian families: "We did not include traditional measures of SES in this study; these measures have a somewhat different meaning in the reservation context and generally demonstrate little variance" (p. 1490). In addition, Spicer and Sarche (2012) discuss the disparate distribution of revenues from gaming, which has largely impacted only a few tribes; "the majority of tribes do not benefit in significant ways from these opportunities" (p. 481). Furthermore, researchers need to keep in mind whether a rural area is growing or declining, as this typically affects adult employment opportunities that, in turn, influence parents' abilities to pay for fees, equipment, and transportation necessary for youth to engage in school and community activities; a hidden opportunity cost of poverty (Conger et al., 2012; Lichter & Graefe, 2011).

Contextual factors also include a consideration of work opportunities, housing discrimination, and spatial history (i.e., residential patterns) which vary widely across regions of the country such as the Black Belt in the South, mining towns in Appalachia, Latino farmworkers in the Midwest and West, and tribal reservations for American Indians (e.g., Harris & Worthen, 2003; Saenz & Torres, 2003; Spicer & Sarche, 2012). The disciplines of Ethnic Minority Studies and US History provide strong evidence that researchers need to consider both historical context and contemporary trends in work, housing, and residential patterns to understand the experiences and consequences of particular REM groups in different parts of the country (e.g., see Brown & Swanson, 2003 ; Hart et al., 2005; Lichter & Graefe, 2011; Parke, 2013). For instance, the timing of arrival of a particular racial–ethnic minority group in the United States, and the specific region of the country where they settle, may alter the experiences of adults and their children. One specific example is the varied experiences of Vietnamese immigrants who came to the United States at two distinct historical periods. The first wave were considered Vietnamese "elites" who were welcomed and resettled in the United States in the 1970s after the Vietnam war; the second wave were characterized as "boat people" who were disenfranchised economic and political refugees looking for opportunities in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Kibria, 2002). A similar story can be told by Cubans coming to America in the twentieth century. Although Cubans have resided in the United States since the early 1800s, immigration patterns altered significantly in the 1960s. The first wave of post-revolution Cuban immigrants were more likely to be well educated, mostly white elites who were viewed as political refugees fleeing Communism. However, later waves of immigrants—especially those of the 1980s Mariel boatlift—who were less well educated, less skilled, and often darker skinned, came for economic reasons and were not automatically granted refugee status (Perez, 2002). Thus, information about family migration histories can help explain both residential patterns in and current economic conditions of REM youth and their families (Kibria, 2002; Min, 2002; Smokowski, Evans, Cotter, & Guo, 2014). Investigating the history of residential and economic discrimination in rural areas is, in many ways, subject to the methodological challenges raised by Duncan and Raudenbush (2001) regarding the

linkages between urban neighborhoods and adolescent development. In particular, they highlight the challenge of obtaining "neighborhood-level measures" and of allowing for concurrent and reciprocal influences between youth and their contexts. In the case of studying REM families, the methodological and conceptual challenges are even more complex, as neighborhoods, towns, and entire regions need to be considered.

Transactional Relations and Processes

In their review of the evolving bioecological model of human development, Rosa and Tudge (2013) explicitly remind researchers to look at proximal family processes as central to understanding the mutual influences between the developing individual and his or her environments over time. These mutual influences are used by Marks et al. (2014) to structure their integrative model of developmental competencies of immigrant youth. Of particular note is their focus on the resilience and competencies of immigrant youth, as opposed to the more typical focus on deficits and risky behaviors. The authors identify three key competencies that should be included in studies of REM youth in rural (and urban) settings including the following: (1) biculturalism and the positive aspects of learning to operate across two cultures and adopting the positive characteristics of each one (see Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; LaFromboise et al., 1993), (2) developing a healthy ethnic identity and not accepting the negative attributes of your REM group assigned by the larger "majority" culture and media (e.g., Cheung & Sin-Sze, 2012; Taylor, 2002; Yip, Seaton, & Sellers, 2006), and (3) bilingualism which represents the challenges as well as positive aspects of learning to operate in two languages in the United States (e.g., Iddings & Katz, 2007; Kempert, Saalbach, & Hardy, 2011). Similarly, from sociology and family studies come concepts such as familism, communalism, filial piety, and school belongingness which should be considered in order to gain an understanding of connections or social bonds between individuals, families, schools, and communities (e.g., Fuligni et al., 2005; Hernandez et al., in press; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Schwartz et al., 2010). Also important to include is socialization by parents, siblings, and other agents regarding family obligations and cultural attitudes (e.g., Cole, Tamang, & Shrestha, 2006; Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallaom, 2008). Another factor to consider is racial–ethnic socialization by parents of minority youth regarding salient issues, such as racial discrimination, which may be particularly salient for Latino and African American youth (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006; Schwartz, 2007; Yip et al., 2006).

Researchers will also want to include the normative biological, cognitive, and social developmental milestones and transitions of children and adolescents such as becoming a sibling, entering school, attaining puberty, and transitioning from middle childhood to adolescence and, eventually, to adulthood (Steinberg, 2013). In addition, studies need to include individual characteristics such as personality (e.g., Donnellan et al., 2009; Huntsinger & Jose, 2006), identity development

(e.g., Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997), and, specifically, ethnic identity as well as individual and collective self-concept (e.g., Fuligni et al., 2005; Whitesell et al., 2006) which interacts in a reciprocal fashion with family processes and, more broadly, with community and political institutions during the course of development (Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000; Schulenberg, Maggs, & Hurrelman, 1997). Researchers also will want to include parenting as a central proximal process in the model. One challenge will be to obtain culturally informed assessments of parenting styles and behaviors that allow for comparisons across studies while taking into account unique elements of parenting within and between REM groups (e.g., Chao, 2001; Crockett, Veed, & Russell, 2010; Lansford, 2012; Parke et al., 2005). Furthermore, researchers will want to take relationships with siblings and extended family members into account when designing studies of REM youth (see Kramer & Conger, 2009).

Addressing the Challenges

Given the breadth of these challenges, it is not surprising that most researchers have focused on a finite set of factors and characteristics and have limited the number of ethnic minority groups being compared when designing and conducting studies. Indeed, a full review of all relevant studies and concepts is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, in order to facilitate future research directions, it may be useful to think about concepts held in common across theoretical perspectives, as well as across REM groups, such as those presented in Table 2.1. In other words, we need to construct a set of shared concepts that can be used by all researchers interested in REM youth development across time and context. For example, racial–ethnic identity is a central concept that has been used by psychologists, educators, sociologists, and ethnic studies scientists in numerous investigations and has been shown to be relevant to academic motivation and achievement, self-concept, and occupational pathways (e.g., Fuligni, 1997; Fuligni et al., 2005; Fuller & García Coll, 2010; Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backen, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006; Oyserman, Kemmelmeier, Fryberg, Brosh, & Hart-Johnson, 2003; Tseng, 2006). Incorporating shared concepts, such as racial–ethnic identity, in addition to unique, study-specific concepts such as the effect of tribal gaming on American Indian youth, would greatly facilitate future research comparability and enhance the strength of findings that could be relevant for future programs and policies (e.g., Brody, Kogan, & Grange, 2012; Granger, Tseng, & Wilcox, 2014; Tienda & Haskins, 2011).

Furthermore, the typical intergroup comparisons found in many studies would be enhanced by understanding more about the within-group variability of each racial–ethnic group. Intragroup variability deserves both acknowledgment and increased research attention; there has been a significant "disregard for the diversity inherent in some of the minority group categories in use" (García Coll et al., 1996, p. 1892). One example of this is the "immigrant paradox" which has recently received increased research attention and furthered our understanding of why more recent

immigrants may (or may not) look better educationally and psychologically, compared to more established, more acculturated immigrant youth, despite the higher likelihood of living in poverty and poor conditions (see discussions by Fuller & García Coll, 2010; García Coll & Marks, 2012; Marks et al., 2014; Parke, 2013). Fuller and García Coll (2010) find that this paradox is more "nuanced" than previously thought and provide a clear illustration of why more research is needed regarding what is happening within REM immigrant groups, as well as how racial–ethnic immigrants are functioning relative to other groups such as the "majority" Caucasian group typically used for comparison. This may be particularly salient in some rural regions of the country as the ratio of ethnic minority families to white majority families begins to change, such as areas in the Midwest which have experienced a recent influx of Mexican origin workers in the agri-food processing industry (Brown & Schafft, 2011; Saenz & Torres, 2003). Indeed, it also would be wise to gain a better understanding of within-group variability among the white rural/nonmetro population, given the wide range of socioeconomic status conditions, cultural heritages, family backgrounds, and contexts in which both majority and minority groups now live (see Lee, 2011; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012).

Conclusion and Future Directions

Our review of theories and concepts has highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities that researchers and policy makers have in developing a coherent framework for conducting research regarding racially/ethnically diverse youth in today's society. However, this complexity should not deter social scientists from conducting studies and developing theory that will contribute to our understanding of REM youth and families in rural America. To recap the central issues, we feel that in order to facilitate comparisons not only across studies but among and within racial–ethnic minority groups living in the United States today, research in this area will benefit from general agreement on certain operational definitions and on some common characteristics and factors that impact REM youth's lives. This is particularly important, as illustrated in the many conceptual challenges presented in the other chapters in this volume. Furthermore, researchers need to acknowledge the sociodemographic diversity in rural settings (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2008; Hart et al., 2005) and come to some agreement on how to incorporate this variability in meaningful ways (e.g., as a predictor and moderator of social processes and developmental outcomes), not simply as a control. Just as researchers try to account for neighborhood effects on children and families in diverse urban/metropolitan settings (e.g., DeCarlo Santiago, Wadsworth, & Stump, 2011; Duncan & Raudenbush, 2001; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2002; Sastry, 2012), researchers interested in understanding the effects of rural settings on REM youth need to take the variability of rural contexts into account (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2008; Hart et al., 2005; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2012).

One important concept shared by REM youth across the United States is related to the importance of family or tribe. Throughout our brief overview of the "major" minority groups in the United States, the role of family/tribe/community is central to the socialization and experiences of these REM youth (see Schwartz et al., 2010). This is one concept that needs to be included when studying any group, no matter how small the group or remote the location. Do these youth have family members to turn to? Did they migrate with family or come alone? Do they come to a community where there is already a core group of people from their racial–ethnic group? Timing of their family's arrival to the region also impacts their experiences and the reception they receive in rural communities. Researchers need to include questions that obtain information regarding historical and contemporary residence patterns of racial–ethnic minority groups in the rural areas of interest. For example, were ethnic minorities always present in a particular rural area, suggesting established patterns of cross-ethnic interaction, or do recent arrivals of REM youth, and their families, happen to coincide with a worsening economy for long-term residents? The changing racial–ethnic composition of rural communities may spark resentment among long-term residents, leading to sentiments such as fear of being taken over, losing one's place in a community, or no longer feeling "at home" in their home town. And if college-educated white youth move out—a.k.a. the brain drain discussed by Carr and Kefalas (2009)—just as ethnic minority youth are moving in, how does that reshape race relations, and even age relations (e.g., older white folk being cared for by younger brown folk)? Furthermore, this shift may present language challenges not only for immigrant families learning English but for long-term residents who must adjust to hearing Spanish, Russian, Cantonese, Portuguese, and other non-English languages spoken on the streets and in the markets of a community that used to be English-language only. As researchers strive to understand the experiences of REM youth in rural settings, they also will want to be mindful of the attitudinal and behavioral impact of increasing racial and ethnic diversity on residents of rural communities that were once racially homogeneous (Andreeva & Unger, 2014).

In addition to the racial and cultural conditions of rural areas, economic conditions are an important consideration for many racial–ethnic minority parents as they look to find stable employment and develop some degree of financial security for their families. For example, an amenity-rich rural setting such as those that currently attract retirees might also be attractive to parents as a stable place to raise children. Alternatively, low-SES families may have little means to leave a rural place where there is economic hardship and declining job opportunities such as in many of the small farming communities in the Southeast and coal-mining towns in Appalachia. Research findings are unequivocal in that poverty and economic hardship can have negative consequences for individuals and families (e.g., Maholmes, 2012). Thus, it is important to understand what factors influence the transmission of hardship or success from one generation to the next and how those factors relate to social position and life course development in various types of rural communities (e.g., Conger et al., 2012; Gonzales et al., 2008). These processes may be particularly important to include in studies of REM youth, who tend to experience higher rates of poverty

and barriers to upward social mobility. Researchers, practitioners, and policy makers alike would benefit from a more complete understanding of the individual and social factors that may enable individuals to improve their economic status, and thus their life chances, compared to previous generations in their family. These factors all play a role in predicting the experiences and the consequences of being REM youth living in rural America today.

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Chapter 3
Latinos in Rural, New Immigrant Destinations: A Modification of the Integrative Model of Child Development

Gabriela L. Stein, Roberto G. Gonzales, Cynthia García Coll, and Juan I. Prandoni

The big news of the National Census of 2010 has been the demographic growth of Latinos in the United States, and much of it has occurred in nonmetropolitan areas (US Census, 2010). In fact, since 1990, a significant number of Latino families have settled in what are termed "new destination areas" or "emerging immigrant communities" (Alba et al., 2010). These communities, 90 % of which are in the South or Midwest, saw a large influx of Latino immigrants that shifted the local landscapes, impacting schools, race relations, community services, and work environments (Lichter, Parisi, Taquino, & Grice, 2010). Strikingly, one-third of recent Mexican immigrants have settled outside of traditional gateway states, and more than one in every five lives in rural towns (Lichter et al., 2010; Singer, 2004). While the experiences of Latino adults in these rural, emerging immigrant communities have been documented (e.g., Marrow, 2011; Millard, Chapa, & Burillo, 2004), few scholars have considered the intersection of minority status, rurality, and emerging immigrant destinations in terms of its implications for the development of Latino children. Given the need for a specific theoretical model to guide this research, this chapter will tackle the intersection of Latino ethnicity and rural location through a revision of the Integrative Model (Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

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Integrative Model of Ethnic Minority Child Development

In 1996, a multidisciplinary team of authors developed a conceptual model for the study of child development, integrating the essential factors necessary for understanding positive development in ethnic minority populations (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). The model posited the central salience of social positional factors (e.g., race, social class, ethnicity) that indirectly influence the developmental pathways of children of color through experiences of racism and oppression that lead to segregated contexts creating both promoting and inhibiting environments. In response to these experiences, adaptive cultural resources are utilized by youth, their families, and communities to directly influence developmental outcomes in youth. The adaptive cultural resources then also interact with individual and familial factors to predict developmental outcomes. At the time, the model was informed by the available research on ethnic minority youth and their families, much of which had been conducted in urban settings. Although the model likely operates similarly for Latino youth in rural, emerging immigrant communities, we posit key modifications to this model that are necessary to best characterize the contextual factors that impact developmental outcomes for Latino youth in this specific context (see Fig. 3.1). The chapter will consider each aspect of the Integrative Model as it relates to the experiences of rural Latino families in emerging immigrant communities,
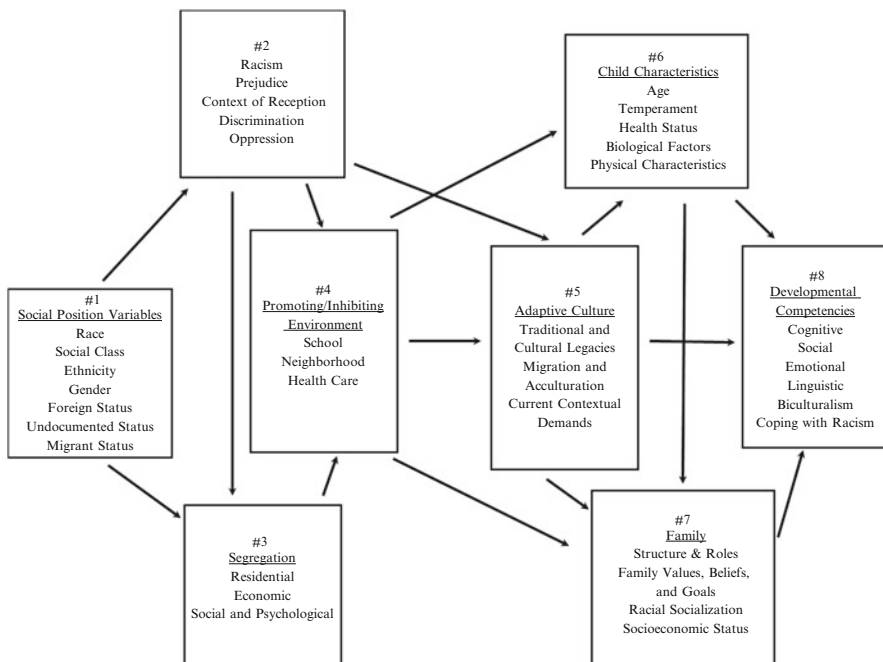

Fig. 3.1 Modified integrative model of ethnic minority child development in rural contexts

emphasizing new theoretical considerations. Due to space limitations, we will not extensively define key terms but instead point the reader to the original paper.

While the focus of our chapter is on rural, new destination Latino communities, it is important to note how these likely differ from rural communities in established Latino areas. The established areas are mostly located in the Southwest and in particular along the US–Mexico border. Those communities tend to be high-minority (mostly Latino) and high-poverty and have the benefit of multiple generations of Latinos that have lived in the area for centuries. Many of the factors noted in our discussion and modified model for new emerging communities will also apply in established contexts (e.g., nativity status, undocumented status), but social position variables and segregation will likely operate differently in established communities given the surrounding context.

Social Positional Factors

A key tenet of the Integrative Model is the pervasive, profound effects of social position variables in determining the daily experiences of youth of color, thereby indirectly impacting developmental outcomes. Social position is a byproduct of social stratification, whereby societies sort individuals into a hierarchy of groups with differential relative worth, utility, and importance. These social positions impact development not only through the effects of segregation, access to social capital, and limitations on social mobility but also through propagation of a hierarchical belief system about the relative value of self and others based on one's position (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). The original model considered the effects of race, social class, ethnicity, and gender as social position variables, and we will address both race and social class specific to rural Latinos; we also propose three new social position variables that are highly relevant for Latinos in rural contexts: foreigner status, undocumented status, and migrant farmworker status.

Race While the concept of race holds no scientific merit, race functions as a social stratification variable in current US society. For Latinos, racial categorization has a complicated history: Latinos were once considered their own racial group (Rodriguez, 2000), but now, according to the US Census, "Latino" is conceptualized as an ethnicity, and Latinos can endorse any racial category. Since the instantiation of this system, it has become clear that a substantial number of Latinos consider themselves as distinct from either white or black. In the 2010 Census, 36.8 % of Latinos categorized themselves as "Some Other Race," making this category the third largest racial grouping in the United States (US Census, 2010). The majority of Latinos (53.0 %) classified themselves as "White," and only 2.5 % classified themselves as "Black." While this data is at a national level, it illustrates the difficulty in understanding where Latinos fit in terms of racial categories in the United States, a difficulty that is particularly salient in rural communities that have been socialized to define race across black–white lines or have limited contact with other

racial groups (e.g., Marrow, 2011; Millard, Chapa, & McConnell, 2004). In fact, in the New Immigrant Survey, Latino immigrants living in the South compared to those in the Southwest demonstrated differential endorsement of racial categories, illustrating the impact of regional context on racial self-categorization (Frank, Akresh, & Lu, 2010).

The process of racial categorization, in terms of both self-identity and racial categories ascribed by others in these rural communities, has important implications for developmental outcomes, as racial categories are associated with privilege. Underscoring the social stratification inherent in the classification of race, Latinos who select "White" as their race compared to "Some Other Race" tend to have higher levels of education, are more likely to be employed, have lower levels of poverty, and tend to earn more (Tafoya, 2007). Indeed, Latinos who view themselves as having more in common with whites tend to identify themselves as "White," while Latinos who view themselves as having more common experiences with blacks tend to view themselves as "Some Other Race" (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009; Stokes-Brown, 2012), perhaps because being black is stigmatized.

Racial self-categorization is also impacted by phenotype, especially skin color. Darker skinned Latinos are less likely to identify as "White" and more likely to identify as "Some Other Race" (Frank et al., 2010; Stokes-Brown, 2012). Skin tone impacts education, economic opportunities, and social mobility for Latinos. In a recent analysis of the New Immigrant Study, for newly legalized Mexican immigrants across the United States, skin color predicted economic outcomes, including home ownership and occupational status (Dávila, Mora, & Stockly, 2011). However, this association may be due in part to the privilege associated with lighter skin tone in Latin American countries, which leads these individuals to have greater social and human capital to aid in their adaptation to the United States and facilitate social mobility. Thus, unpacking the effects of race for Latinos in the United States will have to be considered in light of experiences in the countries of origin. For example, the Mexican narrative of "mestizaje" (mixed racial heritage) may play a role in the lack of a salient racial identity for Mexican immigrants (Flores & Telles, 2012).

Racial self-categorization is complex for Latinos in rural, emerging communities, as it is influenced by the historical context of both the United States and Latin America, the racial makeup of the community in question, phenotype, and socioeconomic factors. How Latinos are viewed by the communities in question, as well as how they view themselves in racial terms, will influence their experiences of discrimination, race relations, social mobility, school integration, and a host of other variables that play critical roles in development (e.g., Lippard & Gallagher, 2011; Marrow, 2011); thus, developmental scientists need to more carefully consider both how Latinos understand themselves racially as well as how they are viewed by members of these rural communities.

Social Class Given the higher levels of poverty and disadvantage experienced in rural communities (Lichter & Johnson, 2007), the role of social class in the lives of Latino youth in rural, emerging immigrant communities is particularly important to understand. Nationally, the poverty rate among rural Latinos is 27.6 %

(Housing Assistance Council, 2012). The majority of work examining rurality in child development has indeed focused on the role of poverty and economic disadvantage, but few studies have included Latino youth.

The role of social class for Latinos in these rural, emerging immigrant communities is also complex. Some initial studies suggested that Latino immigrants in these communities were actually afforded somewhat better economic opportunities than Latinos in other areas (e.g., the Southwest; traditional destinations) due to increased job security and lower of living (Crowley, Lichter, & Qian, 2006). In rural communities across the nation, employment in low-skill, low-wage jobs (e.g., meat processing, textiles, manufacturing) provided Latinos with an opportunity to provide economic stability to their families, as evidenced by higher rates of home ownership compared to Latinos in metropolitan areas (Capps, Koball, & Kandel, 2010; Crowley et al., 2006). However, one recent study did find more poverty for immigrant Latinos in new destination, rural areas compared to metropolitan areas (Kandel, Henderson, Koball, & Capps, 2011). Thus, the protective effect of these communities has not been clearly established, particularly in new immigrant communities.

The effect of poverty on Latino immigrants in these rural, emerging communities may be mitigated by Latino immigrants' cognitive frame. First, given the relatively high level of poverty in these rural areas, Latinos in these settings may experience a smaller discrepancy between their social position and that of other residents, leading to less perceived disadvantage (Marrow, 2011). Second, Latino immigrants may be protected from economic stress due to their dual frame of reference, which allows them to view their current economic status in the United States as a vast improvement compared to their poverty level in their country of origin (Marrow, 2011).

Despite these apparent buffers against economic stress, social class remains a barrier for Latinos in these communities. Often the jobs available to Latinos are those of the lowest status, which have been rejected by native-born groups and provide little opportunity for upward social mobility and integration into the larger rural community (Lichter, 2012). Moreover, risk may be differentially experienced by parents and their children. Parents, armed with immigrant optimism and a dual frame of reference, may feel content with their economic integration into these communities, but their children may not benefit equally. Little is known about the social mobility of these rural Latino youth, but qualitative work suggests that they desire jobs of higher status than their parents have and hold high educational and occupational aspirations (Gonzalez, Stein, Shannonhouse, & Prinstein, 2012), a difference that is also found in urban immigrant communities (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). Unfortunately, these same youth do not possess the requisite knowledge of how to access higher education to achieve their aspirations, making the actualization of these goals less likely and placing them at risk for negative mental health outcomes (Gonzalez et al., 2012; Gonzales, Súarez-Orozco, & Dedios, 2013).

Another risk associated with social class for Latinos comes from the interracial tensions that are associated with an influx of new workers who are perceived as threatening the economic landscape of these rural communities (Crowley & Lichter, 2009). Immigrant Latinos are perceived to be "taking jobs" from native-born US

Americans, and these perceptions can fuel negative racial interactions. Local rural populations may be more tolerant of Latino immigrants as long as they occupy lower status positions in their communities, but as Latinos integrate and show more upward mobility, there may be less tolerance of Latinos who are perceived as foreign and as a threat to traditional "American" life (Lichter, 2012).

Foreigner Status Rural towns have been characterized as "middle America," symbolizing the essence of US American culture (Millard, Chapa, & Burillo, 2004). As such, most of these rural contexts outside of the Southwest had limited contact with foreign-born populations prior to 1990, and the large influx of immigrants was primarily understood by the receiving communities as an influx of foreigners regardless of other social positional variables (e.g., race, social status) (Marrow, 2011; Millard, Chapa, & Burillo, 2004). Foreign-born status, with its accompanying limited English proficiency and lack of knowledge of the US system, serves as an important social position variable in these environments where local people have lived for multiple generations and whose very identity is tied to these locations (Lacy & Odem, 2009). The strong sense of community among people in these rural settings makes it hard for even a native-born outsider to integrate into the community, and this barrier is only more salient for those who are foreign-born. Moreover, the fear of the loss of English and the use of Spanish serves as a salient perceived threat to the local "American" way of life, which further distances foreign- and native-born populations (Lacy & Odem, 2009).

Thus, race, social status, and foreigner status all interact to create a potent social positional variable in these rural, emerging communities. Future developmental research should carefully consider the relative and joint impact of these three factors, but given that there is less variability in nativity status and social class among Latinos in emerging immigrant communities (Winders, 2009), it will be difficult to discern how they differentially predict child outcomes. Researchers should consider their findings regarding nativity in these communities in conjunction with other social position factors, especially when children may be native-born with foreign-born parents.

Migrant/Farmworker Status According to the National Center for Farmworker Health, in 2012, there were more than three million migrant and seasonal workers in the United States (62 % Mexican origin). A large portion of these farmworkers (42 %) were classified as migrants, traveling 75 miles within the previous year to obtain seasonal farmwork (Delgado, 2013). Although migrant Latinos continue to be prevalent in rural communities, it is important to note that an increase in other types of employment (e.g., manufacturing) have also pushed Latinos to settle in these communities (Lichter, 2012).

The life of a Latino migrant farmworker is often filled with uncertainty surrounding job security and living arrangements, exposure to life-threatening working conditions and pesticides, and contact with a system that systematically disenfranchises Latino families to create a state of simultaneous dependency and exploitation (Salazar, Napolitano, Scherer, & McCauley, 2004). Latino migrant youth and their families experience limited upward mobility due to low pay, language barriers,

segregation, and institutional exploitation of their weakened social position as either foreign-born or undocumented immigrants (Magaña & Hovey, 2003). Some of the most disadvantaged migrant families live in segregated farmworker camps and trailer sites isolated from the broader community. Many also suffer work-related health problems with little to no legal access to health care. According to a non-profit organization for migrant farmworkers (Migrant Health Promotion Salud, 2014), agriculture is one of the most accident-prone industries in the country, and farmworkers tend to have more frequent health problems than the general public. In many families, the combination of low wages, family need, and a lack of day-care options compels parents to send their children to work in the fields at young ages. Migrant Latino youth working in the fields also face the challenge of performing farmwork typically assigned to adults, and they do so equipped with inadequate training and equipment (Parra-Cardona, Bulock, Imig, Villarruel, & Gold, 2006). Lack of social empowerment leads Latino youth to be reluctant to demand that their employers uphold proper work standards: youths know they could easily be fired and replaced, or they may fear threats of deportation for either themselves or their families (Salazar et al., 2004).

Undocumented Status Mexican migrants have been working in the US agricultural industry for several decades (González, 1994; Gamboa, 1990). However, growing efforts to fortify the US–Mexico border have made border crossings much more difficult, costly, and dangerous. These efforts to restrict entry have had the unintended consequence of transforming circular migratory flows into permanent US settlement and dispersing migrants and their families across the country (Massey, Durand, & Molone, 2002). During the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, increasing numbers of undocumented migrants created permanent homes in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Seeking jobs and lower costs of living, many settled in rural new destination areas (Light, 2006).

As the pool of undocumented children has grown, so has the public attention to their plight. An emerging body of research has brought attention to their untenable circumstances and promoted an understanding of how undocumented status intervenes in their coming-of-age trajectories (e.g., Abrego, 2006; Gonzales, 2010; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). This research has provided important insight into the ways in which the narrowing of legal options flattens future aspirations and expectations among youth (Abrego, 2006; Gonzales, 2011; Súarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). While this research on undocumented young people has shed important light on their largely urban experiences, a substantial portion of these young people is growing up in nonmetropolitan areas that lack adequate resources to support educational pursuits (Gonzales & Ruiz, 2014). Studying the experiences of undocumented youth in rural settings provides an important lens for understanding how immigration status is mediated by place. Current research points to three acute and overlapping disadvantages: early exposure to the legal limitations of unauthorized life, limited opportunities for educational assistance, and poor community infrastructure (Gonzales & Ruiz, 2014).

Previous studies of undocumented youth have found that the most significant barriers to pursuing higher education are cost and legal restrictions on financial aid and work (Conger & Chellman, 2013; Flores, 2010). However, the elements of rural environments provide additional disadvantages. Apart from the associated health risks with agricultural work discussed above, because many rural young people enter into agricultural work at early ages, they much earlier confront the constraints related to their own immigration status. Due to large-scale, visible immigration raids in the fields and factories, the risk of deportation has lasting and traumatic effects. The interplay between early awareness of legal limitations and heightened perceptions of danger of deportation fuels ongoing fear and insecurity which keep undocumented young people from envisioning themselves as part of the larger community with access to critical health, education, and employment resources.

Social Stratification Mechanisms

The social position variables outlined above impact child development through various mechanisms that were suggested in the original Integrative Model: racism, discrimination, prejudice, and oppression. We argue that the context of reception for rural immigrants is another mechanism that needs to be considered.

Racism In the original model, racism was the main mechanism of social stratification based solely on racialized constructions and the enactment of an ideology that posits the superiority of certain races (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Given the above discussion of the difficulties in the racial classification of Latinos, how racism operates in these contexts for Latinos is also complicated.

The racialized experiences of Latinos in rural, emerging communities are largely dependent on the racial composition of the community and how Latinos align themselves and are aligned by others in terms of race relations (e.g., Marrow, 2011; Winders, 2009). For example, in a rural sample in North Carolina, immigrant Latinos reported more positive racial relations in majority-white communities compared with communities that had more substantial black populations (Marrow, 2011). Black communities have tended to respond more negatively to the influx of a work force that is perceived as competitive and threatening to their economic livelihood and as not contributing to their community (i.e., not paying taxes) (Marrow, 2011; Torres, Popke, & Hapke, 2006). This tension is further fueled by white employers and landlords who are viewed as favoring Latinos over blacks (Torres et al., 2006). Additionally, many Latino immigrants distanced themselves culturally from African Americans who were viewed as more different from Latinos than white Americans were (McClain et al., 2006). Although the racial tensions between blacks and Latino immigrants may be apparent, it is important to acknowledge the long legacy of institutional racism that sets up these two nonwhite communities to fight for limited resources (Jackson, 2011).

In contrast, in majority-white communities, the economic threat posed by Latinos was less salient overall, leading to ambivalent racial relations in which poor whites exhibited more negative reactions to Latinos compared to higher SES whites (Marrow, 2011). Thus, class structure appears to be an important determinant of the experience of race in emerging immigrant, rural communities in the South, one that is further complicated by the introduction of a new "racial" group that does not fit clearly into the existing racial categories.

How racism operates for Latinos in these rural communities may look very different than the history of racism against African Americans, particularly in the South where the social structure is only beginning to respond to the influx of Latinos. It may also be that race is not the most salient characteristic that serves to disadvantage Latinos in these contexts; rather, it is the intersection of race with other positional variables (e.g., foreigner status, documentation status) that leads Latinos to experience institutional and educational racism (Lacy & Odem, 2009). Nevertheless, as noted above, skin color does predict economic outcomes for Latinos suggesting that racial characteristics play a role in disadvantaging Latino families.

Prejudice and the Context of Reception Prejudice is defined as preconceived notions or judgments about a group based on social position variables (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). For Latinos in rural emerging communities, prejudice against them may be rooted in xenophobic attitudes that influence the context of reception. Current anti-immigrant attitudes were fueled by large waves of immigration during the economic boom and by the subsequent great recession, which was particularly salient in rural communities where Latino immigrants had started to become a significant portion of the population (Carr, Lichter, & Kefalas, 2012; Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011; Massey, 2008). Some in these communities feared that the immigrant population would bring crime, economic competition, and tax burdens and would resist integration by refusing to learn English or assimilate to "American" culture (Fennelly, 2008; Lacy & Odem, 2009). However, these beliefs were not widespread, and many whites and blacks in these communities reported positive attitudes toward new Latino immigrants due to beliefs about their economic contribution and their role in reviving rural communities (Griffith, 2008). Xenophobia is particularly problematic for undocumented Latinos as they are viewed as taking from the United States in terms of social services and not contributing to its infrastructure through taxes (Lacy & Odem, 2009).

Discrimination Given the discussion on race relations and xenophobia, it is not surprising that in sociological work Latino adult immigrants in new destination rural communities report experiences of discrimination (e.g., Dalla, Ellis, & Cramer, 2005; Marrow, 2011; Torres et al., 2006). These experiences are reported in all aspects of life, including workplace, housing, school, government offices, obtaining medical care, at restaurants/stores, and in the community (Dalla et al., 2005; Marrow, 2011; Torres et al., 2006). Importantly, Latinos in these communities attribute these discriminatory acts to the various social positional variables noted above: race/ethnicity, social class, immigrant status, and documentation status (Dalla et al., 2005; Torres et al., 2006). Discrimination has been found to have different effects

depending on nativity, type of receiving community, and generation (parent vs. child) which might reflect either actual differences in discrimination or differences in how the discrimination is interpreted. For example, a recent study examining foreigner-based discrimination among immigrant and second-generation college students suggests this may be the case (Armenta et al., 2013). This type of discrimination was associated with negative psychological outcomes only for second-generation youth and not for immigrant youth, indicating that immigrants may be better prepared for this type of discrimination perhaps because they feel it is expected as a foreigner. In a similar fashion, discrimination may differentially impact immigrant parents and their second-generation youth. Other work finds that Latino youth in rural emerging communities report more discrimination than those in established urban settings or urban emerging contexts (Potochnick et al., 2012). In one of our datasets in rural North Carolina, 80 % of Latino youth reported at least one act of peer discrimination, and this perception strongly predicted depressive symptoms, perceived barriers to college, and school belonging (Gonzales et al., 2013; Stein, Gonzalez, Cupito, Kiang, & Supple, 2013); however, mothers in this same sample reported much lower levels of discrimination. Thus, discrimination needs to be considered from both the parental and youth level in these contexts as these experiences may uniquely predict developmental outcomes.

Sociological research with adults in rural, emerging immigrant communities suggests that discrimination against Latinos comes from both white and black US Americans (e.g., Marrow, 2011). Other work suggests that nonimmigrant Latinos also discriminate against newly arrived or undocumented Latinos (Diaz et al., 2011). Consistent with this finding, in one of our pilot studies (Stein), Latino youth in a rural, emerging immigrant context reported being discriminated against equally by white, black, and Latino peers. It is unclear whether the psychological and educational impact of discrimination would differ depending on the race or nationality of the perpetrator. It is possible that discrimination by those in positions of power may be more threatening to social mobility (e.g., job discrimination), and discrimination from same ethnic peers may be more threatening to psychological well-being.

Oppression Due to Congressional gridlock, the inability to overhaul federal immigration policy has compelled states and municipalities to manufacture their own responses to what they perceive as immigration-related problems (Olivas, 2007). While some localities have provided opportunities for undocumented immigrants to apply for driver's licenses and to receive in-state tuition at public universities, others have attempted to criminalize unauthorized presence and to exclude undocumented immigrants from public universities. This "uneven geography" of enforcement and access demonstrates that where one resides within the United States dramatically shapes a multitude of experiences based on local impediments and opportunities (Coleman, 2012).

Over the past decade, the number of detentions and deportations in the United States has soared. There have been more removals between 2004 and 2014 than during the previous 110 years combined. Despite a stated policy of prioritizing criminals, the Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) has focused on meeting

annual deportation quotas by removing low-priority immigrants. These efforts have been achieved through the increased integration between immigration officials and local law enforcement. Swept up in these efforts were immigrants driving without licenses, making improper lane changes, or reporting crimes to the police, as well as those who were victims of theft and traffic accidents. While the fear of deportation is widespread among undocumented populations in metropolitan areas, high-profile immigration raids at rural meatpacking and poultry plants as well as enforcement efforts in large farming communities have elevated levels of fear among rural Latino populations.

Menjívar and Abrego (2012) argue that heightened immigration enforcement efforts inflict a "legal violence" upon individuals and families (see also Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). Through the cumulative effects of raids, apprehensions, detention, and deportation, this violence is manifested in poorer physical, economic, emotional, and psychological well-being among immigrants. It is not merely the actions themselves that affect immigrants but also the ongoing threat of such actions. These public policies are mobilized despite the fact that there is scientific evidence that pro-immigration policies are conducive to better educational outcomes for the children of immigrants, posing less cost to the state (Filindra, Blanding, & Garcia Coll, 2011).

Segregation

In the original theoretical model, segregation was theorized to mediate between social position variables and child outcomes because of its impact on the child's ongoing transactions with the environment (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Residential, economic, social, and psychological segregations are just as powerful in rural, emerging immigrant communities. The basic tenet is that these different types of segregation limit the access to critical developmental resources that affect all aspects of family life and therefore the children's life outcomes.

Residential Residential segregation is evident in rural communities throughout the United States, and this segregation is heightened in emerging immigrant communities (Lichter, 2012). In these communities, residential segregation is less dependent on economic factors than in established communities, where integration is more likely with increased income; instead, such segregation is more likely if there is a larger black population, more poverty, and more foreign-born residents (Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012). Thus, residential segregation is more likely when there is more "threat" to white culture because of a large minority or foreign population. Economic segregation also plays a role, as Latino residential segregation is more likely to occur in contexts with a higher percentage of low-wage jobs (Lichter et al., 2012). At the same time, Latino immigration is revitalizing rural communities by replacing the dwindling white native-born populations who are leaving economically deprived communities (Lichter, 2012), resulting in a community that will

eventually be majority minority. If this pattern continues, Latinos in new destinations will start to resemble Latinos in established rural communities that are high-poverty and high-minority and will be segregated from other ethnic groups. Residential segregation also leads interactions between Latinos and nonwhites to occur primarily in more formalized contexts (e.g., teacher–parent), thus limiting other types of interethnic contact, and this lack of contact may have important implications for psychological segregation (Lichter, 2012).

Economic As noted above, Latinos in emerging immigrant, rural communities experience economic segregation, as they are likely to be employed in lower social class jobs that further their isolation and limit their upward social mobility (Jensen, 2006; Pruitt, 2007). Latinos in these contexts are not likely to experience economic advancement (Jensen, 2006), suggesting that the prejudices about the type of work fit for Latinos impacts their opportunity for economic integration. Moreover, these prejudices get transmitted to their second-generation children in school contexts, as will be discussed below.

Social/Psychological Economic and residential segregation foster social and psychological segregation (sense of being marginalized; emotional distance between groups) which is further exacerbated by limited English proficiency, cultural differences, and experiences of discrimination (e.g., Marrow, 2011; Millard, Chapa, & McConnell, 2004). Latino children have fewer barriers to cross-ethnic contact and integration than their parents, as they have better English language skills, quickly learn mainstream US cultural norms, and attend schools with white and black youth. Nevertheless, due to experiences of discrimination and exposure to prejudice and racism, rural Latino youth may continue to experience psychological segregation even in racially integrated schools, and this may be especially the case for undocumented youth who have real barriers to integration.

Promoting/Inhibiting Environments

Social positional variables directly influence child outcomes when they become actualized in the contextual environments of children (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Inhibiting environments may undermine the development of Latino youth due to the lack of resources but also due to exposure to incongruent expectations, goals, and values between the social context and Latino families. Promoting environments have the resources to support development and are congruent with child and family expectations, goals, and values. We will focus on the contexts of school, neighborhood, and access to health care.

School Over the last three decades, the convergence of two trends has given scholars and policy makers cause for concern: as Latinos are becoming the nation's largest ethnic minority group and the fastest growing segment of its school-age population, their educational progress has flattened (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Latino children in rural areas face additional challenges. Compared to their urban counterparts, rural students are poorer, more geographically isolated, and less likely to have parents with college degrees (Graves, 2011). They are also more likely than urban youth to attend inadequate schools (Lichter & Johnson, 2007) and often lack access to advanced high school courses (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011). Rural minority youth often lack trust in the teachers in their lives. Research suggests that rural students from minority backgrounds perceive their teachers to be perpetrators of racial discrimination and unable to effectively teach to their needs (Hondo, Gardiner, & Sapien, 2008; Pizarro, 2005).

Particular challenges for migrant youth hinder their educational success. Because of limited educational attainment and social capital within migrant families, the absence of critical services, classes, and other resources leaves migrant children at a distinct disadvantage in securing the information and resources needed to finish high school and to make successful postsecondary transitions. In addition, multiple family moves lead children to constantly change schools; this disruption, coupled with the fact that schools are often overcrowded and lack appropriate language and relocation support systems, curbs children's ability to obtain a consistent education (Gibson & Bejinez, 2002). Migrant children are also expected to help their parents by working at early ages. These youth often report feeling too tired after working in the fields to be able to be successful in school (Salazar et al., 2004).

The research on undocumented immigrant students' educational experiences has drawn strong connections between school structure (i.e., mechanisms that facilitate access to school resources such as caring teachers, helpful counselors, and information about college) and educational success (Abrego, 2008; Gonzales, 2010). These findings support more general research on disadvantaged populations, suggesting that the presence of school or community-based mentors, supplemental educational programs, and positive support networks can effectively mitigate the negative effects of weak school structures (Portes & Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Smith, 2008; Zhou, 2008).

Neighborhood In these rural, new destination communities, segregated trailer parks and apartment complexes constitute the residential settings of Latinos (Marrow, 2011). While ethnic enclaves have been associated with some positive developmental outcomes in metropolitan communities (e.g., Kulis, Marsiglia, Sicotte, & Nieri, 2007), how these may function in rural, emerging immigrant communities remains to be tested. While it is likely that rural "ethnic enclaves" engender some of the same positive effects (e.g., social integration, sense of community), because residents tend to be immigrants with limited English proficiency and low levels of education, youth in these enclaves may experience additional risks (Pfeffer & Parra, 2009). For example, in one of our studies in a rural Southern community, a Latino adolescent male noted that while he wanted to grow up to be a psychologist, he was unsure of this aspiration as he had "never met a Hispanic doctor" and questioned their very existence. Thus, segregation in these communities in conjunction with the lack of a middle-class, professional Latino community may mitigate some of the positive effects of ethnic enclaves.

Health-Care Environment A myriad of individual and systemic factors serve as barriers to health care for Latinos in rural communities (Cristancho, Garces, Peters, & Mueller, 2008). While some of these factors are true for other ethnic minority groups in the rural settings (e.g., issues with transportation, issues with discrimination), the communication barrier due to limited English proficiency on the part of the patients and the lack of skilled interpreters or Spanish-speaking services on the part of the provider lead to one of the largest barriers to health care (Cristancho et al., 2008). This barrier is coupled with the systemic factors of limited insurance coverage, lack of eligibility for public health assistance, and the high costs of health care, resulting in lower health-care access in these communities.

Adaptive Culture

Adaptive culture promotes positive developmental outcomes in youth in the face of these social stratification mechanisms. Adaptive culture is conceptualized to be a result of the interaction of a group's collective history (cultural, political, and economic) and current contextual demands present in the surrounding environment; this interaction leads to cultural strategies to cope with these stressors (Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

Latinos in rural, emerging immigrant communities are currently developing strategies to adapt and survive in the United States. As noted in the original model (Garcia Coll et al., 1996), traditional and cultural legacies serve as a foundation for cultural adaptations and strategies. For Latinos in rural emerging immigrant settings, these adaptations likely emanate from their country of origin as they have limited knowledge of the strategies of other Latinos in the United States. For example, in many of these communities, Latinos hold traditional celebrations from their country of origin. Given that many of the residents in these communities are recent immigrants, the stronger ties to their country of origin provide a protective effect as the families are still steeped in cultural practices and have a dual frame of reference. However, because Latinos in these communities lack the same cultural resources located in established communities, they have to build the infrastructure to support community-wide events, yet building this infrastructure may also serve to foster community attachment and engagement. Economic and political histories as well as migration and acculturation patterns serve as another foundation for adaptive cultural strategies. For many Latino immigrants, the intersection of the economic and migration histories influences their current adaptation and integration into the community (Dalla et al., 2005). In addition, the political activities associated with the Dreamer movement are a good example of the adaptive cultural strategies enacted by these communities that are influenced by migration and political history.

Although past migration into rural communities tended to be due to seasonal farmwork resulting in temporary residence, many immigrants are now establishing themselves for the longer term by bringing their families (Jensen, 2006). Temporary workers who are primarily male and alone do not see themselves as building a life

in the United States, but many immigrants are now choosing to remain in emerging immigrant, rural communities particularly to provide their children better opportunities (Dalla et al., 2005). This belief then fuels the establishment of community networks and resources. However, many adult immigrants remain ambivalent about their integration into the United States, as noted by one participant who stated that "my heart remains in Mexico" (p. 179) (Dalla et al., 2005).

Child Characteristics

As noted in the original model, children are not passive recipients of their contextual experiences and social positional factors; instead, characteristics of the child influence their environments and how these factors influence developmental outcomes (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). These processes likely operate in a similar fashion for Latino youth in new destination, rural communities, and thus we will not discuss them at length but refer the reader to the original article. However, as discussed above, both child nativity and undocumented status of the child are important to consider in future work as these can differ from the family status.

Family

The original model argued that minority families may demonstrate unique characteristics that can affect family processes (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). First, there is a greater reliance on extended kin in minority families. While some extended families immigrate together and can continue this pattern in rural communities, many families may experience a significant sense of loss when family members are left behind in the country of origin (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Moreover, this loss can lead to parenting disruptions as families need to navigate new familial roles resulting from the loss of extended kin and from the integration of women into the immigrant workforce (Helms, Supple, & Proulx, 2011). Additionally, the expectations that children stay close to their parents or live in the parental home until marriage may have implications for Latino children's pursuit of higher education in these rural communities (Gonzalez et al., 2012).

Expectations regarding family roles are evident in the family values, beliefs, and goals that dictate the pattern of family cohesion, obligations, and support, which has been termed familism (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Familism translates to positive developmental outcomes in emerging immigrant communities as it is associated with fewer depressive symptoms and better school adaptation among youth (Stein et al., 2013). In addition, cultural values exalting the virtue of hard work as well as certain aspects of familism have been shown to safeguard Latino adolescents against negative outcomes associated with migrant farmwork, because youth holding these values derive a great deal of pride

and a sense of belonging from working hard in order to help provide for their families (Parra-Cardona et al., 2006).

An important area for further inquiry will be to understand how racial and ethnic socialization occurs in rural, emerging immigrant contexts, as the majority of work examining these processes has been conducted in either established areas or urban areas (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006). Socialization in these communities will be influenced by the racial composition of the community as described above, as well as by racial tensions, experiences of discrimination, and prejudice toward Latino residents. Because many of these families are newly immigrated, socialization processes may differ as families will not have access to established cultural resources and a history of coping with discrimination and racism.

Conclusions

The current chapter addressed the theoretically important constructs that developmental scientists need to take into account when conducting research in rural, emerging immigrant destinations. In particular, researchers should consider the multilayered impact of social positional variables and how they operate in these contexts. Consistent with the Integrative Model, we propose that race, social class, immigrant status, documentation status, and migrant status, in addition to gender and ethnicity, influence the developmental trajectories of Latino youth in these communities through experiences of racism, prejudice, oppression, xenophobia, and discrimination. In these rural populations, which do not benefit from the historical legacy of Latino communities in the Northeast and Southwest, Latino youth and their families are more isolated and do not have access to a higher SES, more acculturated Latino community. Thus, racial and ethnic segregation place these families at heightened risk. These risks are evident in the multiple environments that these youth inhabit. Nevertheless, the cultural and familial assets in their families may serve to offset the risk they face and promote developmental competencies in these youth. Empirical work is needed to more closely examine the experiences of Latino youth in these contexts and to test the predictions of the current model.

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Chapter 4
Theoretical Perspectives on African American Youth and Families in Rural Settings

Michael Cunningham and Samantha Francois

Research focusing on rural African American adolescents is needed because they may be especially vulnerable to psychological challenges given the possible trials and tribulations associated with adolescence and residing in a rural environment. Rural youth are often exposed to the economic distresses of poverty and lack of employment opportunities, among others, and limited access to resources and positive support networks (Kerpelman & Mosher, 2004). Further, Murry and Brody (1999) noted that rural African American adolescents often reside in families that are nested within communities with similar socioeconomic status and racial background. However, such communities often find it difficult to overcome challenges such as stressful events due to a lack of structural resources, including a restricted range of employment opportunities, limited public transportation, and a lack of recreational activities and facilities for youth (Proctor & Dalaker, 2003). Rural African Americans remain vulnerable to racial discriminatory and oppressive social structures, particularly for those who live in the south, as most rural African Americans do (Murry, Berkel, Simons, Simons, & Gibbons, 2014). Moreover, rural African American families, compared to rural White families, are more likely to live below the federal poverty threshold, live in dilapidated subsidized housing, and have greater exposure to community violence (Nasim, Fernander, Townsend, Corona, & Belgrave, 2011). Thus, rural adolescents may be just as vulnerable in terms of the development of mental health problems as urban adolescents, but may be presented with just as many opportunities of resilience as their urban counterparts.

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Theoretical perspectives are needed to examine rural African American populations. In particular, we argue that ecological systems theoretical perspectives are most appropriate when examining the experiences of rural African American adolescents. The chapter is organized with a review of two theoretical perspectives. Both ecological systems models are reviewed. First, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) and Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) ecological system's theory is presented, as his model is the basis of many others. Where Bronfenbrenner's model is advanced as a universal conceptualization of development, an additional model is also examined as it is relevant for understanding the particular experiences of African Americans. Specifically, Spencer's (1995, 2006) phenomenological variant on ecological systems theory is examined. Spencer's theoretical model expands on Bronfenbrenner's perspectives and provides a blueprint for studying resilience and vulnerability with specific attention given to human development and contextual experiences. The model is especially salient when working with rural African American populations because PVEST incorporates the universal themes posited by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory with specific guidance associated with racial and ethnic minorities, ecological contexts, and, importantly, how individuals understand themselves and their surroundings.

The current chapter highlights similarities and differences among the theoretical perspectives. In doing so, we highlight the usefulness in using ecological theoretical perspectives with empirical examples of research with African American rural adolescents. We highlight the roles of gender, context, and developmental issues in each example.

Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner first discussed the foundations of ecological systems theory under the guise of celebrating the life's work of Kurt Lewin and specifically elaborating on *Lewian Theory* (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Bronfenbrenner states, "Lewin constantly reminds the reader, lest one be misled, that the space is not physical but psychological—consisting of the environment not as it exists in the so called objective world…, but in the mind of the person, in his or her *phenomenological field*— including, as especially significant, the world of imagination, of fantasy, and unreality" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 202). Interestingly, Bronfenbrenner's more recent writings on ecological systems theory do not include the phenomenological field. Instead Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) elaborates on ecological systems theory as an approach to the scientific study of human development. By attempting to place psychology in line with the traditional sciences (e.g., physics, biology), Bronfenbrenner tempered the phenomenological aspects of Kurt Lewin's theory and focused more on understanding the dynamic relationships between the developing individual and the integrated, multilevel ecology of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, ecological systems theory is explained in relation to systems from the most proximal (e.g., microsystem) to the more distal

(e.g., macrosystem). It is these systems that are useful to begin to understand the experiences of rural African Americans.

As Bronfenbrenner has posited, individuals develop within a dynamic set of systems. The outermost is the macrosystem, which is associated with the ideology of a society (1979). Also, the chronosystem, which involves the sociohistorical contexts that may influence a person, is embedded across all systemic levels. One example of this is the age of a child during the Great Recession may affect not only the child's behaviors but also the family's relationships and behaviors. For rural African Americans, the chronosystem includes the same sociohistorical events that urban participants experience; however, they may have specifics associated with a rural context. For example, rural areas had lower unemployment rates following the Great Recession compared to urban areas, but employment growth in rural areas lagged behind that of urban areas (Hertz, Kusmin, Marré, & Parker, 2014). Thus, unemployed in rural areas were less likely to gain or regain employment during the recession than unemployed living in urban areas. In fact, counter to the assumption that rural communities are "a retreat from the brutalities of urban living, where people live closer to nature in simpler and (by implication) happier lives" (Campbell, 2000, p. 562), the challenging experiences of rural individuals often go unnoticed or underreported (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2008). Additionally, many rural communities lack economic resources to provide system-level care. For example, DeKeseredy and Schwartz's (2008) descriptions of female survivors of domestic abuse experiences in rural Ohio indicate that the lack of public safe shelters put women at a greater risk for continued abuse. This sociohistorical context is linked to the ideologies within a community and impacts what Bronfenbrenner describes as the macrosystem.

The macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exo-systems for a given culture or subculture (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The macrosystem refers to the belief systems, material resources, customs, knowledge, lifestyles, and life-course options embedded in the other three systems. Cultural contexts can include the socioeconomic status of individuals and their families and their race or ethnicity or those living in a rural community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, challenging philosophical ideologies such as racism hold an overarching cloud over policies associated with the other systems. This may impact what some may believe as "American cultural norms," which in rural environments are intertwined with historical experiences of isolation and stereotypes associated with African Americans living in a rural community (Burton, Garrett-Peters, & Eaton, 2011; Murry & Brody, 1999). While most extant literature highlights these challenges, there are ample opportunities for resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten et al., 1999). For example, being born into a poor and rural family makes people work harder every day (Murry et al., 2014). In fact, Murry et al.'s 12-year longitudinal study highlights how social support systems can buffer rural African American males who are vulnerable to HIV infection because of the lack of organized systems or personal opportunities for positive youth development.

As mentioned earlier, rural racial minority participants (especially African Americans) may also deal with the experiences associated with living in a rural

community such as polarized race relations and heightened racial threat narratives that impact stress and mental health (Burton et al. 2011). Rural communities are often characterized as pockets of "deep poverty" and environmental "dumping grounds" (Eason, 2010; Lichter & Brown, 2011). These rural communities are more likely to be highly segregated poor racial/ethnic minorities with limited access to quality health care or social services (Burton, Lichter, Baker, & Eason, 2013). These macrosystem issues directly link to exosystem opportunities and challenges.

The exosystem is the setting in which there is a link between the context wherein the person does not have any active role and the context where one is actively participating (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). Suppose a child is more attached to his father than his mother. If the father goes abroad to work for several months, there may be a conflict between the mother and the child's social relationship, or on the other hand, this event may result to a tighter bond between the mother and the child. The father's absence because of employment opportunity has an indirect (exosystem) influence on the child. Brody, Stoneman, and Flor (1995) found that especially for African American males, "job ceilings" exist in the rural areas that affect their access to jobs, wages, and benefits appropriate to their educational levels. Bowman discusses this lack of job opportunities as provider role strain (Bowman, 1990, 1996). According to Bowman's conceptualizations, African American men who do not have adequate employment opportunities disengage from family networks. Thus, the exosystem example of workplace (or lack of employment) is associated with how much or little African American men engage with their families (Bowman, 1996). This exosystem experience interacts with the mesosystem, which facilitates interactions among the microsystems.

The microsystem's setting is the environment that most directly impacts our lives. This is a person's family, friends, classmates, teachers, neighbors, and other people who have a direct contact with the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem is the setting in which individuals have direct social interactions with these social agents. Bronfenbrenner's theory states that individuals are not mere recipients of the experiences they have when socializing with these people in the microsystem environment, but contribute to the construction of such environment.

The mesosystem involves the relationships between the systems in one's life. This means that a person's family experience may be related to the person's school experience (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). For example, if children have challenges within their families, they may have low chances of developing positive attitudes toward their teachers. Also, these children may feel awkard in the presence of peers and may resort to withdrawal from a group of classmates. In rural environments, parents who have negative memories of their school experiences may have challenges working with their child's school because the school may be the same one that the parents attended. Given that most families in rural communities attend the same schools across generations, parents may have memories that impact their willingness to be involved in the school life of their children (Burton et al., 2011; Walker, 1996). This point is especially salient in rural African American communities. The legacies of school segregation are still in the memories of many parents (Walker, 1996).

Ecological systems theory, as originally posited by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and later elaborated by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), is useful in understanding the experiences of rural African Americans. By considering how each system works (chrono-, macro-, exo-, meso, and microsystem), researchers and practitioners can understand how distal and proximal contexts are associated with life in rural America. While ecological systems theory discusses proximal processes that are the interactions of the changing individual within a changing context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), explicit attention to how social address variables such as an individual's racial and ethnic background is actually is less clear. For example, ecological systems theory does not explicitly provide a framework understanding how individual factors such as racial background and sex intersect with a growing child's cognitive abilities and the caregiver's adult experiences.

Traditional ecological systems theory also does not overtly address diversity within African American families, which exists in rural and urban contexts (Hill, Murry, & Anderson, 2005). Murry and colleagues describe the foundation for examining African American rural families. By focusing on family functioning and resilience theorizing in their basic research and interventions, they are able to promote parenting processes such as nurturance, monitoring, and consistent discipline (Murry et al., 2005). This diversity within families is not fully optimized when using Bronfenbrenner's model. The proximal processes associated with traditional ecological systems theory may be helpful in understanding how families socialize the younger generation about family norms and traditions. However, specific cultural patterns associated with parents are less clear (Spencer, 1995, 2006). In rural African American families, this may also include intergenerational associations of family and kinships (Burton et al., 2011). For example, Spencer (1995, 2006) expands ecological systems theory with a Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) that focuses on typical developmental processes, but with an emphasis on pathways to both productive and unproductive outcomes.

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory

Developed by Margaret Beale Spencer, PVEST highlights the origins of ecological systems theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in that the phenomenological aspect is a crucially important aspect of the theory. Spencer (1995, 2006) emphasizes how individuals make meaning of their experiences, contextual situations, and of the self. Self-appraisal is an important aspect of the theory in that individuals understand their experiences based on how they perceive those experiences as well as how they understand themselves. PVEST is an identity-focused cultural ecological model because understanding oneself is done in culturally specific ways and is associated with the individual's ecological context.

PVEST is a cyclical model with five bidirectional areas that are described below. The first is net vulnerability. Too often, research on African Americans focuses on

risk factors associated with the group and directly links these factors to a plethora of unproductive outcomes. For rural African American populations, an example of this may be directly linking living in an isolated rural community to high school disengagement or mental health challenges. Spencer's PVEST model is a useful tool for understanding processes associated with risk factors and unproductive outcomes. That is, the risk associated growing up in a rural community must be balanced with considerations of the protective factors of growing up in the same community. Therefore, the first component of PVEST, in particular, emphasizes that researcher must consider protective factors as well as risk factors to assess the individual and family's "net vulnerability." For example, being an African American who lives in a low-income rural area may be considered a risk factor because of the lack of resources available in the area. However, even within this low-income rural area, families may have protective factors such as an intergenerational network of family members that may outweigh some of the potential risks. Thus, net vulnerability is the balance between risk and protective factors. Using the net balance between risk and protective factors affords the opportunities to focus on developmental processes. These developmental processes are associated with the next component of PVEST, which is net stress engagement.

Rural African American adolescents do not have a choice of where they live. By living in a rural environment, they may be exposed to contextual stressors such as substance usage by family and/or peers among other issues. However, by considering the net balance between the adolescents' risk and protective factors, they may also have supports to assist them in dealing with their stressors. These supports may be extended kin (biological and fictive). In rural environments, the African proverb of "it takes a village to raise a child" may become more evident than in urban environments. Opportunities to be "invisible" may be harder because of the small population and close-knit social networks that foster a culture of caring and looking after children regardless of biological relation. How adolescents respond to the net stressors is linked to PVEST's third component, reactive coping methods.

Using the same example of an African American adolescent who resides in a rural community, the teen must develop coping methods to being exposed to the stressors associated with the rural context. These methods may be adaptive or maladaptive and are linked to identity development. For example, rural African American adolescents can adaptively cope with substance use exposure by refraining from the pressures to experiment with the substances. In contrast, adolescents can use maladaptive cope by engaging in the substance use. Given that adolescence is associated with identity exploration, a process through which adolescents are determining who or what they want to be (see Erikson, 1968); thus experimentation is normal during this period. Within a PVEST perspective, the long-term associations of this experimentation need to be considered. That is, one must consider how the reactive coping methods are associated with an emergent identity, which is the fourth component of PVEST.

The emergent identity that comes from how individuals cope can be positive or negative. A positive identity may be associated with developmentally appropriate tasks such as seeing oneself as a scholar or identifying one's self with having a

positive role as a member of the family. Or it can be negative such as seeing one's self as a person who chooses not to engage in school or who engages in behaviors that are not developmentally appropriate. These emergent identities are associated with life-stage-specific coping outcomes, which is the fifth PVEST component.

Spencer (2006) highlights how outcomes are "nested in ecologies that vary significantly in character as a consequence of particular social constructions and individual characteristics, histories, and experiences" (p. 852). Importantly, the outcomes may be gender specific and may be different within and between groups. For example, rural adolescents who are exposed to availability of substances and who have emergent identities as scholars may have higher school performance than adolescents who have emergent identities with hypermasculinity or hyperfemininity who may have outcomes associated withdrawal from school activities or low educational aspirations.

A PVEST perspective emphasizes the point at which the outcomes are recursive and can impact the first component, net vulnerability. For example, are rural African American adolescents perceived as scholars or as disengaged students? Depending on the answer, their risk and protective factors may be different and associated with new net stressors, which are linked to new reactive coping strategies that may impact emergent identities. Thus, these identities may be associated with new outcomes. For example, the highly vulnerable rural adolescent who cycles through PVEST and demonstrates resilient outcomes begins to be seen as a student who overcomes challenges (e.g., net vulnerability) and has more support networks than challenging networks (e.g., net stress engagement) and has assumed an identity of perseverance (e.g., emergent identity) that is associated with positive life outcomes such as academically succeeding despite the challenges that were associated with growing up in a rural context that exposed the adolescent to more challenges than supports. Additionally, each component of PVEST is bidirectional (Spencer, 2006). Thus, the self-appraisal process is continual and associated with one's culture and ecological context.

Similarities and Differences in the Ecological Models

Each of the theoretical models acknowledges that development occurs within an ecological context and that one cannot understand the individual without simultaneously understanding where the individual lives. Lewian theory is the foundation of each of the models. Bronfenbrenner (1979) expands on the work of Kurt Lewin by illustrating how distal and proximal ecological systems interact to influence developmentally specific outcomes. His later advances in the model include consideration of the individual's biological development along with the dynamic interplay of the developing individual with the context that is also evolving (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Spencer (1995, 2006) presents a model that extends the theorizing put forth by Bronfenbrenner by emphasizing cultural patterns associated with behaviors. She

also reminds the reader of the foundation of ecological systems theory by highlighting the phenomenological aspects. Additionally, a PVEST perspective considers social position variables as significant contributors to the developmental process. PVEST differs, however, in how to consider individual development and cultural patterns. PVEST acknowledges that racism, sexism, discrimination, etc., occur and are real and highlights that the risks associated with being a person of color need to be considered along with potential protective factors. Thus, the net balance between risk and protective factors is what is important as it is what drives development and encourages researchers to consider the intersectionality of human development within context.

A PVEST perspective emphasizes the importance of how individuals make meaning of their histories and experiences. Unlike Bronfenbrenner's expansion of Lewian theory, PVEST highlights the phenomenological experiences. While socio-historical events are important in ecological systems theory, PVEST places more importance on how the individual decides or does not decide to consider the history and experience. Finally, while PVEST has mostly been used with African American populations, the model is a human development model and can be applied to individuals from any racial or ethnic background (Spencer, 2006).

Empirical Examples with Rural African American Adolescents

Presented next are two empirical examples from rural investigations with African American adolescents that were conducted in a South Central part of the United States. The first example examines whether racial identity is a buffer between stressful events and anxiety outcomes. The second example is an examination of physical activity as buffer to anxiety in African American females. PVEST is used as the conceptual template for both examples. While the samples are distinct, the procedures and methodology are the same for both examples. Details associated with the methodologies are published elsewhere (Mulser, Hucke, Trask-Tate, & Cunningham, 2012).

As stated earlier, the rural environment provides a vast range of challenges for the healthy development of adolescents. For instance, youths are often exposed to the economic distresses of poverty and lack of employment opportunities, among others, and limited access to resources and positive support networks (Kerpelman & Mosher, 2004). To gain an understanding of how adolescents interpret specific contexts and react to stressors within these contexts, a contextually sensitive framework for individual development needs to be applied. Spencer's (2006) PVEST provides such a framework by analyzing the complex relationships between vulnerability, stress level, coping processes, and stage-specific coping outcomes throughout human development. Individuals' perceptions of their experiences are a core aspect of a PVEST perspective, and therefore, the theory is useful in examining adolescents' stressful events and their impact on mental health.

Example #1: Racial Identity as a Buffer of Depressive Symptoms

Even though racial identity has been identified as a protective factor in the relationship between racism and discrimination and poor mental health, there is a significant dearth of research on the function of racial identity in the relation between other types of stressful events and mental health, especially in rural African American adolescents. For example, adolescents living in rural areas, compared to those living in urban areas, are at a greater disadvantage because of their restricted access to feedback about their identity development in terms of emotions, attitudes, and behavioral responses that derive from the objective characteristics of people's surroundings. In addition, the development of adolescents' identity within a rural environment can be hampered if their access to positive support networks is restricted (Kerpelman & Mosher, 2004).

This first example focuses on the effects of stressful events on African American adolescents living in a rural environment. We hypothesized that stressful events will negatively affect the mental health (i.e., depressive symptoms) of African American adolescents. We further hypothesized that racial identity would moderate the effects of stressful events on the depressive symptoms of the participants.

According to the results, stressful events explained a significant amount of the variance in depressive symptom scores. Racial identity did not explain a statistically significant amount of the variance in depressive symptoms. As indicated in Fig. 4.1, the interaction between stressful events and racial identity was of statistically
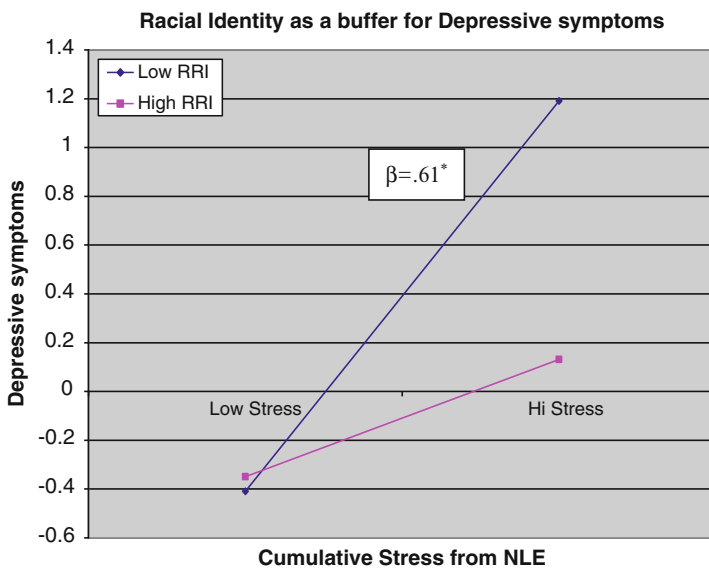
Fig. 4.1 Racial identity as a buffer for development of depressive symptoms in response to stressful events

significant. These results support racial identity as a buffer for the development of depressive symptoms in response to stressful events.

The results suggest that as stressful events and students' racial centrality increased, their depressive symptoms tended to slightly increase as well. Further, as stressful events increased for students with low racial centrality, depressive symptoms significantly increased. We conducted a simple slopes analysis to test the significance of the interaction found in regression analysis one. Results of the simple slope analysis show that, under conditions of low racial identity, stressful events led to significantly higher depressive symptoms. Under conditions of high racial identity, stressful events did not lead to significantly higher depressive symptoms scores. These results support our hypothesis that racial identity acts as a buffer for the development of depressive symptoms.

Example #2: Physical Activity as a Buffer for Anxiety

The second example examines the potential benefits of physical activity on mental health in rural African American adolescent females. These issues are particularly salient for this population. First, increased cognitive abilities in adolescence can result in perceptions of discrimination and racism, which may lead to additional stress (Spencer, 2006; Spencer, Cunningham, & Swanson, 1995). In addition, adolescent females report higher levels of anxiety than their male peers (Botticello, 2009). Finally, adolescent females engage in physical activity less than their male peers (Gordon-Larsen, Nelson, & Popkin, 2004). Therefore, an important imperative is to examine if physical activity is a potential buffer to the development of anxiety and if physical activity is a potential healthy coping strategy for this population.

As indicated in Fig. 4.2, the finding suggests that physical activity acted as a moderator of the relationship between race-related stress (RRS) and anxiety. As hypothesized, females who reported high RRS and low physical activity reported high amounts of anxiety. However, females who reported high RRS and high physical activity reported significantly lower levels of anxiety. Under a condition of low RRS, physical activity did not have a significant effect on anxiety scores. However, under condition of high RRS, physical activity was significantly associated with lower anxiety scores. This result further supports the hypothesis that physical activity acts as a buffer for anxiety.

Taken together, these empirical examples highlight pathways of understanding the experiences of rural African American adolescents. By using PVEST as a conceptual template, we demonstrated that adolescents' perceptions and reports of their experiences were associated with mental health outcomes. An important point to highlight is the process of how adolescents understand their respective environments. Race-related stressors transcend a rural, urban, or suburban context. However, within a rural environment, the meaning that African American adolescents place on their racial identity is important. This racial centrality identity serves as a buffer when adolescents perceive stressors associated with their racial background.
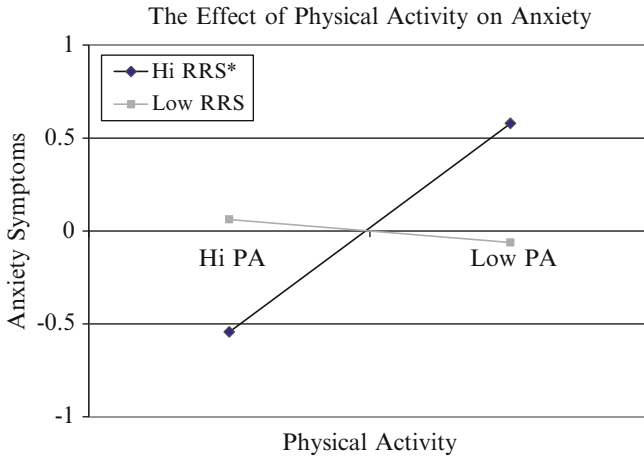
The Effect of Physical Activity on Anxiety

Fig. 4.2 Physical activity and physical activity interaction with anxiety symptoms as the dependent variable. *Significant slope ($B = -0.27$, $p < 0.05$)

Within a PVEST perspective, the net vulnerability may be associated with being an adolescent growing up within silos of social experiences. Therefore, racially hostile experiences may have more salience if the adolescent does not have a protective emergent identity.

Likewise, the second example, with girls only, highlights the importance of physical activity as a significant buffer between race-related stressors and anxiety symptoms. The PVEST perspective highlights how opportunities to engage in physical exercise may be a healthy outlet for African American adolescents who reside in geographically isolating communities. In fact, as the interaction demonstrates, girls with less physical activity are more vulnerable to anxiety symptoms than girls with high physical systems.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to examine theoretical perspectives associated with rural African American populations. We reviewed theorizing by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) and Spencer (1995, 2006). Our review highlights the importance of using an ecological perspective when examining the experiences of rural African Americans. Specifically, a PVEST approach provides researchers and practitioners with a conceptual template to explicitly address issues associated with race and an ecological context. While ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) is useful in understanding behaviors within an ecological niche, the theory lacks specificity to address circumstances that are specific to African Americans who reside in rural environments.

The chapter also includes examples from two small studies of African American adolescents who resided in a rural community. The results of each empirical example provide suggestions for future directions. From the first example, we learned that racial identity can serve as a protective factor when students are exposed to cumulative stressful events. This result is especially salient given that rural African Americans remain vulnerable to racial discrimination, particularly for those who reside in the southern region of the United States as most African Americans do (Murry et al., 2014). The results of the second example demonstrated that physical activity was a buffer between race-related stressors and anxiety symptoms. This example highlights the importance of gender specificity. Unlike ecological systems theory, PVEST encourages researchers to explicitly examine gender-specific themes associated with human development. Similar to Murry et al.'s (2014) longitudinal study of rural African American males, the second example presented highlights how high physical activity is especially important as a buffer between racial stressors and anxiety symptoms.

Future research with rural African American adolescents must simultaneously consider where the participants live, their social and familial experiences, as well as how they come to perceive their respective experiences. While ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) is important for providing the foundation for other theoretical perspectives (e.g., Spencer's PVEST, 1995, 2006), it does not go far enough to ensure a complete understanding of rural African Americans. Building on Lewian Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), Spencer's PVEST perspective provides a theoretical perspective that assists researchers and practitioners alike to fully evaluate both risk and protective factors associated with growing up in an ecological context. Furthermore, using a PVEST allows for the discovery of resilience patterns along with vulnerability themes.

Particularly challenging is the situational context where there are a lack of intimae partner violence shelters in many rural environments that is described by DeKeseredy adn Schwartz (2008), which can be better understood by a PVEST perspective. For example, municipalities may cite numerous support structures in rural environments; however, how individuals perceive these support structures as supportive or not is most important. Likewise, parents' perceptions of their own school experiences may impact how likely they are involved in their child's school experience (Burton et al., 2011). Parents with dissonance producing memories may not be as likely to indulge in involved parental school involvement.

Finally, more asset perspectives are needed when examining the lives of rural African American populations. As Hill et al. (2005) highlight, there is diversity within African American populations. This diversity includes understanding diversity with urban and rural environments alike. While rural African American adolescents may face a plethora of challenges because of economic distresses of poverty and lack of employment opportunities, among others, and limited access to resources and positive support networks (Kerpelman & Mosher, 2004), they have just as many opportunities for resilience (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten et al., 1999). A PVEST perspective is a theoretical framework that allows for the understanding of the net balance between these challenges and opportunities for success.

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Chapter 5
Theoretical Perspectives on Asian American Youth and Families in Rural and New Immigrant Destinations

Lisa Kiang and Andrew J. Supple

Immigrants tend to settle where job opportunities and socioeconomic resources abound. For Asians, this has historically meant large, ethnically dense, metropolitan cities in the US West and Northeast (e.g., San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Boston). By the late 1990s, resulting from such centralized settlement patterns, the vast majority (nearly 70 %) of Asian Americans lived in urbanized communities dispersed in just six states (Hune, 2002). However, since then, oversaturation in traditional gateways has contributed to immigrants searching for opportunities in less urban, metropolitan centers (Massey & Capoferro, 2008; Parrado & Kandel, 2008). Resettlement programs for Asian refugees have also led to the increased movement of immigrants into regions that have not traditionally hosted newcomers (Forrest & Brown, 2014). These new or emerging immigrant communities are often characterized by small, low population-dense cities, suburbs, and rural towns and typically lack resources and infrastructure to aid newcomers' integration (Bailey, 2005; Hirschman & Massey, 2008).

Following these migration trends, theoretical and empirical interest in understanding immigrant adaptation in new destinations has grown, with many investigating the ramifications of context and place of settlement on families and youth development (Massey & Capoferro, 2008). For instance, some have examined the implications of geographic context for ethnic identity and well being (Kiang, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2011; Perreira, Fuligni, & Potochnick, 2010). Others have focused on the prevalence and experience of discrimination within different types of

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communities (Potochnick, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2012). However, the literature is scarce and especially limited given that much of the increased research attention has centered on immigrants from Latin American backgrounds to the exclusion of those with Asian ancestry (Kuk & Lichter, 2010). Virtually nothing is known about the Asian youth and families who are increasingly settling in new immigrant communities and rural areas of the USA.

The disparity in the literature is particularly problematic given high rates of growth among the Asian American population overall. From 2000 to 2010, the population of Asian Americans increased by 46 % (Asian American Federation; AAF, 2014). This rate of growth, primarily attributable to an influx of foreign-born immigrants, surpassed all other ethnic groups during this period, even outpacing Latin Americans who exhibited 43 % growth (Pew Research Center, 2012). The limited attention to Asian Americans in rural settings is also a problem due to the notable ways in which they differ from their counterparts from other ethnic groups. As one example, some ethnic minorities in rural settings, such as Latino/as or Native Americans, sometimes comprise the most dominant ethnic group residing in their communities (Evans, Smokowski, & Cotter, 2014). In contrast, Asian Americans in rural and new immigrant settings tend to represent the true numerical minority, often with extremely sparse numbers. For instance, in North Carolina, although Asian Americans tripled in number since the turn of the century, they still comprised only 2 % of the total state population in 2010 (Reeves & Bennett, 2002). Such extreme minority status, particularly in emerging immigrant areas that are newly adjusting to the presence of immigrants, creates a pressing need for conceptual and empirical work to elucidate newcomer families' development and to help these families and the surrounding communities adapt positively to the changing demographics.

The goal of this chapter is to provide a theoretical discussion of some of the factors that should be considered when conceptualizing the development of Asian American youth and families in rural and new immigrant destinations. We begin by briefly reviewing historical migration patterns of Asian American immigrants. We then draw on existing frameworks of child development and present a conceptual model that identifies key individual, community, and culturally based factors that face Asian American families and youth and impact their development and adjustment. We conclude with a discussion of topics to address in future work, including implications for education, policy, and research.

Notably, we use conceptions from UNICEF and define *Asian American* as individuals in the USA with ancestry from the Pacific Islands and the Eastern, Southeastern, and Southern regions of Asia. Specific countries of origin include Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam, among others. Asian American thus denotes a panethnic group with complex identities, multiple layers, and flexible boundaries. Like other panethnic identities—US Latino/as, European American—the category is dynamic and fluid across place and time. While we recognize their tremendous heterogeneity, most of our discussion focuses on Asian American as a general category, largely because the current number of subethnicities

of Asian Americans who are settling in rural areas tends to be too small to support more focused or comparative work.

Relatedly, the Asian American population in rural areas is still sparse; hence, our discussion embodies not only rural communities but new immigrant destinations more broadly. While some of these destinations can be considered relatively large, metropolitan areas (e.g., Austin, Texas; Salt Lake City, Utah), our conceptualization includes rural townships and small cities (e.g., Greensboro and Hickory, both in North Carolina). We use typologies set in prior literature and define new immigrant destinations as areas that have only recently experienced great growth in their immigrant population (e.g., higher than the national average; in 1990, the foreign-born growth rate was 57 %, nationwide) (Kuk & Lichter, 2010; Park & Iceland, 2011; Singer, 2004). Such dramatic growth in predominantly and historically monocultural areas reflects a new social, economic, and demographic phenomenon and introduces unique challenges for families' adjustment (Bailey, 2005; Massey & Capoferro, 2008).

Demographic Shifts Toward Rural Communities and New Immigrant Destinations

By the turn of the twenty-first century, over 30 % of immigrants resided outside of established gateway states, and these numbers are growing (Singer, 2004). For Asian immigrants, sites for settlement increasingly include suburbs and rural communities in the Midwest and South (AAF, 2014). These new or emerging immigrant destinations have been defined in different ways. For example, Singer (2004) used Census data to track migration flows and differentiated six types of gateway communities. "Pre-emerging" areas were defined as those with low percentages of the foreign-born population through the 1980s, with sudden, rapid growth in the 1990s. These were commonly comprised of suburbs outside of central cities (e.g., Charlotte, North Carolina; Salt Lake City, Utah). In a similar analysis focusing on Asian Americans, Kuk and Lichter (2010) used county-level data to define "new Asian settlement areas" as counties that did not exceed the national population of Asian Americans in 1990 (i.e., 3 %), yet exhibited at least a 200 % growth rate from 1990 to 2008. These areas were most notably dispersed in Georgia and North Carolina.

Regardless of the specific criteria used to delineate new settlement areas, migration trends clearly show a shift in population demographics since the late 1990s. Largely driving these shifting trends are changes in industries and jobs. As work and career prospects in major cities have become more saturated, growth and opportunities in construction, services, and manufacturing have expanded to other, more remote, areas. For instance, nationwide shifts in agriculture, construction, and meatpacking industries have contributed to changing migration patterns by attracting immigrants from overcrowded gateway cities to abundant opportunities in low-wage, low-skill work (e.g., poultry processing, textiles) in places like Idaho, Nevada, or North Carolina (Parrado & Kandel, 2008). Hence, as commerce and the

"geography of opportunity" (Singer, 2004; p. 7) have changed, so have major immigrant destinations in the USA.

Notably, the individuals and families moving to these areas are heterogeneous. They include new immigrants who were drawn to these areas as initial places of settlement, the foreign-born already in the USA who moved in search of jobs, and second-generation youth who were born into these areas (Kuk & Lichter, 2010). In some cases, settlement decisions are not economically driven but due to refugee or resettlement policies that are outside of families' control and dictated by the US government or sponsoring agencies (Forrest & Brown, 2014). The ethnic groups moving into these areas are markedly diverse in ethnicity, acculturation, language, education, and socioeconomic status. Hence, in understanding Asian youth and families in new immigrant destinations, individual characteristics, premigration circumstances, as well as context must be addressed, as illustrated through our conceptual model.

Building a Theoretical Model of Asian Americans in Rural and New Immigrant Areas

Although the developmental literature has been criticized for failing to incorporate cultural factors (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006), several theoretical frameworks have explicated the importance of community and context. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological model systematically delineates environmental influences while emphasizing their interrelatedness. History and life events in the chronosystem permeate increasingly proximal spheres including the macrosystem, or sweeping cultural values; the exosystem, reflecting indirect influences such as institutional regulations; and, most proximally, microsystems, or daily lives and experiences. Specific mechanisms can vary, but external factors are believed to trigger change, interact, and create a natural component of each person's life course. Bronfenbrenner's ideas have inspired other theoretical frameworks, and some of the systemic factors found in his bioecological model can be seen through other conceptualizations. For example, Laosa (1990) extended Bronfenbrenner's ideas and proposed a culturally sensitive multivariate model that incorporates individual and family factors as well as characteristics of the sending and receiving communities in determining immigrant child development. Also inspired, in part, by Bronfenbrenner, Garcia Coll et al. (1996) developed an integrated framework that focuses specifically on children from ethnic minority backgrounds and pinpoints a variety of contextual influences. This framework also incorporates other views (e.g., social stratification and spatial assimilation theories) and includes issues of social position, segregation, and promotive and inhibiting environments.

Drawing on these theoretical perspectives, we conceptualize fundamental constructs that are relevant to Asian Americans residing in rural or new immigrant destinations and discuss how these factors operate uniquely in these settings. We consider Fig. 5.1 a working illustration that is not intended to be entirely
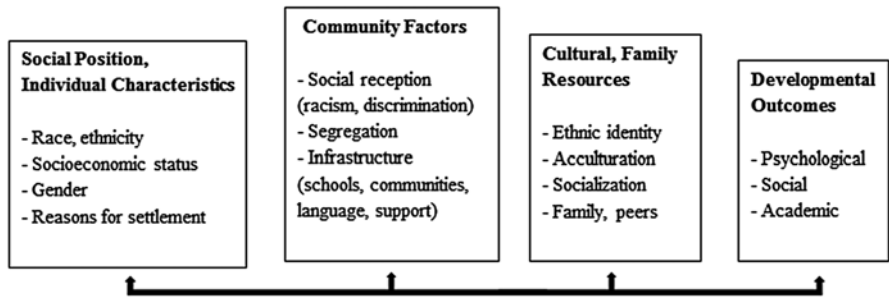
Fig. 5.1 Conceptual model of Asian Americans in rural and new immigrant destinations

comprehensive due to the many complex, dynamic factors that evolve and shift in determining trajectories and outcomes. Rather, our hope is that this model can begin encouraging and guiding more thinking about how rural or new immigrant contexts might distinctively drive development and adaptation. By initiating continued theory and research in this understudied domain, our preliminary model could pave the way toward developing more precise frameworks and best methodological practices to capture and understand the lived experiences of rural Asian American children, adolescents, and families.

Social Position and Individual Characteristics While the factors that are unique to each individual are many and diverse, we highlight some that might be particularly salient for Asian Americans in rural and new settlement areas—race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and familial reasons for migration.

Race and ethnicity stratify and place individuals in the social hierarchy. Issues of race and ethnicity are especially important in rural communities and new immigrant destinations where the population density of Asian Americans is low and might also vary considerably, even within specific areas. For example, in North Carolina, vast county-wide differences exist in the rates of Asian American representation. Wake County in North Carolina has a relatively large proportion of Asian Americans for the state (approaching 6 %), but the population is concentrated in only a few Census tracts and is mostly comprised of those from Asian Indian backgrounds (U.S. Census, 2010a). In contrast, nearby Guilford County has a slightly lower proportion of Asian Americans (closer to 5 %), but the population is mostly comprised of Vietnamese-origin families in some Census tracts and Korean-origin families in others (U.S. Census, 2010b). All of these groups came to North Carolina under different circumstances and share little cultural connection. Hence, while the overall percentages of Asian Americans in these counties might seem relatively large, at least when compared to other parts of the Southeastern USA, the local communities are still rather small when separated by nationality or ethnicity.

The term "Asian" itself is a racialized construct, and the panethnic nature of it masks important heterogeneity. All Asian immigrants represent specific ethnicities. However, due to the limited numbers of same-ethnic peers that reside in new immigrant communities, these ethnic variations might be abandoned by individuals who

seek greater power in a collective "Asian" identity and voluntarily group themselves panethnically (Espiritu, 1992). For example, despite few cultural similarities among South Asians and Southeast Asians, they might band together as "Asians" in small communities with few opportunities to interact with same-ethnic peers. They might also identify with other non-Asian ethnic minorities and adopt a "collective Black" mentality due to shared experiences of marginalization and social stratification (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). Moreover, Asians are commonly stereotyped by the mainstream as either perpetual foreigners or model minorities (e.g., high achieving, economically successful, hardworking) (Goto, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2002; Tuan, 1999), and their racial background often places them toward the low-end of the social hierarchy.

Similarly, because of limited experience and cultural understanding on the part of the mainstream, Asian Americans could be involuntarily grouped into the broad category of "Asian." Indeed, the distinction between self-chosen and other-ascribed identity is important to consider, especially since such labeling differences are prevalent among Asian American adolescents in the Southeastern USA (Kiang & Luu, 2013). In rural and new immigrant destinations especially, the mainstream community could be unfamiliar with the cultural traditions and characteristics of Asian Americans and thus rely on assumptions and stereotypes that can hinder newcomers' integration and adjustment. Whether voluntarily chosen or socially ascribed, the panethnic label or racialized construct of what it means to be "Asian" is an important individual variable or distinguishing characteristic that Asian youth in rural and new immigrant destinations must face.

Social class is another mechanism of social stratification, with research supporting detrimental effects of having few socioeconomic resources (McLoyd, 1998). Newcomers in rural and new immigrant communities tend to have lower socioeconomic status and higher poverty rates than their counterparts in traditional migration areas (Singer, 2004). Although there could be some overlap with race or ethnicity, socioeconomic background is important to consider because it can dictate what type of housing or neighborhood new immigrants settle in, what jobs parents hold, what resources are available to children, and, ultimately, how well newcomer families can be integrated into their communities (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). Effects of socioeconomic status could also play out in light of Asian Americans' sense of "otherness," particularly if they have different clothing or other superficial markers that make them stand out (Armenta et al., 2013). Indirect effects could also be found in which economic hardship fuels family strain and conflict (McLoyd, 1998), which then have implications for child development.

Among Asian American immigrants, gender is naturally embedded in cultural adjustment processes. For instance, Southeast Asian girls tend to be seen as "keepers of culture," and messages that emphasize cultural knowledge and traditions are often more strongly socialized in girls than in boys (Lee, Jung, Su, Tran, & Bahrassa, 2009). Girls, compared to boys, from Hmong backgrounds are also often faced with stricter rules and monitoring and are expected to help out around the house and engage in stereotypically feminine tasks (e.g., cooking, cleaning) (Supple & Cavanaugh, 2013). Such familial expectations and gender-prescribed roles could

lead to different opportunities for acculturation, where boys might be given more freedom to engage with the mainstream community and girls might be expected to stay closely connected to their home and native culture. Another upshot of gendered socialization is in the parent–child relationship; some evidence points to greater relationship dissatisfaction in girls compared to boys, which in turn, could have adjustment implications (Supple, McCoy, & Wang, 2010).

An additional layer of complexity involves familial reasons for migration, which could be intertwined with ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other demographic variables. Generally speaking, patterns of migration, including premigration circumstances and reasons for migrating, can influence the structure of settlement communities and the cultural environments in which youth and families develop (Mistry & Wu, 2010). Parents' deliberate decision to migrate to certain areas, perhaps in pursuit of opportunities, could involve a unique set of factors such as great uncertainty, a decrease in social position, and self-sacrifice (Perreira et al., 2006). Alternatively, some families could be involuntary migrants who left their countries due to forced evacuation, violence, and threat of genocide (Tatman, 2004). Some refugee families have been settled in new locations by the US government or other agencies with little knowledge or choice of their own. For instance, the US Office of Refugee Resettlement dispersed many Vietnamese and Hmong refugees to states with a limited history of immigration (e.g., Louisiana, Missouri) in an effort to facilitate integration and economic independence.

Another notable example is the Montagnards, who represent an under-researched cultural minority group with origins in the Central Highlands of Southeast Asia. During the Vietnam War, the USA recruited and trained the Montagnards to fight against the communists from North Vietnam. When US-backed forces were defeated, the communist Vietnamese government retaliated and subjected the Montagnards to a host of human rights atrocities including near genocide. Those who survived were left with little options but to flee, hide in the jungle, or move to refugee camps. North Carolina has been a primary destination for this group's resettlement and holds the largest concentration of Montagnards outside of Vietnam. They settled in North Carolina because of the strong bonds they developed with the US Green Berets during the war (stationed in Fort Bragg, NC) and because state sponsoring agencies played a role in helping them settle (Bailey, 2005). Given the danger and extreme hardship in fleeing the country, many Montagnard refugees are men who immigrated alone or with other men and who later sponsor their children and female family members in reunification efforts (Kinefuchi, 2010). This unique history supports the idea that premigration circumstances should be considered in attempts to understand immigrant youth and families' adjustment, especially since such factors are bound to interact with post-migration experiences.

Different types of families also have different levels of social and economic capital, which are interrelated with both pre- and post-migration circumstances. It should be recognized that all immigrants bring with them a particular set of characteristics and experiences that can promote or hinder their subsequent adjustment. While reasons for migration are important for all immigrant populations, they might be especially meaningful among families who settle in new immigrant

destinations, either due to the large proportion of refugees who have relocated to these areas or due to the somewhat pioneering decision to voluntarily move to an area where few ethnic supports and resources are available. Notably, reasons for migration could also interact with other individual characteristics discussed (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, gender) to jointly affect how families adjust to their new surroundings.

Community Factors Social position and individual characteristics alone do not directly affect development. Rather, it is the interplay between these factors and individuals' experiences with the broader community that has an influence (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). We highlight features of the receiving community that can impact Asian Americans in rural and new immigrant destinations. Some reflect broad, macro-level constructs (e.g., racism, social reception, segregation). Others reflect more proximal influences of schools and neighborhoods (e.g., institutional resources). Collectively, these community-level variables are central to our theoretical model because they represent contextual circumstances that are perhaps most distinctive for Asians in new immigrant settings. They also permeate layers of the environment and affect daily interactions with family, peers, schools, and other community structures.

The social reception of the receiving community and, more specifically, perceived discrimination in schools and neighborhoods can shape daily experiences and the way individuals culturally adapt and define themselves (Laosa, 1990; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Asian Americans in rural and new immigrant destinations face the challenge of having to adjust in environments that are often predominantly White and that have only recently experienced a boom in foreign-born presence. The underlying social reception in such communities could be positive or negative. Some could adopt a genuine openness and curiosity about the cultural diversity and traditions that newcomers add. There could be a sense of welcome and efforts to integrate the foreign-born or second-generation immigrant into existing social spheres. Yet, while some community members might view the growing ethnic diversity a boon, others might view newcomers as competition and outcasts (Singer, 2004). Xenophobia and lack of cultural familiarity could exacerbate conflict between groups. Asian Americans could also experience an objectification of their ancestry and stereotypes about who they are (Armenta et al., 2013).

At a more extreme level, racism and related mechanisms could serve as major obstacles in Asian Americans' community integration. Theory and research have long evidenced the negative influence of discrimination (Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Moreover, recent work suggests that the modern face of discrimination has changed from overtly rejecting experiences to those that are subtle and ambiguous (e.g., microaggressions) (Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions can be seen through unfamiliarity with a particular culture, such as when Asian subethnicities are racially grouped and assumed to be similar, or from general stereotypes, as when Asian Americans, even those who are second or third generation, are assumed to have limited English proficiency (Armenta et al., 2013). Discrimination and unfair treatment could leach into the school system as well. In a qualitative exploration of

discrimination reported by Asian American adolescents in the Southeastern USA, open-ended descriptions revealed that discriminatory experiences with teachers were notable, with 13 % of individuals describing situations in which a teacher or school authority figure treated them differently because of their race or ethnicity (Bhattacharjee & Kiang, 2012). Although more work needs to be done, particularly with respect to systematic comparisons across new and traditional receiving sites, it is likely that Asian Americans in new settlement areas experience forms of racism that are both institutional as well as symbolic and subtle in nature. Indeed, in a comparative study of Latin Americans in different geographic settings, youth from new immigrant destinations reported more instances of ethnic discrimination compared to those from traditional areas of migration (Potochnick et al., 2012).

On the more optimistic side, experiences of discrimination could create shared challenge and camaraderie, which could ultimately strengthen cultural ties and newcomers' adaptation (Tatum, 2003). However, one of the reasons that discrimination and its effects could be particularly rampant in rural and new settlement areas is the isolation and lack of social support that newcomers are likely to experience, possibly leading to internalized oppression, depression, and poor identity development (Evans et al., 2014). Indeed, segregation and feelings of isolation are additional community-level factors that can be problematic for many reasons.

Given the long history of Asian settlement in West Coast urban areas or places like New York City, Asian immigrants who settle in these traditional gateway communities tend to become fairly well integrated relatively quickly. The multiple generations of Asian Americans found in these areas have established a strong presence not only in neighborhoods and communities but also within the school system, local businesses, service sector, and political environment. However, different developmental processes could face newcomers who are received in new immigrant destinations, which likely lack the institutional and social infrastructure to support their community integration (Bailey, 2005; Park & Iceland, 2011).

Segregation in new immigrant destinations can take the form of residential, social, economic, or ethnic isolation (Evans et al., 2014). In North Carolina, Southeast Asian refugees are often housed in low-income apartments with few opportunities to interact with mainstream Americans, especially if job segregation (which is also common) also exists (Kinefuchi, 2010). In manufacturing and blue collar jobs, immigrants often work in entry-level positions and have little contact with advanced laborers and professionals who tend to represent the mainstream community. Work segregation could also result from bias in terms of hiring, salary, and ceiling effects. In some cases, employers promote job segregation by fostering ethnic antagonism and a split labor market where immigrants are perceived as competing with the mainstream for jobs, displacing workers, and lowering wages (Bonacich, 1972). Such assumptions could create further social segregation marked by conflict, tension, and perhaps even mistrust and fear.

Segregation could also be directly experienced by immigrant children and youth. With limited social, institutional, and community resources, rural and new immigrant destinations could offer less in terms of organized social activities for youth, especially in comparison to the opportunities found in traditional areas of migration.

The implications of such limited resources are weighty given that extracurricular involvement is widely beneficial to academic development and social and psychological well being (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003), with recent work pointing to particularly strong effects for first-generation youth (Camacho & Fuligni, 2014).

Notably, some segregation could be voluntary, such as when immigrants purposefully concentrate in areas due to affordable housing, proximity to resources and jobs, and comfort and familiarity of same-ethnic peers (Park & Iceland, 2011). In new destinations, however, ethnic enclaves tend to be smaller, less concentrated, or nonexistent and, as such, segregation can take on a different meaning than in urban, ethnically dense areas. In some cases, segregation might not even be possible, such as in small communities where few institutional resources (e.g., library, community center, schools) must be shared by all (Waters & Jimenez, 2005).

In terms of community resources, the influx of newcomers has put substantial demands on existing infrastructure in many rural areas (e.g., schools, health care system) and has forced these communities to immediately adapt to the demographic change (Singer, 2004). Challenges could arise if communities are unprepared or unwilling to accommodate their changing demographics. On the other hand, the arrival of new residents can help to revitalize small, rural communities through increased activity such as property sales and rentals or simply keeping schools and local organizations populated and energized (Singer, Hardwick, & Brettell, 2008).

Language resources are also vital. Limited heritage language support in schools could serve as a barrier to child and youth adjustment (Kuk & Lichter, 2010). Few language supports in receiving communities could similarly challenge adults' integration and force them to rely on children as language brokers or translators (Singer, 2004). Moreover, the scarce availability of external resources is not only a practical concern but could convey the subtle message that newcomers are inferior, not welcome, or do not belong. While language supports are growing for Spanish-speaking immigrants in new destinations, the diversity in languages spoken among Asian immigrants makes providing such resources a particularly difficult challenge to address.

Taken together, the influence of the receiving community on Asian Americans in rural and new immigrant destinations is widespread and significant. The variables in our model intersect in complex and dynamic ways, and all of these community factors (e.g., discrimination, segregation, resources) are linked to the overall size and ethnic diversity of the community itself (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). With negative social perceptions of the influx of immigrants, newcomers are likely to experience multiple levels of segregation. Discrimination in areas where ethnic density is low and where individuals have a sense of social isolation could be particularly harmful (Potochnick et al., 2012). A lack of infrastructure and few economic, cultural, or social resources could hinder adaptation and lead to further feelings of isolation. Not having same-ethnic peers to commiserate and share negative experiences with or to revel in achievements also presents challenging social circumstances (Tatum, 2003). Alternatively, communities that embrace change could work with newcomers to create effective strategies for integration and promoting adjustment. As movement into new immigrant areas is still growing, more work is needed to understand

complex social and community factors and to develop concrete ways to celebrate such demographic change, for newcomers as well as the mainstream.

Cultural and Family-Level Resources Another key component to our model includes the cultural and family resources that could enhance the adjustment and adaptation of youth and families in rural and new immigrant destinations. Like other aspects of our model, these cultural and family variables are intricately linked with other components including community factors previously discussed. Cultural and family resources are permeated by Garcia Coll et al.'s (1996) idea of adaptive culture, which refers broadly to the ways in which individuals negotiate and integrate their lived experiences, such as those that stem from the environment, into their overall sense of self. The specific variables that we highlight as particularly important include ethnic identity, socialization, and culturally relevant aspects of family relationships and values.

Few have examined protective factors among immigrant youth, especially among those in new immigrant destinations, but ethnic identity is a key resource to consider. Ethnic identity can promote psychological, social, and academic adjustment (Evans et al., 2014), as well as protect against negative effects of discrimination and normative stress (Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backen, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). The social connections and pride that come with a strong sense of identity would thus seem beneficial for Asian Americans in new immigrant communities who might be at risk for social segregation and racial discrimination.

Context can shape the way children and adolescents culturally define themselves. In rural and new immigrant destinations, which tend to be predominantly White, maintaining cultural traditions while assimilating to the mainstream could be challenging (Mistry & Wu, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In contrast, among immigrants in metropolitan areas and established ethnic enclaves, children are often exposed to cultural institutions such as temples, community centers, and small businesses, which provide infrastructure for sustaining heritage language and practices (Khandelwal, 2002). In urban enclaves, children in immigrant families are also often exposed to other communities of color and ethnically diverse contexts. Child development in such urban areas can enhance early support for and awareness of ethnic identity, with children being somewhat protected from recognizing their minority status until they venture out from their ethnically dense communities (Mistry & Wu, 2010).

Being in a true numerical minority thus introduces qualitatively distinct circumstances. In a comparative study of Latino/as and Asian Americans in new immigrant versus traditional receiving sites, those in urban communities of Los Angeles were more likely to choose diverse ethnic labels to define themselves and to incorporate the term "American," whereas those in new immigrant destinations tended to use mostly ethnic heritage labels (Kiang, Perreira, et al., 2011). In turn, such labels have implications for well being and adjustment, with specific heritage labels being linked with healthier adjustment compared to the use of diffuse, panethnic labels (Kiang, 2008). Moreover, ethnic identity development is highly connected to American identity and to establishing a bicultural comfort with both ethnic and

mainstream cultures, which can also promote positive development (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Kiang, Witkow, & Champagne, 2013).

Community experiences can serve as socializing mechanisms, but parents also play a significant role (Kiang, Harter, & Whitesell, 2007). Ethnic socialization messages received from parents could depend on their family's reasons for migration and include messages that foster cultural pride and ways to cope with mainstream interactions that serve to devalue their group (Hughes et al., 2006). Parents could have different motivations to encourage children to fully assimilate or preserve cultural traditions. For example, Kinefuchi (2010) found evidence for diverse socialization strategies in the Montagnard community in North Carolina—some join Montagnard churches and organizations because of ease and familiarity, while others dissociate from these organizations in order to encourage their children to assimilate. Parents' own goals and acculturation levels can thus play a large role in their parenting, in the cultural values and behaviors they promote, and in their children's subsequent levels of cultural understanding.

Language is closely related to acculturation and cultural identification. Few direct comparisons across immigrant destinations have been made, but research does suggest that English proficiency tends to be lower and heritage language proficiency higher among those in new settlement versus traditional areas of migration (Kiang, Perreira, et al., 2011; Singer, 2004; Waters & Jimenez, 2005). As such, parents in rural areas could frequently enlist their children to assist with language brokering, which could, in turn, foster a strong, positive ethnic connection and motivate youth to identify closely with their culture and ancestry (Morales & Hanson, 2005). As stated earlier, new immigrants struggling with English could face difficulties adjusting to the mainstream and are largely dependent on available institutional and community resources.

Culturally relevant family values represent another central resource. Among Latino/as and Asian Americans, family obligation, or the idea that one should assist the family and help maintain family functioning, tends to be endorsed strongly, and such endorsements have been consistently related to healthy academic and psychological adjustment (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). Recent work with Latin Americans has further found that the link between family obligation and academic adjustment is particularly strong for those in rural communities compared to youth in traditional migration areas (Perreira et al., 2010). Other aspects of familism (e.g., respect) are also positive influences in individuals' lives (Kiang & Fuligni, 2009). Again, such family connections might be especially vital in rural areas given the few sources of same-ethnic social connections. Certainly, the lack of a same-ethnic peer group could hinder positive development through limited social support in the face of discrimination and less access to ethnic exploration with peers with shared backgrounds (Tatum, 2003). Our work with Asian American youth from the Southeastern USA has indeed found that same-ethnic peer relationships are positively associated with ethnic identity (Kiang, Peterson, & Thompson, 2011).

Cultural supports in the form of community resources and family and peer relationships all work to potentially buffer negative interactions at the community level. At the same time, the lack of social or cultural resources could hinder ethnic

socialization and exacerbate some of the unique challenges associated with residing in rural or new immigrant destinations. Further research to uncover and build cultural capital, relationships, and other assets to boost healthy development for children and youth in these immigrant contexts should be a priority.

Developmental Outcomes The utility in outlining a conceptual framework rests in its ability to predict outcomes. Most of the literature on immigrant youth adjustment has centered on samples from traditional areas of migration (e.g., Qin, 2008; Yip & Fuligni, 2002). This is a serious oversight. Given the changing landscape of where immigrant children are found, more work needs to be done to better understand how youth in new destination areas are adjusting.

Perhaps most pressing is the need to examine how individual, community, and cultural factors interact and work together to shape outcomes among Asian American youth in rural and new destination areas and, if possible, in comparison to their urban counterparts. As one example, some of the factors in our model (e.g., discrimination) could have a more intense effect for youth in rural and new immigrant destinations who are likely to have limited same-ethnic social support compared to youth in urban settings or ethnic enclaves. Some research conducted in new immigrant destinations supports this idea in that Southeast Asian youth exhibit greater risk for suicidality and other internalizing problems compared to youth from other backgrounds who represent a larger proportion of the overall population (Supple et al., 2013). It is also possible that well being and adjustment are generally lower among these Asian youth due to their status as relatively new immigrants in these settings, which could be accompanied by social stressors and isolation. However, in a daily diary study, Latino/a youth from rural areas of North Carolina tended to report higher happiness compared to their counterparts from Los Angeles (Potochnick et al., 2012). The existing literature thus appears to be inconclusive at best.

Many outcomes are relevant to youth in rural and new immigrant areas. Psychological and socioemotional adjustment (e.g., depressive symptoms, self-esteem) is critical, but socially oriented outcomes, such as peer relationship quality and feelings of loneliness and isolation, are also pertinent. Research on externalizing and delinquent behaviors is needed given that very little work has examined such outcomes among Asian American youth, regardless of geographic setting. Prior work with a non-Asian sample has found that rural youth were at risk for externalizing symptoms such as substance use and other risk-taking behaviors compared to youth in other settings (Atav & Spencer, 2002; Evans et al., 2014). To our knowledge, no such comparison has been done with rural Asian Americans. Similarly, very little research on more diverse indicators of positive development among Asian Americans exists, such as purpose or meaning, optimism, hope, and other eudaimonic constructs. Academic adjustment should be also considered, especially given the cultural salience of educational success among Asian American families (Thompson & Kiang, 2010). Schools are primary contexts that youth must navigate, and educational supports might be gravely limited in rural and new immigrant settings. As suggested by Garcia Coll et al. (1996), key developmental outcomes also include elements of bicultural competence, as well as adaptive ways of coping with racism, discrimination, and segregation.

Model Implications and Future Directions

Empirical tests of the different components of our theoretical model could assist in furthering the field's understanding of the developmental challenges, resources, and outcomes found among Asian American youth in rural and new immigrant destinations. We reiterate that the factors in our model are relevant for all youth and families, geographic area notwithstanding. However, in our discussion, we highlighted some of the unique ways in which such factors might operate in communities that are newly adjusting to hosting immigrant families.

Indeed, some models of immigrant adaptation might not apply to families in rural or new destinations. For example, the spatial assimilation model suggests that new immigrants are initially drawn toward immigrant-dense urban neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves, where most jobs and opportunities are located (Massey & Capoferro, 2008). As newcomers adjust and gain social mobility, they begin to integrate with the mainstream culture, gradually adopt their attitudes and values, and venture out to more affluent suburbs (Alba & Nee, 2003). These trends appear to be changing, given that many contemporary newcomers are moving directly to the suburbs and rural areas where job opportunities are now located (Singer, 2004). As discussed earlier, in the case of rural Asian Americans, an offshoot of these trends is that there might not be an established enclave in which newcomers can begin the process of acculturation. Hence, the gradual process of settling in segregated communities and later moving to desegregation might not apply (Park & Iceland, 2011). As such, to build on some of the components of our model, systematic investigation of the implications of the new migration patterns and alternatives to assimilation would be helpful. In particular, research is needed on how these new patterns of migration and assimilation might be linked to changes in the broad structure of the macrosystem, existing government policies, such as settlement strategies for refugees or state funding for institutional resources, and more proximal issues regarding contextual and community supports.

In terms of policy, emerging research and our theoretical conceptualization suggest that local governments and institutions should provide language support for immigrant children in school as well as for parents and adults in the community. The receiving community should also be aware of possible social conflict and proactively promote racial harmony, perhaps by educating the public and raising awareness about race and diversity (Kuk & Lichter, 2010). Explicitly examining the effectiveness of such programs could yield vital information on how to best promote newcomers' integration and child development.

Another meaningful opportunity is for researchers to address issues of intersectionality. Race, culture, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic background, and religion, among other forms of social identity, have always been intricately linked, yet empirical work has yet to investigate their interrelated role in predicting adjustment. Race and class intersect, particularly with respect to social status and inequality. Race, ethnicity, and religion are also intertwined and under-researched, as found in the case of Indian Hindus or Christian Montagnards.

For immigrant youth in new immigrant destinations, religious support could be especially salient and impactful (Evans et al., 2014). In places like the US South, churches are primary social organizations that community members use to connect and build social capital (Putnam, 2000). Prior work has identified religious development as central for rural youth (King, Elder, & Whitbeck, 1997). Through religious services and church-based programs, such as heritage language schools, the church may play an important role in promoting cultural connection and identity. Kinefuchi (2010) found that the church was highly meaningful and represented a strong source of support within the Montagnard community, not just for religious faith but also as a social meeting point. On the other hand, religious institutions could create internal strife. For example, some Hmong communities struggle between Christian-based "new" faiths and traditional beliefs (e.g., shamanism, animism, spirits) (Tapp, 1989). Accordingly, responding to recent calls in the developmental literature to better examine intersectionality, including ways that religious identity can intersect with ethnic identity, could be exceedingly worthwhile.

Lastly, a recurring theme in this chapter is that Asian Americans are heterogeneous. Recent work cautions against the use of panethnic groupings due to significant differences in adjustment and adaptation across Asian subethnicities (AAF, 2014). Although we agree, we also grant that there could be utility for researchers to rely on such categorizations, e.g., in cases where topics under study reflect generalizable processes. Given many Asian ethnic groups' mobility and settlement in areas that are less urban and less dense with other immigrants and ethnic minorities, there are also cases in which it is simply not realistic or feasible to recruit samples with specific ethnic heritages. In rural communities and new immigrant destinations, we might have to start with a panethnic definition, in order to get numbers that are large enough to examine with meaning. All things considered, the continued investigation of the implications of panethnicity and a more deliberate recognition of the use of panethnic labels in scientific theory and research, while specifically investigating subethnic Asian groups when possible, could help to drive the field forward and further inform our understanding of Asian American development in diverse geographic settings.

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Chapter 6
Development and Well-Being of Rural Latino Youth: Research Findings and Methodological Aspects

Marcela Raffaelli, Maria I. Iturbide, and Mariela Fernandez

Latino children and adolescents represent a growing share of the rural population across the United States. Nationally, the number of Latinos under age 20 in rural counties increased by 48 % between 2000 and 2012, while the number of rural non-Hispanic White and Black youth decreased by 12.9 % and 12.4 %, respectively (Johnson, Schaefer, Lichter, & Rogers, 2014). As a result of these trends, over one tenth of rural youth in the USA are now Latino (Johnson, 2012). Despite their increased presence in the US population, rural Latino youth remain largely invisible within the developmental literature. Our goal in this chapter is to provide a systematic review of the current state of developmental knowledge about rural Latino youth. We open with a demographic overview of the rural Latino youth population. In the second section, we review the empirical literature on the development and well-being of rural Latino youth. We then discuss methodological challenges and strategies for developmental scholars working with this population. In closing, we provide suggestions for future research.

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Demographic Overview: Latino Youth in Rural America

As is true of the overall Latino population, rural Latinos are diverse in terms of geographic distribution, ancestry, and immigration experience. Some border states that were formerly part of Mexico have long-established rural Latino (primarily Mexican American) communities (e.g., California; see Rochín, 2013). In other states, secondary migration has occurred, with Latinos dispersing from urban centers that represent traditional immigrant destinations into surrounding areas, including rural locations (Kandel & Parrado, 2006). In other cases, Latin American immigrants responded to increased demand for low-wage labor in the manufacturing, service, and agricultural sectors (Capps, Koball, & Kandel, 2010). These opportunities were primarily concentrated in so-called new destinations in the Midwest and South where Latinos have not historically had a significant presence (Kandel & Parrado, 2006). Another source of diversity reflects shifts in migrant origins across countries and sending regions. For example, the share of migrants from traditional sending regions in Mexico (Central-West and Border areas) has declined, while the share from the Central and Southeastern regions increased (Riosmena & Massey, 2012). The diversity of rural Latinos is a critical consideration for researchers.

Rural communities provide a different developmental context than urban communities. Taking an ecological approach, Castro and Gutierres (1997) described urban–rural differences in three domains (environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal). Within the environmental domain, there are differences in the ecology (e.g., rural areas have lower population density, less congestion, and less access to media and services). Rural–urban differences in the interpersonal domain include pace of life (slower in rural areas), closeness of social relations (closer in rural areas), and general conservatism (rural areas tend to be more politically and socially conservative). Intrapersonal characteristics (attitudes and values orientations) are also likely to differ in ways that affect individual development and behavior (e.g., emphasis on cooperation and collectivism in rural areas vs. individualism and competition in urban areas). One current reality in rural communities is poverty: 81 % of US counties with persistent child poverty are rural (Mattingley, Johnson, & Schaefer, 2011). At the same time, rural communities differ from each other on multiple dimensions (see Conger, Reeb, & Chan, 2015)—including population density, adjacency to metropolitan areas, and dominant economy (e.g., farming, mining, manufacturing, recreational opportunities; Johnson, 2012). They also differ in the proportion of Latinos in the population; some rural counties are "majority–minority" counties where ethnic minorities predominate, whereas others have low numbers of Latino youth (Johnson et al., 2014).

Rural youth are likely to experience life differently depending on these and other factors. For example, Latinos migrating to new destination areas often found themselves in communities that experienced dramatic changes starting in the 1980s, when the downturn in the farm economy led to family financial stress, loss of land, and outmigration. These communities have been described as "rural ghettos"

characterized by abandoned businesses and lack of services (Conger, 2013). Newcomers typically found work in low-wage jobs that did not offer benefits; as a result, they and their families were disproportionately likely to be poor (Saenz, 2008). They also lived in communities that were often unprepared to support new-comers and their families, lacking an ethnic enclave and Spanish-speaking profes-sionals who could facilitate immigrants' adaptation and integration (e.g., Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013).

Given the growing presence of Latinos in new destinations, it is not surprising that studies have often focused on the challenges they confront. However, many rural Latinos are not immigrants working in low-wage jobs—they are US citizens whose families have been in the USA for multiple generations. As long-established community members, they take on a variety of roles, including as "educators, police and firemen, service providers, owner-operators of all kinds of businesses, local leaders" (Rochín, 2013, p. 81). Life in established rural communities is likely to be qualitatively different from life in new destination areas. And still other Latinos are migrant and seasonal farmworkers who work in often dangerous conditions (National Center for Farmworker Health, 2012); Latino children in these families are an understudied population.

Development and Well-Being of Rural Latino Youth

We structure this section around three main topics. First, we ask how Latino youth are faring in rural communities, examining multiple dimensions of well-being. Second, we ask what is known about the developmental contexts experienced by rural Latino youth and (where possible) explore how contextual factors are linked to well-being. Third, we discuss challenges and opportunities for those who seek to promote posi-tive outcomes among rural Latino youth. In each case, our coverage was dictated by the available literature, rather than by the relative importance of a given topic.

Research on Indicators of Well-Being Among Rural Latino Youth

A number of primarily cross-sectional studies have focused on psychological, behavioral, and physical health outcomes in rural Latino youth. Some studies have utilized datasets that include both rural and urban youth, whereas others have included exclusively rural samples.

Psychological Health There are indications that Latino youth living in rural communities are similar to their urban and non-Latino counterparts in terms of psychological health. For example, a study of over 4000 ethnically diverse adoles-cents from two economically disadvantaged rural Southeastern counties revealed

no ethnic differences in anxiety and aggression (Smokowski, Cotter, Robertson, & Guo, 2013) or depression and self-esteem (Smokowski, Evans, Cotter, & Guo, 2013). A large-scale study of Latino youth in three contexts (Los Angeles, urban North Carolina, and rural North Carolina) revealed multiple differences across states but only one significant difference between rural and urban Latino youth in North Carolina. Specifically, rural youth reported a higher likelihood of experiencing discrimination than urban youth (Potochnick, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2012, Table 2); no differences were found in psychological well-being (e.g., happiness, depression), social acceptance (e.g., positive school climate), or social identity (e.g., ethnic identification, family relationships).

Factors linked to psychological well-being among rural Latino youth have not been systematically investigated, although some studies have examined gender differences. A study of Latino adolescents in rural California found higher rates of depression and stress (particularly acculturation-related concerns and family-related issues) among girls than boys (Katragadda & Tidwell, 1998). In contrast, a more recent study of Latino early adolescents in rural North Carolina revealed that boys were more likely than girls to discuss stress linked to family concerns (Larson & McQuiston, 2008). The divergent findings highlight the need for replication in different contexts, with in-depth consideration of factors linked to psychological well-being in Latino boys and girls growing up in rural communities.

Substance Use   There is limited information on substance use among rural Latino youth. Based on a comprehensive literature review, Crockett and Zamboanga (2009) concluded that overall, Latino youth start using substances at younger ages than youth from other ethnic backgrounds but that rates are similar by the end of high school. General population studies indicate that patterns of drug and alcohol use do not differ substantially between urban and rural youth, with a few exceptions. For example, the 2013 Monitoring the Future Study showed that rural youth were less likely than those in metropolitan areas to report marijuana use and cigarette smoking, but more likely to use smokeless tobacco and inhalants (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, Schulenberg, & Miech, 2014). However, it is unclear whether similar patterns of substance use exist among rural Latino youth.

In a study that examined predictors of alcohol use among rural adolescents, Swaim and Stanley (2011) reported a complex set of results, including the finding that Mexican American youth in predominantly White rural communities were more likely to report alcohol use than those living in Mexican American communities. Examining risk and protective factors for substance use among Latino youth in a new immigrant destination, Stone and Meyler (2007) noted unique community-level risk factors; for example, diverse cultural origins of immigrants and lack of community infrastructure were associated with greater substance use. These findings are consistent with the notion that being in the minority might lead to substance use through pathways that include peer factors, discrimination, and acculturative stress (Castro & Gutierres, 1997). In addition, culturally specific protective factors have been identified for Latino youth, including gender-related expectations (Stone & Meyler, 2007) and spirituality or religiosity (Hodge, Cardenas, & Montoya,

2001). Additional work is needed to elucidate the role these factors play in rural Latino adolescents' drug and alcohol use.

Sexual Health Overall, rural teens experience higher pregnancy rates than their urban peers, and this is true for Latinas. National statistics indicate that 72 out of 1000 rural Latina adolescents ages 15–19 are parents, compared to 52 out of 1000 urban Latina teens (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy [National Campaign], 2013).

A range of factors at multiple levels of the ecology have been identified as contributing to risky sexual behavior and early pregnancy among Latino adolescents (for review, see Raffaelli & Iturbide, 2009). It is unclear, however, whether this work can be generalized to rural Latinos. In two studies, rural Latino parents were described as holding traditional views of sexual activity (Murphy-Erby, Stauss, & Estupinian, 2013) and expressing concern about daughters' sexuality (Larson, Sandelowski, & McQuiston, 2012). Other potential contributors to teen pregnancy in rural settings include contextual factors (e.g., lack of services, limited opportunities to pursue higher education; National Campaign, 2013), interpersonal factors (e.g., sexual aggression; Larson & McQuiston, 2008), and intrapersonal factors (e.g., limited or incorrect information about sexually transmitted infections; Champion & Kelly, 2002; Larson & McQuiston, 2008). Additional research is needed to investigate the extent to which these factors operate to place rural Latinos at risk of teen pregnancy or problematic sexual outcomes.

Physical Health There are indications that rural Latino youth face different—and perhaps greater—physical health challenges than their urban counterparts. In the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), 40 % of rural Latino youth reported at least one chronic illness (e.g., asthma, obesity), compared to 35 % of non-rural Latino youth (Wickrama, Elder, & Abraham, 2007). This rural–urban disparity remained after controlling for multiple community, family, and individual variables. Other studies suggest that specific health conditions may differ by place of residence. For instance, educators reported that rural Latino students were more likely to experience conditions related to lack of basic medical care (e.g., ear infections, poor dental care, lapsed vaccinations) than urban Latino students (Villalba, 2007).

Recent studies conducted in particular states provide insight into the health status of rural Latino adolescents. For example, rural Latino youth in Nebraska had high rates of health risks related to diabetes and heart disease, and low levels of physical activity (Nelson et al., 2013). Other scholars have focused on health issues among children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (e.g., Kilanowski & Moore, 2010). These youth confront multiple health challenges, including high blood pressure, obesity, pesticide exposure, and lack of access to routine health care (Kilanowski, 2014). In some cases, youngsters are themselves employed in agricultural work, with implications for their health and well-being. Although children under age 14 are barred from most occupations in the USA, and 14- to 15-year-olds can work only in specific jobs under restricted conditions, labor laws differ for agricultural work. With some restrictions during the school year, children of any age can work

on small farms with parental permission; at age 12, they can work on any farm (including commercial farms) with parental permission; at age 14, they can work on any farm without parental permission (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (2014), agricultural employment "ranks among the most dangerous industries" (para. 1) in the USA, posing an obvious threat to healthy development. Taken together, these studies suggest that rural Latino youth may experience a range of physical health problems.

Studies examining potential correlates of physical health among rural Latino youth have focused primarily on linguistic assimilation and examined different outcomes. In the Add Health sample, higher levels of acculturation (indexed by speaking English at home) were associated with higher prevalence rates of chronic illnesses (Wickrama et al., 2007). Nelson et al. (2013) reported that higher levels of acculturation (English use) were associated with lower levels of health risks related to diabetes and heart disease. Additional research is needed to elucidate factors contributing to different aspects of physical health among rural Latino youth.

Developmental Contexts Experienced by Rural Latino Youth

A recurrent theme in the literature on rural Latino youth is the role of contextual factors in shaping their experiences. In this section, we consider what is known about the social relationships and settings that represent key development contexts for youth.

Family Relationships Research has documented the importance of family relationships in the lives of Latino youth (Grau, Azmitia, & Quattlebaum, 2009), and family members have been identified as important sources of motivation and support for rural Latino youth (e.g., Lagerwey & Phillips, 2003). In Potochnick et al.'s (2012) study, greater family identification was associated with higher levels of happiness and lower levels of anxiety among rural Latino youth, and spending more time with family was linked to lower symptoms of depression. At the same time, gaps in parent–child expectations may be an issue for some families. In a mixed-methods study of Latino and White students in California high schools, regardless of ethnicity, rural students described less satisfactory relationships with their parents than did urban youth, citing issues of control and parental concerns about peers as sources of tension; rural students were also more likely to report that parents held traditional values (Gándara, Gutierrez, & O'Hara, 2001). Additional research is needed to examine whether rural–urban differences in parent–child dynamics reflect family characteristics (e.g., parent education or birthplace) or values inherent to rural settings.

Parental adjustment has been linked to Latino children's well-being in urban samples (e.g., Raffaelli, Iturbide, Carranza, & Carlo, 2014), and similar linkages could exist for rural Latinos. A growing body of literature describes the often challenging situations rural Latino families confront, particularly immigrants in new destination communities. These families face an array of potential stressors,

including family separation, parental role shifts, economic strain, language difficulties, and issues surrounding documentation (for review, see Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013). These challenges take a toll; over two thirds (67.9 %) of adult Mexican immigrants studied in rural North Carolina met clinical thresholds for anxiety, depression, or both (Kiang, Grzywacz, Marín, Arcury, & Quandt, 2010). The extent to which parental and child well-being are linked in rural Latinos represents an important area for future research.

Relationships with Peers and Nonfamilial Adults Few studies have examined nonfamilial social relationships of rural Latino youth. Peers were identified as sources of motivation for Latino youth in studies of educational aspirations (Lagerwey & Phillips, 2003; Streng et al., 2004). For some youth, however, language barriers and differences in family background may hinder the establishment of relationships between Latinos and European Americans (Diversi & Mecham, 2005; Stone & Meyler, 2007), as well as between immigrant and nonimmigrant Latinos (Streng et al., 2004). Nonfamilial adults also have been cited as contributing to rural Latino youth's well-being. For instance, youth participants in a mentoring program reported that college student mentors kept them from engaging in risky behavior while encouraging them to do their schoolwork (Diversi & Mecham, 2005). Similarly, youth in another study emphasized the importance of having an adult advocate for their high school club (Streng et al., 2004). Rural youth may have fewer opportunities to connect with adults than their urban peers due to the ecology of rural communities (e.g., small and geographically dispersed population, lack of physical infrastructure). Given that non-familiar peers and adults represent important developmental influences on youth, there is a need for additional research on this topic.

Schools and Educational Experiences Rural schools represent a third of all public schools in the United States, and 13 % of rural students are Latino (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013). Dropout rates for rural Latino students are comparable to rates in suburbs, cities, and towns (NCES, 2013), suggesting that Latino youth are not necessarily disadvantaged educationally by living in a rural area. The exception is migrant and farmworker youth, who drop out from school at higher rates than the national average due to educational interruptions (Human Rights Watch, 2010) and long work hours (there is no limit on the number of hours farmworker youth may work outside of school time; U.S. Department of Labor, 2013).

Rural schools appear to provide a unique set of opportunities and challenges for Latino youth. Gándara et al. (2001) provided a rich description of how educational experiences differ by rural–urban context to shape students' expectations. In some ways, the rural context was protective (e.g., less pressure to engage in gang activity); however, rural youth (regardless of ethnicity) reported lower educational aspirations than urban youth. The authors note a lesser emphasis on college attendance in the rural school, as well as differences between urban and rural parents' aspirations for their children that likely reflect parents' own educational experiences and socioeconomic standing. Consistent with this notion, a qualitative study

revealed a correspondence between immigrant Latino parents' educational backgrounds and their children's educational and occupational aspirations (Behnke, Piercy, & Diversi, 2004).

Schools in new destinations may have difficulty meeting the needs of Latino youth, particularly those from immigrant families. In many rural districts, schools lack bilingual education classes or bilingual staff (Lagerwey & Phillips, 2003), and school administrators and staff are European American (Villalba, 2007), posing challenges to educating ethnically diverse students. For example, in rural Utah, teachers expected Latino students to perform well without considering that some did not understand assignments (Diversi & Mecham, 2005). Teachers may also fail to recognize that some parents do not read fluently in either English or Spanish due to limited educational attainment (Saenz, 2008) or because they come from Latin American populations that do not speak Spanish (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012). Furthermore, immigrant parents may hold different expectations than teachers regarding parental involvement (Diversi & Mecham, 2005), resulting in misunderstandings or conflict. In some cases, teachers are described as the source of differential treatment, discrimination, and racism directed towards youth (e.g., Behnke et al., 2004; Gándara et al., 2001; Lagerwey & Phillips, 2003), which can lead to social isolation and school disengagement (Diversi & Mecham, 2005; Stone & Meyler, 2007; Streng et al., 2004). Additional research is needed to examine further how features of rural schools are associated with developmental outcomes.

Promoting the Well-Bring of Rural Latino Youth: Challenges and Opportunities

As documented in the previous section, many rural Latino youth face barriers to optimal development. Challenges may take different forms, such as social (e.g., family stress, small social networks), physical (e.g., distance between school and home), and economic (e.g., limited family and community budgets). Barriers are also likely to vary depending on the nature of the community: an established ethnic enclave can help newcomers navigate life in the new setting but is typically lacking in new destination communities (Stone & Meyler, 2007; Villalba, 2007). Dispersed or frontier rural communities often lack services and resources (Stone & Meyler, 2007). Even when services are available, they may be difficult to access due to geographic distance and lack of transportation (Champion & Kelly, 2002). Furthermore, institutions may lack bilingual staff or the cultural knowledge to serve Latinos effectively.

In light of these issues, identifying ways to promote the well-being of Latino youth in rural communities is a priority. Efforts that build on local expertise and existing resources are more likely to succeed than those that come from external sources or require new investments. For example, in isolated rural communities, schools represent a potential venue for delivering programs (e.g., Knoche & Witte, this volume).

Community-based after-school programs offer another potential resource for reaching youth, although it has been noted that Latinos are less likely to participate in youth programs than other ethnic groups (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012). Collaborative approaches may better serve the Latino population (Diversi & Mecham, 2005; Edwards, Miller, & Blackburn, 2011). For example, Murphy-Erby et al. (2013) described the collaboration of families, churches, and other community institutions to implement a culturally sensitive teen pregnancy prevention program for Latino families. Diversi and Mecham (2005) created an after-school program for Latino youth in collaboration with an ESL teacher. Community collaborations offer a way of leveraging scarce resources to address pressing needs in rural communities. They also offer potential points of entry for researchers hoping to work with rural Latino youth.

Methodological Issues in Research with Rural Latino Youth

Scholars have provided guidelines on how to conduct research with ethnic minorities (specifically Latinos) and disadvantaged populations based largely on experiences with urban samples (e.g., Knight, Roosa, Calderon-Tena, & Gonzales, 2009; Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009; Marín & Marín, 1991). Working in rural areas presents a unique set of considerations. In this section, we briefly review issues related to sampling, recruitment, cultural appropriateness, and ethical issues, particularly as they apply to research with rural Latino populations. We also discuss strategies and recommendations for conducting research with rural Latino youth, drawing on the published literature and our own experiences in the field. We note that some suggestions may not be feasible for all researchers owing, for example, to differences in university Institutional Review Board policies. Researchers are encouraged to consult with experienced colleagues at their institution, their IRB staff, and community collaborators regarding what is locally acceptable.

Before embarking on a study in a rural community, it is worth taking the time to learn about the local context. In some settings, gatekeepers and collaborators may have limited knowledge about or experience with research. In these cases, researchers must be prepared to spend time explaining the research process before proposing a specific project, including a realistic discussion about funding and timelines. For example, school principals are often surprised (and disappointed) when a study they are excited about cannot start immediately because it must undergo a lengthy review process to secure funding. Conversely, in rural areas with a high concentration of Latinos near a major university, schools may be overwhelmed with requests from researchers and be reluctant to grant access. Researchers must also learn about the industry that employs potential participants. For example, in an agricultural area, it is likely that some Latinos (including youth) are employed as seasonal or migrant workers. Before initiating a study, researchers should determine what fruit or vegetable is in season and when peak harvesting occurs, because there will be large shifts in the Latino population based on the agricultural product. Allowing time to learn about the local setting and build relationships with community partners can avoid later complications.

Sampling Issues

Designing a study involves determining the type of sample that is most appropriate given the study's research questions and the study context. Random samples give everyone in the population of interest an equal opportunity to be a part of the research sample (Knight, Roosa, Calderon-Tena, et al., 2009). This sampling approach yields the most representative sample, allowing results to be generalized to the larger population. It would be time-consuming and expensive to obtain a random sample of Latinos in a rural setting because they are not evenly distributed throughout the community (thus, one might have to knock on every door to locate Latino youth). Random sampling can be conducted in a school setting when administrators agree to provide class lists—researchers can then randomly select youth from the entire school or by classroom. However, many schools are reluctant to release ethnicity information, making it impossible to reliably identify Latino students. Furthermore, school-based recruitment neglects adolescents who have dropped out of school, are home schooled, or are temporarily absent (e.g., participating in seasonal farm work).

Stratified samples are determined by specific criteria to insure that population subgroups (e.g., defined by gender, national origin, birthplace) are equally represented (Knight, Roosa, Calderon-Tena, et al., 2009). In rural settings, researchers could use Census data to identify areas that include Latino youth with the desired sample characteristics, and then recruit in those areas. Another approach is venue-based sampling, which involves identifying locations frequented by members of the target population, then randomly selecting days and times for recruiting (Muhib et al., 2001). For example, in studies of migrant families, Kilanowski and colleagues have sampled from farms or migrant camps (e.g., Kilanowski & Moore, 2010). To the extent that the venue attracts a representative cross-section of the population, the resulting sample will be representative.

Most studies of Latinos use convenience samples, which are easy and inexpensive to obtain (Knight, Roosa, Calderon-Tena, et al., 2009). Convenience samples can be recruited using multiple methods, such as posting flyers, snowball sampling (participant referrals), and solicitations at community organizations. The main drawback of convenience samples is that there is no defined sampling frame and thus the representativeness of the sample—and generalizability of the findings—cannot be established. An adaptation of snowball sampling, respondent driven sampling, allows researchers to compensate for the nonrandom sample through mathematical modeling (Heckathorn, 1997). However, this method favors participants with large social networks, so it may not be suitable for recent immigrants or socially isolated populations.

Regardless of the sampling approach, researchers should specify inclusion criteria used to identify potential study participants and collect sufficient information to describe the sample. Ideally, this information would allow a comparison of the sample with the larger Latino population on key demographic indicators (e.g., income, education, immigrant background), bolstering confidence that study findings were not due to specific sample characteristics.

Recruitment and Retention

Once the sampling approach has been decided, a recruitment plan must be devised to reach and attract the population of interest. Recommendations for the recruitment of Latinos all encourage a personal touch, consistent with cultural values of *respeto* (respect; Marín & Marín, 1991), *personalismo* ("importance placed on personal goodness and getting along with others"; Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2000, p. 12), and *simpatía* (agreeableness and the desire to maintain nonconfrontational relationships; Marín & Marín, 1991). If researchers are not themselves Latino or do not speak the same language as potential participants, having bicultural/bilingual staff is critical when introducing the study.

Researchers recommend employing trusted members of the community as recruiters and community liaisons (e.g., Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004). This brings a familiar face to the project and adds a level of credibility for potential participants. For example, one study employed community members and *promotores* (health promoters) to recruit rural Latino youth and adults in participants' homes and community organizations (García, Gilchrist, Vazquez, Leite, & Raymond, 2011). Some researchers have used school staff and school assemblies to recruit Latino youth (e.g., Villarruel, Jemmott, Jemmott, & Eakin, 2006). A community liaison is a person known in the Latino community who can serve as a bridge between the researchers and the target population. Community liaisons can be particularly helpful for long-term or longitudinal studies. In rural areas, researchers may not be able to identify members of the Latino community to act as recruiters or community liaisons; in these cases, another trusted community member may be identified (e.g., a daycare provider, health worker, or coach).

Recruitment may incorporate print or broadcast media (often used in conjunction with other approaches). Print media (e.g., flyers, newspaper ads) should be in Spanish and English and written at an appropriate reading level. Flyers should be posted in locations frequented by Latinos; in rural areas, this may be limited to post offices, restaurants, grocery stores, or churches. For example, Nelson et al. (2013) recruited Latino youth via flyers that were distributed by school staff and posted in locations frequented by Latinos. Because all members of the target population may not be literate, broadcast media can also be used (e.g., local radio and TV stations), although this may be difficult in rural areas with limited Spanish language media.

Longitudinal research with rural Latinos may pose a particular challenge, especially when samples consist of a mobile population. General strategies for maintaining longitudinal cohorts could be adapted for use with rural Latino populations. For example, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997) followed a national sample of young people across 15 waves of data collection. Retention strategies included obtaining contact information for the respondent and several other people who would know where they were if they moved, mailings with forwarding requests, monetary incentives, multiple contact attempts, and use of standard locating services (NLSY, n.d.). When working with Latinos, it is important to use strategies that

emphasize a personal connection (e.g., sending handwritten holiday cards and thank you notes). Migrants may return to their country of origin, so researchers should obtain contact information for relatives and friends in both the USA and the home country. Given the lack of published models for conducting longitudinal research with rural Latinos, pilot work is likely to be useful in identifying retention strategies that are likely to be successful in a particular community.

Cultural Appropriateness in Research Methods with Latinos

Understanding the complexities of the Latino population and familiarity with the local population are both critical for researchers seeking to approach the participants in the most appropriate way. In addition, issues of cultural appropriateness must be considered.

Language There are multiple language issues to consider when designing a study of Latinos. First, given variations in levels of formal education among Latinos (particularly immigrants), study documents (e.g., recruitment material, consent forms) need to be written at an appropriate reading level. Second, it is not enough to translate documents, as there are regional variations in the Spanish language. Furthermore, researchers must decide when to use formal versus informal language (e.g., the English word "you" can be translated into the formal "usted" or the informal "tu"; the most appropriate form depends in part on the relative age of the speakers and their familiarity with each other). Finally, immigrants from some indigenous populations in Latin America speak an indigenous language (e.g., P'urhépecha in Michoacán, Mexico) and may not speak Spanish. Hiring bicultural and bilingual staff from multiple Latin American countries should be considered to ensure that language issues are adequately addressed. Given the complexities of translating and validating measures, we advocate using existing measures that have been validated with members of the target population whenever possible. If existing measures are not available, researchers should follow established guidelines to ensure that the resulting measure is conceptually equivalent to the original and demonstrates acceptable psychometric properties (Erkut, Alarcon, García Coll, Tropp, & Vázquez García, 1999; Knight, Roosa, Calderon-Tena, et al., 2009; Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009).

Family Structure and Roles Historically, Latino families have been described as having a hierarchical structure and demarcated gender roles (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2000). Family roles are probably less strongly defined in contemporary Latino families, especially those who are more acculturated or of higher socioeconomic status (Raffaelli & Iturbide, 2009), but in some Latino groups, it would be considered inappropriate to recruit youth without first speaking to their parents. It would be best to approach both parents because in many cases the father would defer decision about the youth to the mother (considering child-related issues part of the maternal domain). Given an increase in single parent Latino households

(Grau et al., 2009), and family separation due to migration, we typically address recruitment materials to the "parent(s)" of potential youth participants.

Time Orientation Traditionally Latinos are described as present time-oriented (i.e., focusing on what they are doing at the moment; Marín & Marín, 1991). As a result, Latino participants may be late to (or miss) data collection appointments. This tendency may be compounded by transportation limitations, work and household responsibilities, and other demands of daily life. Researchers recommend scheduling appointments no more than a week in advance and sending several reminders (Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004; Villarruel et al., 2006). Data collection should also be structured to accommodate participants; for example, Villarruel et al. (2006) had a "straggler" session for youth who missed a scheduled appointment. In another study, researchers offered a monetary incentive to participants who arrived on time for data collection sessions (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, Ruth, & Hyers, 2012).

Hospitality Following cultural values of *respeto* and *simpatía*, researchers should be hospitable towards participants. For example, researchers have served food and beverages during data collection sessions or recruitment (Domenech Rodríguez, Rodríguez, & Davis, 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004). This fits with notions of hospitality and gives participants a meal they might otherwise miss. Researchers have also provided child care during data collection (e.g., Behnke et al., 2004; Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2006), which may be particularly important in rural communities where finding a baby sitter may be difficult and expensive.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues are a paramount concern for researchers, particularly those working with vulnerable populations—a category that includes minor children, economically disadvantaged populations, and ethnic minorities (including Latinos). A full discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter, but we briefly discuss some of the principal issues.

In rural settings, potential loss of confidentiality is a major concern, particularly when the population of Latinos is small or distinct. For example, if a school has a small number of Latinos, it may be relatively easy to identify a specific youth described in (apparently) general terms in a manuscript (e.g., there may only be one "13-year-old girl who recently arrived from Guatemala with her single mother" in the entire county). Similarly, migrant workers may be housed together in a particular county, so knowing where the study was conducted would potentially allow identification of individuals. In some cases, the focus of the study might be a concern—merely participating in a study of substance use, teen pregnancy, or another sensitive topic could result in a breach of privacy. Therefore, study procedures should be rigorously designed to safeguard confidentiality at all stages—from recruitment through data collection to reporting of results.

Specific questions may also be a concern for respondents. For example, some participants may not wish to answer demographic questions (e.g., income, place of birth, time in the USA) because they feel the questions are too personal or are concerned their answers may reveal that they (or a family member) are undocumented. Researchers sometimes handle this concern by not asking for demographic information, which is problematic because it does not allow the study population to be adequately characterized. A preferable approach is to implement protections so respondents feel comfortable answering personal questions. For example, researchers can apply for a waiver of documentation of informed consent when submitting their IRB protocol so participants can give verbal rather than written consent (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2011). For particularly sensitive studies, it might be desirable to obtain a federal certificate of confidentiality, which limits the information researchers can be required to release to judicial entities (National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research, 2011).

In a recent study of Latino parents conducted in largely rural counties, several procedures were implemented to reassure participants that their privacy would be protected (Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013). Recruitment flyers had a list of "frequently asked questions" stating that interviewers would not ask about respondents' or family members' immigration status, participants would not be required to show any identification, and payment would be in cash. Data collection occurred through face-to-face interviews, with responses recorded on paper by the interviewer, rather than being audiotaped. In addition to completing required ethics trainings, recruiters and interviewers signed a confidentiality agreement documenting their responsibilities toward the participants. Finally, the list linking participant names and IDs (kept to monitor recruitment) was destroyed when data collection was complete, rendering data anonymous. With these safeguards, participants were willing to provide extensive personal information.

Practical Considerations

In addition to the issues raised above, there are a number of practical considerations to keep in mind. Rural areas consist of a dispersed population and typically have limited (or no) public transportation; therefore, potential participants may not have a way to get to and from the data collection site. For example, asking youth to stay after school to fill out a survey may not be feasible because the school bus is their only way to get home. Some researchers recommend selecting data collection sites close to participants' homes or providing transportation (Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004). If families are being recruited, in-home data collection may be feasible (e.g., Behnke et al., 2004).

Clustering data collection can also work well in rural communities. In a previous study by the first author, it was more cost-effective for interviewers to carpool and conduct several interviews at a time, rather than driving individually to conduct a

single interview. Accordingly, interviewers scheduled interviews with several participants during a block of time (e.g., a morning or afternoon). Because the study used snowball sampling as one recruitment method, interviewers also called referrals immediately to see if they were available that same day, rather than scheduling an interview for another day.

With an increase in technology use among Latinos (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Patten, 2013), researchers often communicate with study participants via cell phone and social networking (e.g., send text message reminders of data sessions, create a project page on a social media site). However, rural households are less likely than urban households to have home internet (62 % vs. 73 % in 2010), and those that do have limited access to broadband service (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2013). Moreover, many parts of the USA do not have reliable access to cellular voice and data service (Hamblen, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate feasible and preferred methods of communication in the specific target population.

Finally, scholars should consider giving back to a community that has been essential to their research. From a pragmatic perspective, being known as a "drive by" researcher will reduce the possibility of the researcher (and other scholars) being welcomed back in that community. Giving back involves providing some kind of service to benefit the community and participants, but does not have to be a major time commitment. For example, researchers can prepare reports, fact sheets, or workshops regarding topics relevant to the research project.

Conclusions and Future Directions

In this chapter, we assessed what is known about the development and well-being of rural Latino youth and discussed strategies for conducting research with this understudied population. The developmental literature on rural Latino youth is growing but still sparse, consisting primarily of cross-sectional descriptive studies on a subset of developmental topics. On the basis of the literature review, we offer three preliminary conclusions regarding the development and well-being of rural Latino youth. First, it appears that Latino children and adolescents in rural communities are similar to their urban counterparts, or their non-Latino rural peers, in some aspects of development. But although many rural Latino youth are doing well, there are indications that some face challenges to positive development due to living in underserved rural communities. Second, it appears that the family, peer, and school contexts of rural and urban youth differ in ways that might affect their well-being. For example, although rural settings may protect Latino youth from harmful influences (e.g., gang involvement), lack of cultural diversity and social supports in rural settings may lead to feelings of isolation and stress. Finally, some rural Latino youth appear to face unique or increased challenges to well-being due to their family situation or contextual factors (e.g., those who are immigrants or grow up in predominantly non-Latino settings). These conclusions are only preliminary; it is important to emphasize that few studies have examined fundamental

developmental processes among rural Latino youth (e.g., identity formation, gender-related development, social relationships) or systematically explored whether contextual variations (e.g., in family, peer, and school contexts) are associated with youth well-being. Therefore, we close with recommendations for moving the field forward.

There is a clear need for basic information about the development and well-being of rural Latino youth. National datasets that include assessments of multiple domains of psychosocial functioning are potential resources for this work (e.g., Add Health, National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth, National Survey on Drug Use and Health). For example, national studies include measures of psychological adjustment, educational experiences, family and peer connections, and health behaviors. Although these datasets typically do not include extensive measures of culturally relevant constructs, they would allow researchers to begin addressing questions about how Latino youth are faring in rural contexts (e.g., Wickrama et al., 2007). Analyses could be conducted to describe how rural Latino youth compare to other groups of youth (e.g., urban Latino youth, rural youth from other ethnic backgrounds). Because several national datasets are longitudinal, it should also be possible to examine development over time.

Theory-driven research is also needed that explicitly considers the multiple factors shaping the reality in which rural Latino youth grow up. Scholars have long recognized that Latino subgroups vary in their demographic characteristics (e.g., nativity, education, income), and developmental studies typically take these factors into account. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, communities also vary along multiple dimensions that have not been systematically examined in developmental research. Therefore, future research should characterize rural communities in a nuanced way that captures meaningful contextual variations. For example, some scholars have used the rural–urban commuting area (RUCA) codes developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2014), which reflect population density, urbanization, and commuting flows. Using these (and other) classification approaches, scholars are beginning to parse how growing up in various types of rural communities affects developmental outcomes among Latino youth (e.g., Swaim & Stanley, 2011). Our discussion of methodological issues highlights the challenges of conducting research with rural Latino populations, but studies that systematically examine the intersections of Latino ethnicity and rurality are urgently needed.

Combining information from national datasets and in-depth studies would contribute to the goal of developing a full picture of the situation of rural Latino youth. This body of work would shed light on what life is like for rural Latino youth and elucidate whether and how growing up in a rural context affects their development and well-being. Given expected increases in the number of Latino children and adolescents in rural communities across the USA, identifying factors linked to their development and well-being represents an urgent priority for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.

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Chapter 7
School, Community, and Cultural Connectedness as Predictors of Adjustment Among Rural American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Adolescents

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American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) adolescents face an array of challenges, some of which they share with other rural as well as ethnic minority youth in the US. Research specific to this population is needed, however, due to unique features of their cultures, histories, and lifestyles as well as a lengthy legacy of colonization that compromised cultural, familial, and individual well-being. The historical trauma model accounts for accumulated emotional and psychological group trauma perpetuated across generations and observed in present-day incidences of substance abuse, mental health problems including depression and anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and self-destructive and suicidal behaviors (e.g., Brave Heart, 2003; Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Garrett & Carroll, 2000; Goodluck & Willeto, 2009).

Today's adolescents are not immune to these problems; for instance, some aspects of substance abuse are identified as major compromising factors to the well-being of AI/AN adolescents (Kulis, Napoli, & Marsiglia, 2002; Kulis, Okamoto, Rayle, & Sen, 2006; Waller, Okamoto, Miles, & Hurdle, 2003). More specifically, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (SAMHSA, 2010) found that the rate of substance dependence or abuse was highest for AI/ANs aged 12 or older at 15.5 % (3.5 % Asians, 8.8 % Blacks, 10.1 % Hispanics, and 9 % Whites). AI/ANs aged 12 or older also had the highest rate of current illicit drug use at 18.3 % (3.7 % Asian, 9.6 % Blacks, 7.9 % Hispanics, and 8.8 % Whites) (SAMHSA, 2010). Further, substance-related motor vehicle collisions was one of the three leading causes of death of AI/ANs aged 15–24 years (CDC, 2003). Of additional concern is the high suicide rate among AI/AN aged 15–34 which is 2.5 times higher than the

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national average for the same age group (CDC, 2010); indeed, the highest rate of suicide is found among Native youth compared to other ethnic groups (National Congress of American Indians, 2011). Teenage pregnancy and violent crime victimization rates are also elevated amongst AI/AN youth (Bearinger, Pettingell, & Resnick, 2005; Martin, Hamilton, Osterman, Curtin, & Mathews, 2013).

Given the evidence of compromised well-being among AI/AN youth, of interest in this chapter is examination of potential buffering or protective factors utilizing the resilience model as an overall approach. There are resilient AI/AN youth—those who present adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity in their lives—as shown by LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, and Whitbeck (2006) who found over 60 % of AI adolescent sample to be resilient. Therefore, it is meaningful to examine relevant protective factors for AI/AN youth; and we center on social connections as an anchor point. Connections to family, kin, and community are central features of relationships across numerous AI/AN cultures, and such relationships serve as sources of identity and well-being (Markstrom, 2011). Family connectedness is an important component of protection, but there is a major research gap on whether and how extrafamilial connections serve as sources of protection for AI/AN youth. Hence, the available literature is examined with special emphasis on adolescents' connection to and involvement in school, community, and culturally based activities as potential sources of protection. These sources of connection may be particularly salient for AI/AN youth given particular barriers to transportation and other opportunities posed to rural youth.

In this chapter, reservations as unique, predominantly rural, living contexts for this population are discussed according to both risks and benefits. The historical trauma model is presented as a means to shed light on risks posed to present-day AI/ANs. We then examine theory and research (our own and that of others) on the potential protective roles of social connections through school, community, and culture relative to adjustment outcomes among AI/AN adolescents with special consideration of rural and reservation contexts when such delineations are offered by authors. Conclusions and recommendations for future research are given.

Rurality and AI/ANs

AI/ANs account for 1.7 % of the US population (5.2 million) either solely AI/AN (0.9 %) or in combination (0.7 %) with one or more other races (US Census Bureau, 2012). Demographics for the rural segment of this population vary across parameters. It is shown that 53.8 % of Native Americans (excluding the two or more race population) live in rural or small town contexts compared to 21 % in the USA overall (Housing Assistance Council, 2012). In a generous definition of urban as communities over 2500, 71 % of AI/ANs—either solely or in combination with at least one other race—are designated as urban (Urban Indian Health Institute, 2013). Regardless of the means of determination, significant numbers of AI/AN live in rural or small town settings.

AI/AN adolescents face challenges similar to those of rural youth from other backgrounds, including poverty, lack of transportation, limited access to health and social support services, curtailed recreational, educational, and vocational opportunities, and so forth (Puskar, Serika, Lamb, Tusaie-Mumford, & McGuinness, 1999; Willging, Quintero, & Lilliott, 2014). These barriers are likely to be more widespread for AI/AN youth than for the US adolescent population overall. For example, while rural individuals are more likely to be in poverty than their urban counterparts, poverty rates are substantially higher for AI/ANs (Council of Economic Advisers, 2010). Further, US Census Bureau (2010) estimates reveal that AI/AN youth are more than twice as likely to be in poverty as their white peers. The accumulation of these risk factors, in conjunction with other intermediary processes such as family instability, stress, and insensitive parenting, lead to high levels of young children's behavioral problems (Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2013), which then sets the stage for subsequent involvement in substance use, sexual risk-taking, and other forms of maladjustment (Atav & Spencer, 2002). Thus, one explanation as to why AI/AN youth are disproportionately likely to engage in certain forms of substance abuse and other health compromising behaviors is their high burden of such risk factors—a subject that is more fully explored in a later section on historical trauma.

In addition to risks and barriers shared with other rural adolescents, the reservation experience is a unique and important facet of the rural experience specific to AI/ANs. The reservation system is a dimension of European colonization of Native peoples that was influential in altering lifestyles and social organization. Reservations are located predominantly in rural and remote areas (Housing Assistance Council, 2013; Whitbeck, Yu, Johnson, Hoyt, & Walls, 2008) and have historical prominence. Although today 67 % of those who self-identify as solely or partly AI/AN live off reservation lands (US Census Bureau, 2012), many of these individuals maintain ties to these rural places and return for short or long periods of time to reconnect to families and cultural traditions. Given the higher prominence of reservations in rural areas, it logically follows that reservation-based youth will more likely live in rural rather than metropolitan contexts. For example, in our analysis of the 2010 Arizona Youth Survey data, 28 % of AI/AN adolescents lived on nonmetropolitan reservations, while only 1.5 % lived on metropolitan reservations (Moilanen, Markstrom, & Jones, 2014). Of those living off reservations, 26.2 % resided in nonmetropolitan areas and 44.4 % in metropolitan settings. Thus, the bulk of reservation-based adolescents lived in nonmetropolitan areas, but most AI/AN adolescents were not living on reservations.

Several social and demographic factors present combinations of risk and benefits to rural reservation-based AIs. Most notable, reservation status is associated with higher rates of substance abuse as well as disrupted family structures, low incomes, high unemployment, inadequate housing, fewer education resources, and persistent poverty (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2008; Housing Assistance Council, 2013; Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2007). Indeed, these locations are among the poorest in the USA. On the other hand, some of the risks posed by rural reservation living are offset by tribal colleges which offer

culturally sensitive and geographically accessible educational opportunities (Housing Assistance Council, 2013). Further, AI youth living in these rural contexts have a greater likelihood of multigenerational access to kin (Housing Assistance Council, 2013; Portman & Dewey, 2003). Reservation settings may provide greater access and exposure to cultural activities and traditions (Churchill, 2014; Portman & Dewey, 2003). LaFromboise, Albright, and Harris (2010) found the lowest levels of hopelessness among reservation youth compared to their urban or rural/nonreservation counterparts explaining: "It may be instead that living on a reservation offers a greater sense of sociocultural familiarity, feelings of collective efficacy, and/or a modicum of socioeconomic protection relative to living off reservation" (LaFromboise et al., 2010, p. 73). Finally, reservations can offer some reprieve from discrimination faced off reservations (Whitbeck et al., 2008).

In summary, the significance of the reservation experience particularly for rural AI/ANs was noted as well as both risks and possible protective factors associated with the rural context. This chapter draws on resilience theory as a means to examine the potential protective roles of various forms of connections for rural AI/AN youth. The presence of risk is a mandated component of resilience models; hence, the next section more fully examines the sources and nature of risk posed to AI/AN youth.

Historical Trauma Model and Associated Risks

AIs are enduring people demonstrating social and cultural resilience in spite of over 500 years of assaults to their integrity and viability as indigenous peoples. The historical trauma model has emerged as an explanatory mechanism linking accumulated emotional and psychological group trauma from across generations to present-day social, health, and behavioral problems experienced by some AI people (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Goodluck & Willeto, 2009). More specifically, the source of historical trauma is traced from the onset of European colonization in the Americas and the resulting actions, both intentional and unintentional, that served to massively disrupt traditional forms of livelihood and subsistence patterns along with viable kinship structures and forms of social organization (see Brave Heart, 2003; Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011; Duran, Duran, & Brave Heart, 1998; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Garrett & Carroll, 2000). Massive loss of life from European-borne diseases coupled with warfare, forced assimilation, removal from traditional homelands, prohibitions against the practice of Native belief systems, and physical and cultural genocide served to perpetuate trauma. Over the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, forced assimilation practices escalated and undermined traditional family structures with the removal of AI/AN children from their homes and subsequent placement in remote boarding schools as well as the adoption of AI/AN children into white homes (a surprisingly recent practice in the USA that began to be curbed with the 1978 passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act). Boarding schools and adoption served to separate children from their families

and cultures indoctrinating them to white lifestyles and the English language. There has not been adequate time and opportunity to heal from the accumulation of these devastations (Brave Heart, 2003; Duran et al., 1998).

In addition to historical sources of group and individual trauma, additional present-day stressors are evident, serving to exasperate recovery. In particular, current socioeconomic and sociocultural factors impede recovery from historical trauma for AI/ANs. Median household income reflects a discrepancy at $35,062 for AI/ANs compared to the national average of $50,046 (US Census Bureau, 2010). Poverty rates are at 28.4 % for AI/ANs, which is nearly twice the national average of 15.3 % (US Census Bureau, 2010), and widespread poverty has had deleterious health outcomes for AI/ANs, including youth (Carlo, Crockett, Carranza, & Martinez, 2011). Microaggressions (e.g., discrimination, stereotyping, daily hassles directed toward minorities) are additional sources of current stress (Brave Heart, 2003; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Harvard Project, 2008) and have been linked to lower resilience among AI adolescents (LaFromboise et al., 2006). Microaggressions are common experiences as reported in the perceptions of reservation-based AI adolescents from the Upper Midwest who reported feelings of being judged by the white culture, with many students recounting experiences of discrimination especially when away from their reservation communities (Feinstein, Driving-Hawk, & Baartman, 2009). Whitbeck (2011) reported that close to one-half of 10- to 12-year old AI children had experienced insulting comments about their ethnicity with one-third having experienced racial slurs. Differential and derogatory forms of treatment in school settings also were reported by these children. Interpersonal violence, child abuse and neglect, and poor health can be added to the list of current debilitating circumstances for AI/ANs (Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011).

This review of historical trauma and additional present-day stressors served to establish the factors of risk and adversity posed to AI/AN youth. An assertion of this chapter is that the numerous assaults and associated stressors that have plagued AI/ANs from the onset of colonization have resulted in multigenerational historical trauma. Responses to historical trauma endure to the present day and are evident in high levels of social and behavioral problems among some AI/AN youth. The following sections review applicable theory as an orientation to the review of research that follows. As previously noted, there are resilient AI/AN youth (LaFromboise et al., 2006) and of interest are social connection factors that serve as sources of protection for this population.

Theoretical Orientation

Given the: (a) legacy of historical trauma with multigenerational impacts extending to the well-being of present-day AI/AN adolescents; (b) distinctive aspects of rural life among AIs including particular compilations of risks and benefits, (c) limited research specific to this rural youth population, and (d) high involvement in

substance use and other problematic behaviors by some AI/AN adolescents, this chapter seeks to enhance understanding on sources of protection relevant to this population. Protective models of resilience account for risk and protective factors, with both sets integral to all models of resilience. The basic notion is that an individual's risk for a maladaptive outcome is moderated or reduced with available sources of protections from resources or assets (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Kretman, Zimmerman, Morrel-Samuels, & Hudson, 2009; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Assets are positive factors reflective of individual strengths (e.g., self-efficacy), while resources are positive factors from sources external to the individual (e.g., social support) (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). This chapter is concerned with resources stemming from sources of social connectedness. In either case of assets or resources, protective models of resilience specify that risk is buffered by protective factors and consequently deviance should be lower in contrast to adolescents lacking such factors.

Sources of resilience emerge from within the individual, through relationships and social supports, and other external factors (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar et al., 2000). Social connection is a prominent theme of protection, and additional theories characterize the mechanisms by which this might occur. The stress-buffer hypothesis suggests that, when faced with stressors, individuals with broad support networks experience reduced negative arousal because of the resources provided by others (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In turn, reduced stress should translate into increased potential for positive development. Similarly, Hirschi's (1969/2002) social control theory posits that the key dynamic to deterring deviance is connectedness or bonding. In other words, the value adolescents place on their emotional attachments to family, school, organizations, and conventional beliefs deters engagement in deviance because of the risk of compromising these connections (Henry & Lanier, 2006; Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009). Of the four key sources of bonding in this theory—attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief—involvement occurs, in part, through an adolescent's engagement in societally endorsed activities which occupies the adolescent's time productively and reduces time and energy to participate in antisocial behaviors (Hirschi, 1969/2002). This is consistent with routine activity theory which states that unstructured and unsupervised time with peers is a risk factor because opportunities for engagement in adolescent deviance and delinquency are then readily available (Hirschi, 1969/2002; Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 2005). In short, societally sanctioned activities meet adolescents' desires for connection and recreation and also limit opportunities for engagement in deviance. Hence, connection through activity involvement is a key factor of interest in our review of literature.

The direction of this chapter resonates with works of Native writers on the concept of resilience which is sometimes referred to as "cultural resilience" (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Strand & Peacock, 2003). HeavyRunner and Marshall (2003) wrote that resilience is implicit to traditional Native cultures asserting that every indigenous language has a word for it which translates into such strength-based strategies of not giving up, trying harder, and drawing on strength from the ancestors. Goodluck and Willeto (2009) explained: "While precise definitions vary across

the broader community, many Native Americans characterize resiliency first through the broader themes of culture, traditions, language, spirituality, family and survival" (p. 3).

Connections to family, kin, and community are central features of relationships across numerous AI/AN cultures, and such relationships serve as sources of social support. For example, in Diné (Navajo) culture, natural helping is a way of life and is embedded in complex broad-based relationships spanning blood, clan, and those who one comes to regard as kin (Waller & Patterson, 2002). An underlying mechanism of such practices is that Native societies are typified according to values of communalism, interdependence, and cooperation, in contrast to Western societal features of independence and individualism (Markstrom, 2011). Indeed, Markstrom (2011) identifies connection as one of the three components of American Indian identity along with identification and culture/spirituality. Family connection is a central component of Western and Native resilience models, but of interest in this review are the additional buffering roles of extrafamilial sources of connection most particularly from school, community, and cultural forms of involvement.

Research on Connectedness and Adjustment Outcomes

It is important to note that the rural and urban status of research participants is not always delineated in the methodology of studies. Hence, rural and urban status is noted in this review when known. Further, urban studies are included due to limited research on rural youth. When a study is conducted on a reservation, it can reasonably be assumed that the setting is rural unless otherwise noted, given the much higher preponderance of rural versus urban reservations.

School Connectedness School connectedness has been broadly conceptualized as adolescents' feelings of attachment/belongingness to schools and perceived support in school settings, both of which may be bolstered via adolescents' participation in school-based extracurricular activities. Conceptually, youth who are highly connected to schools should be less likely to engage in risky behaviors because doing so would violate social–contextual expectations for conventional behaviors and could risk adolescents' peer acceptance (Loukas & Pasch, 2013). Further, adolescents who are heavily involved in activities should have access to greater social support networks (e.g., teammates; Schaefer, Simpkins, Vest, & Price, 2011). School-based extracurricular activity involvement serves an additional social control function by enhancing connection and belongingness to conventional and societally endorsed organizations and groups and by occupying adolescents in productive activities, leaving less time for deviance. Despite its importance as a protective factor, AI/AN youth may be less likely to be highly connected to schools than their non-AI/AN peers (Rees, Freng, & Winfree, 2014). For example, in an analysis of the YRBSS data, urban AI/AN teens reported higher levels of school violence and feeling unsafe at school than their white counterparts (Rutman, Park, Castor, Taualii,

& Forquera, 2008). School connectedness may also be weakened for AI/ANs due to discrepancies in value systems (e.g., failure of the school to account for AI/AN children's linguistic and cultural traditions; Romero-Little, 2011), as well as the historical role of formal educational institutions in forced assimilation (Harvard Project, 2008). Further, youth may feel little connection to teachers and schools due to the limited socioeconomic resources of reservation school systems (Apple, 1996). Such scarce socioeconomic resources likely result in few enrichment opportunities in class and limited access to school-based extracurricular activities, as suggested in Waters, Cross, and Shaw (2010).

There is significant support for predicted associations between low school connectedness and maladjustment in non-AI/AN samples (e.g., Lester, Waters, & Cross, 2013; Loukas & Pasch, 2013). Although scarce in comparison, findings related to school connection and adjustment outcomes in AI/AN youth are likewise consistent with Hirshi's social control theory. Regarding sexual behaviors, 13- to 18-year-old AI girls in a statewide study in Minnesota who felt that their school cared for them were less likely to have initiated sexual intercourse, whereas the risk of sexual initiation was reduced for AI boys aged 16–18 years if they thought that their teachers were interested in their studies (Hellerstedt, Peterson-Hickey, Rhodes, & Garwick, 2006). Likewise, urban AI youth were less likely to carry a weapon in the past month if they reported being highly connected to their schools (Bearinger, Pettingell, Resnick, & Potthoff, 2010). More appears to be known about substance use than other risk behaviors. School commitment was associated with lower marijuana use of AIs adolescents (Eitle, Eitle, & Johnson-Jennings, 2013). Sense of belonging to school was related to lower usage of alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes among urban Southwest AI adolescents (Napoli, Marsiglia, & Kulis, 2003), and school bonding predicted drug refusal skills among AI adolescents living on or near a northern reservation (Galliher, Evans, & Weiser, 2007). Stiffman et al. (2007) reported that reservation AI adolescents were less likely to identify strengths associated with their schools than were urban AI adolescents in a Southwestern state suggesting a possible rural–urban disparity. Further, with more school strengths listed, there were fewer conduct disorder and alcohol and drug abuse symptoms. In our analyses of data provided by rural AI/AN adolescent participants in the 2012 Arizona Youth Survey (AYS), high levels of perceived school support were linked to low levels of substance use and related behaviors, including substance use, being drunk or high at school, selling drugs, and riding/driving while intoxicated (Markstrom & Moilanen, 2014).

There is limited research among AI adolescents explicit to school-based activity involvement, and again this is largely limited to substance use outcomes. Extracurricular activity involvement is one of the primary dimensions of school connectedness (Brown & Evans, 2005; Kretman et al., 2009). For AI adolescents in Seattle, participation in team sports and participation in playing music were among three key protective factors against tobacco usage, which is an established antecedent of use of other substances (Degenhardt et al., 2010; Osilla, Lonczak, Mail, Larimer, & Marlatt, 2007). In our previous work with the 2010 AYS data, high involvement in extracurricular activities was protective against being drunk or high

at school and selling drugs for nonmetropolitan AI teens, and protective against driving while under the influence or riding with an intoxicated driver for AI adolescents who lived on reservations (Moilanen et al., 2014). However, in preliminary analyses of rural AI/AN adolescent respondents to the 2012 AYS, the degree to which youth were involved in school-based extracurricular activities had no effect on substance use outcomes once other protective factors were modeled (Markstrom & Moilanen, 2014).Yet in subsequent reanalyses of these data, rural AI/AN youth who were highly involved in school-based extracurricular activities reported low levels of substance use, going to school while drunk or high, and riding/driving while intoxicated (Markstrom & Moilanen, 2015). For this final outcome, the effect of extracurricular activity participation was moderated by age, such that older teens who were highly involved in school-based extracurricular activities were far less likely to ride/drive while intoxicated than their comparatively uninvolved peers or their younger peers. Across these studies and in both rural and urban settings, there is some support for the notion that AI/AN teens benefit from connections to their school settings, including through involvement in extracurricular activities.

Community Connectedness Given the research indicative of school-based connections and involvement, similar processes may operate for community-based activities which would support Hirschi's social control propositions on connection and involvement as deterrents to adolescent deviance. As discussed above, there is limited evidence for the importance of school connectedness as a potential deterrent in substance use of AI adolescents; however, there is even less evidence relative to community-based involvement, which includes community clubs and organizations and faith-based activities. In terms of the latter, religious involvement was associated with being alcohol- and drug-free among 12- to 19-year-old urban and rural AI adolescents (Silmere & Stiffman, 2006). Among 5th to 8th grade AI adolescents living on or near reservations in the upper Midwest, LaFromboise et al. (2006) assessed community support as community concern and support for good grades, being good at playing sports, and learning one's culture's language and customs. These factors indicated a protective association with outcomes indicative of resilience, which was measured as a composite of substance use, school-related variables, and behavioral variables. Nonparental adult role models were found to be personally and socially advantageous for urban 13- to 19-year-old AI youth in Oklahoma relative to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug non-use (Beebe et al., 2008) which is suggestive of the potential protective role of adult mentors in community-based activities. In our program of research using the 2012 AYS data, rural AI youths perceived neighborhood support was not predictive of any of the considered substance use outcomes, when school support was also modeled (Markstrom & Moilanen, 2015). This may indicate that the relatively distal influence of neighborhood support may be less crucial than the comparatively proximal force of school support in preventing substance use-related behaviors.

There is similarly limited evidence for the protective value of community-based activity involvement against risk involvement in AI/AN youth. Regarding sexual risk-taking, AI girls in Minnesota aged 16–18 years were less likely to report sexual

initiation if they regularly engaged in volunteer or community service, while risk of initiation was higher for boys aged 16–18 years if they participated in organized sports outside of school contexts (Hellerstedt et al., 2006). In our research with the 2012 AYS data, intensity of involvement in community-based activities among non-metropolitan AI/AN youth was linked to only one of the four outcome variables considered (i.e., riding/driving while intoxicated) in models that controlled for demographic characteristics and school and neighborhood support, and consistent with hypotheses, high intensity involvement was protective (Markstrom & Moilanen, 2015). For being drunk or high at school, there were hints that the effect of community activities involvement was moderated by school-based support, such that high participation intensity had a greater protective effect for youth who reported low levels of school support; for teens in highly supportive school environments, intensity of participation in community-based activities did not alter reported frequency of being drunk or high at school. This hints that connectedness to the community is a protective influence that may interact with other influences such as school connectedness.

Community resilience has also received some attention and, while not explicitly measuring connectedness, it is reasonable to assume that it is youths' connections to their communities and the viability of these communities that contribute to youth adjustment outcomes. An outstanding example of this conjecture is found in the work of Michael Chandler and colleagues on community resilience among First Nations in Canada. It was found that risk for youth suicide was lower among those communities characterized by cultural continuity (measured according to self-government, land claims, education, health services, cultural facilities, and police and fire) (Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003). Hallett, Chandler, and Lalonde (2007) extended this research adding a language use indicator of cultural continuity and found that youth suicide rates were low to absent in bands in which more than 50 % of the members had a conversational knowledge of the Aboriginal language. Of concern was the finding that in bands in which less than 50 % of the members spoke the language, suicide rates were six times greater. It is reasonable to construe language as a form of both community and cultural connectedness and, in its absence, risks for youth were heightened.

In summary, although limited, research on community connectedness is suggestive of its role in adaptive adjustment outcomes of AI/AN adolescents. There is some evidence in our research that influences from community connectedness may be somewhat dwarfed relative to more proximal influences of school connectedness. Finally, the breadth and type of tribal resources (e.g., cultural continuity) may serve as protective factors for youth in these communities and, furthermore, could be highly relevant for rural AI/AN youth given most reservations are located in rural areas.

Cultural Connectedness Cultural connectedness may be a viable component of protection for AI/AN youth and serves as a buffer against historical trauma and its resulting negative impacts. Such connectedness in some cases is an indicator of higher cultural identification and identity which have been found to be important

adjustment components in various studies with rural AI/AN samples. For instance, among small town Navajo students aged 14–19, ethnic affirmation and belonging were associated with better adjustment and psychosocial functioning (Jones & Galliher, 2007). In additional research, among 9th and 10th grade Navajos from a small town, adaptive outcomes were associated with embeddedness and connection to Navajo culture which served a buffering role particularly suppressing negative impacts from discrimination (Galliher, Jones, & Dahl, 2011). Among 9th to 12th grade students in a Northern Plains tribal school, ethnic identity was associated with positive affect, but no differences were noted in psychosomatic symptoms (Kenyon & Carter, 2010).

What is called enculturation, or becoming socialized toward and embedded in one's culture, has been identified as a protective factor that may buffer against problem behaviors such as substance abuse (Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012; Whitbeck, 2011). Indeed, LaFromboise et al. (2006) found enculturation to be the strongest protective factor in a sample of 10- to 15-year-old students from three reservations in the upper Midwest, as reflected in greater academic performance and prosocial behaviors and lower levels of problem behaviors. Likewise, certain aspects of enculturation (the learning of one's traditional culture) were associated with more positive psychological adjustment of American Indian adolescents (Zimmerman, Ramirez, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1994). Filbert and Flynn (2010) found that a higher level of cultural assets (i.e., more opportunities to participate in culture) was related to lower levels of behavioral difficulties but surprisingly was not related to other measures of resilience (measured by prosocial behavior, self-esteem, and educational performance) of First Nations youth. Among 12- to 15-year-old Southeastern rural AIs, Newman (2005) found that the cultural affinity dimension of an enculturation measure was associated with fewer social and behavioral problems and more prosocial experiences.

In contrast to studies that have identified enculturation as a protective factor, cultural involvement has in some cases been associated with some less desirable outcomes. In Silmere and Stiffman's (2006) study described previously, adolescents more involved in AI traditions were less likely to be alcohol- and drug-free compared to those who were less involved. No significant findings emerged assessing participation in AI traditions in relation to having a clean police record and absence of serious misbehavior (Silmere & Stiffman, 2006). Yu and Stiffman (2007) found that participation in generic cultural activities positively predicted symptoms of alcohol abuse among urban and reservation 13- to 19-year-old AI adolescents; however, cultural pride/spirituality was associated with fewer alcohol symptoms. Attendance at cultural events was positively related to marijuana use among 4th–12th grade students from reservations in Minnesota and Wisconsin overall and to alcohol use for males (Petoskey, Van Stelle, & De Jong, 1998). Further, participation in tribal ceremonies was related to marijuana use among males. Adolescent (5th and 6th grade AI students from Seattle) inhalant users were not significantly different from nonusers according to involvement in traditional AI activities (Howard, Walker, Walker, Cottler, & Compton, 1999). This group of studies shed some doubt that cultural participation is universally protective.

It is surprising to find cultural involvement operating as a risk as opposed to a resilience factor. Yu and Stiffman (2007) discussed AI college students' descriptions of non-sanctioned drinking activities associated with cultural events such as Powwows. Potentially, the social components of these events present opportunities for congregating among youth and sharing substances. The strong influence of peers on substance use of AI adolescents has been shown in the literature (e.g., Kulis et al, 2006; Swaim, Oetting, Thurman, & Beauvais, 1993; Yu & Stiffman, 2007). In summary, cultural connectedness as assessed by participation in cultural activities is not fully supported as a protective mechanism relative to youth adjustment outcomes. Potentially more intrinsic components indicative of connection, such as ethnic identity and enculturation, are indicative of more favorable adjustment outcomes.

Conclusions

The role of extrafamilial social connectedness has great promise for future research, as many questions remain unanswered about rural AI/AN youth. Although there is some research on global maladjustment in urban AI/AN samples (e.g., Rutman et al.'s (2008) analyses of the YRBSS), even basic descriptive research on forms of maladjustment other than substance use and on positive development is sorely lacking for rural AI/AN youth. Further, although the emphasis on substance use in AI/AN adolescent samples is unsurprising given the gravity of substance-related problems in this population, inquiries exploring problem behaviors beyond substance use are needed for urban and rural AI/AN teens alike. Research on positive outcomes (e.g., cooperation, prosocial behavior, social competence, emotional well-being, and self-esteem) is also needed to provide a more fully comprehensive understanding of rural AI/AN youth.

Regarding connections to school and community, positive youth development frameworks suggest that involvement in voluntary youth-oriented activities should encourage positive adjustment, resilience processes, and thriving (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2007; Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009), but this does not seem to be well-understood just yet for AI/AN teens. Along these same lines, there is some information available about the degree to which activities are available to rural AI/AN youth in Arizona; basic descriptive analyses indicate that rural youth have slightly greater perceived access to school-based extracurricular activities than do urban peers, and that teens living off-reservation have slightly greater access than their peers who live on tribal lands (Markstrom & Moilanen, 2014). Yet, at this point, there is little indication of how these opportunities compare to those afforded to non-AI/AN youth in rural or urban settings, in terms of quantity and range of opportunities available. This question warrants further investigation as part of unraveling how activity involvement functions as a protective factor against substance use and related behaviors. Once these initial questions are addressed, it would be useful to consider the possibility that community and cultural connectedness may be protective in indirect fashions via proximal protective factors such as school

connectedness and parenting. For example, findings from a recent study by Pu et al. (2013) suggested that adolescents' interest in learning more about their tribe's culture was linked to low involvement in violence in AI/AN girls indirectly via parental monitoring. For boys, such interest predicted greater self-efficacy to avoid violence, but self-efficacy did not in turn predict actual involvement in violent acts in the past three months. These types of pathways would be important to understand as part of building culturally relevant prevention and intervention programs.

The findings relative to cultural connectedness were mixed, but it appears that if such connections can foster positive feelings about being AI or AN and toward one's own cultural background, the outcomes relative to adolescent adjustment may be more desirable. Additionally, enculturation is associated with more adaptive outcomes. In contrast, involvement in cultural activities was problematic and may have offered opportunities to engage in substance use and abuse with peers. Certainly the role of cultural involvement—as risk or protection—requires additional research that carefully delineates the social context of involvement including the presence of peers, the roles of adult mentors, and the nature of the activity (e.g., a social event such as Powwow or a more intimate ceremonial context).

There are some overall methodological considerations applicable across a range of research on AI/ANs adolescents. There are over 560 federally recognized AI/AN tribes and between- and within-group diversity exists relative to culture, beliefs, practices, and numerous other dimensions. From a research standpoint, it is desirable to identify specific parameters of the sample including information on tribal or cultural affiliations. However, the protocol is to respect tribal anonymity and not identify tribes by their names in research studies. In our research using the AYS (Markstrom & Moilanen, 2014; Moilanen et al., 2014), it was advantageous to utilize a large state-wide sample which included adolescents from a variety of tribal backgrounds. While articulation of tribal affiliations was not permissible, it was advantageous that the scope of the study encompassed one Southwest state. Hence, there were some common experiences across respondents, such as environment and geography, economic and social resources, and state-wide educational policies. A further advantage of our research was the ability to delineate reservation and non-reservation status along with metropolitan and nonmetropolitan status. These and other features of settings should be carefully demarcated because AI/ANs live in a range of contexts. Further, there are distinctive features of reservations that were described earlier in this chapter, and most of these settings are in rural areas.

There is a tendency for research on AI/AN adolescents to be cross-sectional, nonexperimental, single informant, and survey based. Longitudinal and experimental designs could begin to answer questions about causality in terms of the proposition that forms of social connectedness buffer against problematic behavioral outcomes of AI/AN adolescents. It would be highly useful to have knowledge regarding the timing of the emergence of substance use behaviors relative to the putative protective factors. Of additional need are richer and more complete measures of various types of social connectedness including adolescents' access to and involvement in specific types of activities.

Theories that served as a basis for this review (i.e., resilience theory, stress-buffer hypothesis, social control theory, and routine activity theory) were complementary in supporting the proposition that social connections should serve as deterrents to adolescents' engagement in behaviors that compromise adjustment. Similarly, these ideas are consistent with Native values and identity concerning connection and interdependence. It was rural adolescents' connection to and participation in school, community, and culturally based activities that were of particular interest in this chapter. The need for such connections is important to all youth, and like other rural youth, AI/ANs face challenges of distance, transportation, and potentially fewer opportunities for connection to these extrafamilial sources of support and belonging. Unlike other rural youth, AI/AN youth contend with additional challenges that may pose barriers to building such connections including impacts from multigenerational historical trauma as well as compounding factors from present-day poverty levels and experiences of microaggressions. School connectedness, including opportunities for engagement in extracurricular activities, was shown to be of keen importance for rural AI/AN adolescents. The more proximal school environment may be even more impactful for prevention than the community. Cultural connectedness relative to ethnic identity and enculturation has merit but may be disadvantageous when connectedness involves participation in culturally based activities that are potentially not adult sponsored or supervised and have high peer involvement. It is evident that connectedness is advantageous in the lives of rural AI/AN adolescents, but research findings are complex and require consideration of nuances posed through social contextual, demographic, and cultural factors.

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Chapter 8
African American Couples in Rural Contexts

Carolyn E. Cutrona, Frederick D. Clavél, and Melissa A. Johnson

Although rural life is often characterized as idyllic, the realities are frequently quite different. A "new rural order" was described by Burton and colleagues (Burton, Lichter, Baker, & Eason, 2013). The departure of well-paying manufacturing jobs from the United States has disproportionately harmed rural residents and towns (Lichter & Graefe, 2011; Smith & Tickamyer, 2011). As in urban locations, stable well-paying manufacturing jobs have been replaced by lower-paying jobs in the service industry (Smith & Tickamyer, 2011). Many low-income rural residents lack the opportunity to earn adequate income because jobs that pay a living wage are rare in rural areas (Hotz, Mullin, & Scholz, 2002). Rural residents have fewer employment opportunities than their urban counterparts. They are more likely to be employed at minimum wage, are frequently under-employed, and must often settle for part-time work (Findeis et al., 2001). Between 2000 and 2009, the number of nonmetropolitan communities with poverty rates exceeding 30 % increased by almost 50 % (Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, 2012).

African American families are very much a part of rural hard times. Recent statistics showed that more than one-half of all rural African Americans and two-thirds of poor rural African Americans live in high-poverty counties, mostly in the South (Lichter et al., 2012). An increase in migration from major cities to less expensive small towns has occurred among low-income racial and ethnic minorities (Foulkes & Newbold, 2008; Hamilton, Hamilton, Duncan, & Colocousis, 2008; Lichter et al., 2012). This migration has caused racial tension in some previously all-White communities, and patterns of racial segregation and areas of concentrated poverty are becoming more common in rural areas (Keene, Padilla, & Geronimus, 2010; Schafft, 2006). Thus, the stressors of financial strain and racial discrimination add to the burdens of many rural African American families.

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Shifts in rural employment opportunities have been accompanied by shifts in family structure. Up through the mid-1990s, rural women were significantly more likely than urban or suburban women to choose marriage as the context for their first union and for childbearing (Snyder, Brown, & Condo, 2004). However, there is evidence that the greatest increase in cohabiting households with children in the past decade has occurred in rural areas (O'Hare, Manning, Porter, & Lyons, 2009) suggesting that rural marriage patterns are changing. Rural communities have also seen a sharp rise in single-parent households, which further exacerbates the prevalence and duration of poverty in rural families (Snyder & McLaughlin, 2004).

This chapter will present a summary of findings from a large-scale longitudinal study of nonurban African American families designed to focus on factors that influence the relationships between parents, given the importance of parental relationships for the outcomes of children. After a brief summary of the study's goals and methods, findings will be presented regarding the impact of adverse neighborhood characteristics, financial stressors, and racial discrimination on the quality and stability of African American couples' relationships. Findings will also be presented that highlight the benefits for couples of key resource variables and the mechanisms through which these resources affect outcomes. Finally, we briefly present some methodological challenges to conducting research on this population and provide recommendations for future research.

The Family and Community Health Study

Study Goals

The Family and Community Health Study (FACHS), a large, ongoing longitudinal study of African American families, was designed to gain an understanding of vulnerability and resilience factors that influence the well-being and success of African American parents and children outside of large cities. Relationships are influenced by the contexts in which they are located (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Contexts may be supportive of healthy family relationships, or they may contain elements that make it difficult for relationships to survive (Berscheid, 1999). Literature documents the harmful effects of adverse life circumstances on the quality of interactions between couples (e.g., Conger, Rueter, & Elder, 1999; Conger & Donellen, 2007). We sought to discover the effects of stressors, including living in adverse neighborhoods, racism, and financial strain on nonurban African American couples. African Americans are more likely than other major American racial groups to experience racial discrimination and to experience financial strain, in both urban and rural areas (Pieterse, Todd, Neville, & Carter, 2012; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). We examined the influence of these three important kinds of stressors on the relationships of couples in the FACHS study.

Much research on African American families has focused on deficits rather than on strengths, leaving the field with limited understanding of resources that are associated with positive outcomes for African American families (Bryant et al., 2010). We identified several key resources to examine as predictors of relationship quality

and stability, including education, income, relationship type, and religious involvement (see Cutrona, Russell, Burzette, Wesner, & Bryant, 2011). Average levels of both education and income are lower in rural communities, especially in the American South (Burton et al., 2013; Fram, Miller-Cribbs, & Van Horn, 2007). Although rural areas have historically favored marriage over cohabitation, rural rates of nonmarital cohabitation and childrearing are increasing rapidly, thus posing a threat to relationship stability (O'Hare et al., 2009). Religious involvement is high in rural communities, and serves as a coping resource for many African American families, especially in the South (Chatters, Taylor, & Lincoln, 1999). Both education and religious involvement play a key role in the ability of African American couples to thrive outside of urban settings, and we examined their impact on the quality and stability of marital and couple relationships.

Participants

A total of 889 families were recruited to participate in the study, approximately half in Iowa and half in Georgia. Census tracts outside of major metropolitan areas in both states that had at least 10 % African American residents were selected as recruitment sites. A deliberate effort was made to include families that varied widely on socioeconomic status to counter previous tendencies for research to focus exclusively on impoverished African American families. We approached public and private schools, community organizations, and churches to identify families who met our recruitment criteria: (a) Each family had to include a 10- to 11-year-old African American child and (b) the target 10- to 11-year-old child and his or her primary caregiver/parent agreed to participate. The first wave of data collection occurred in 1997–1998. Subsequent in-person interviews were conducted an average of every 2.5 years. To date, six waves of interview data have been collected from the families. In 2010–2011, at the sixth wave of data collection, retention of the original 889 families was approximately 80 % (defined as participation by at least one family member). At the first two waves of assessment, a video-recorded assessment of marital interaction was conducted. Both members of the couple were asked to discuss a series of questions that were designed to elicit both conflict and supportive responses. The videotaped interactions were rated by trained African American observers who used the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (IFIRS; Melby & Conger, 2001). A wide range of self-report measures was administered at every assessment.

Effects of Neighborhood Characteristics on Couples

The question addressed in research on neighborhood contexts is whether neighborhood characteristics predict individual behavior and well-being beyond the variance explained by individuals' personal characteristics. We examined the association between neighborhood adversity and the interaction quality and relationship quality

of nonurban African American couples (Cutrona et al., 2003). Using US Census data, we computed an economic disadvantage index for each neighborhood, based on an aggregate that combined average per capita income, proportion of households that were women-headed, proportion of persons on public assistance, proportion of households below the poverty level, and proportion of unemployed males (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). We selected a set of individual-level and couple-level variables to include in our models, including the age and education of each member of the couple, duration of marriage, and subjective level of financial strain (the perception that income is inadequate to meet one's needs), reported by each member of the couple (Cutrona et al., 2003). Financial strain was assessed with a composite measure that assessed negative financial events, life adjustments made due to financial hardship, and insufficient funds to cover expenses (Conger & Elder, 1994). We selected families from the larger sample that were headed by a married couple and for whom both observational and questionnaire data were available from both husband and wife at the first wave of data collection. The mean number of years married was 12.5, and the mean ages for wives and husbands were approximately 38 and 40, respectively. The sample was quite well educated; 58 % of the women had completed 1 or more years of college, including 7 % with an advanced graduate degree and 50 % of the men had completed some college, including 8 % with an advanced graduate degree.

We used multilevel regression to predict level of warmth displayed by both members of the couple during videotaped interaction tasks. We found that neighborhood-level economic disadvantage was a significant negative predictor of observed warmth during the videotaped interactions of husbands and wives. As shown in Table 8.1, neighborhood-level economic disadvantage retained significance when controlling for all of the demographic variables and the level of financial strain

Table 8.1 Individual-level, couple-level, community-level variables as predictors of observed warmth

Variables	β	SE	df	t
Individual level				
Education	.15	.05	360	3.10**
Age	.03	.06	360	0.57
Sex	.01	.06	360	0.14
Financial strain	−.06	.05	360	−1.20
Couple level				
Years married	−.20	.07	360	−2.87**
Neighborhood level				
Economic disadvantage	−.14	.06	36	−2.36*
State of residence	.43	.12	36	3.63***

Note: Sex is coded 1 = *female*, 0 = *male*. State is coded 1 = *Iowa*, 0 = *Georgia*

Cutrona, C.E., Russell, D. W., Abraham, W. T., Gardner, K. A. Melby, J. N., Bryant, C. & Conger, R. D. (2003). Neighborhood context and financial strain as predictors of marital interaction and marital quality in African American couples. Personal Relationships, 10, 389–409. Published by ISSPR. Reprinted with permission

$*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001$

reported by each member of the couple. Living in a lower-income neighborhood was associated with less warmth in the interactions of married African American couples. Surprisingly, we did not find a significant association between neighborhood-level economic disadvantage and observed hostility in couple interactions. By contrast, family-level financial strain was associated with elevated hostility, although the association was only marginally significant.

Our findings for nonurban African American couples suggest that warmth may be somewhat more susceptible to environmental influences than hostility. A higher threshold of stress may be required before hostile behaviors are triggered. If the family's personal finances are adequate to meet the family's needs, living in the context of a lower-income community may not tax coping resources sufficiently to erode morale to the point of eliciting highly negative behaviors toward the spouse. The relation between neighborhood-level economic disadvantage and warmth is consistent with prior studies that have shown an effect of stress on prosocial marital interaction. For example, Repetti (1989) found that high stress during the workday was associated with withdrawal from spousal interaction at the end of the day in a mostly White sample.

Effects of Racial Discrimination and Financial Strain on Relationships

As noted previously, the recent migration of ethnic and racial minority families to small rural communities has caused racial tension in some previously all-White communities, and patterns of racial segregation and areas of concentrated poverty are becoming more common in rural areas (Keene et al., 2010; Schafft, 2006). Experiences of racial discrimination are associated with a range of stress responses, including depressed mood, anger, increased blood pressure, and substance use (Brondolo et al., 2008; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Dolezsar, Mcgrath, Herzig, & Miller, 2014; Gibbons et al., 2014). In the current study, experiences of racial discrimination were assessed by an inventory that asked the frequency of experiences such as exclusion, harassment, and prejudice as a function of one's race (based on Landrine & Klonoff, 1996).

We sought to investigate the impact of racial discrimination relative to the well-known negative effect of financial strain on couple interaction quality and satisfaction. We expected that higher levels of hostility and lower levels of warmth would be displayed by couples experiencing high levels of these two stressors. We conducted regression analyses predicting observed warmth and hostility by both partners, using variables assessed at wave 1 to predict observed behavior at wave 2. Key predictor variables were the individual's level of financial strain at wave 1 and the wave 1 level of racism in the individual's neighborhood. In each analysis, we controlled for the individual's education level, the duration of the relationship, and the individual's wave 1 score on the observed behavior variable. Turning first to men's observed warmth, both wave 1 financial strain and neighborhood racism were

Table 8.2 Financial strain and neighborhood racial discrimination prospectively predicting male partner's observed warmth at wave 2

Variables	β	SE	df	t
Education	.08	.06	96	.95
Relationship duration	.01	.01	96	.94
W1 Male obs. warmth	.52	.08	96	6.39***
W1 Financial strain	−.17	.16	96	−2.27*
W1 Neighborhood racism	.20	.13	96	2.31*

Note: W1 = wave 1
*p < .05, ***p < .001

Table 8.3 Financial strain and neighborhood racial discrimination prospectively predicting male partner's observed hostility at wave 2

Variables	β	SE	df	t
Education	−.01	.04	97	.95
Relationship duration	−.13	.01	97	−1.40
W1 Male obs. hostility	.31	.08	97	3.31***
W1 Financial strain	.16	.11	97	1.72+
W1 Neighborhood racism	−.18	.09	97	−1.81+

Note: W1 = wave 1
+p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

significant predictors of wave 2 warmth (see Table 8.2). As expected, higher financial strain at wave 1 was associated with lower warmth at wave 2. Contrary to expectation, higher neighborhood racism at wave 1 was associated with an *increase* in warmth at wave 2. The analysis was repeated, predicting change over time in men's observed hostility (see Table 8.3). Although both coefficients were marginally significant, the pattern was the same: financial strain was associated with lower-quality behavior (i.e., an increase in observed hostility), and neighborhood racism was associated with higher-quality behavior (a decrease in observed hostility).

We repeated these analyses, predicting women's observed behavior (tables not shown). Neither financial strain nor neighborhood racism significantly predicted women's observed warmth or hostility over time. Thus, for women, we did not find the same pattern of associations of financial strain and neighborhood racism with the quality of observed behavior. More generally, our findings suggested that men's behavior is more sensitive to life stressors than that of women. This is consistent with Conger and colleagues' finding that White rural men's behavior was more strongly affected by financial hardship than women's (Conger et al., 1990).

Clavél and colleagues (Clavél, Cutrona, & Russell, 2014) undertook a second examination of the ways in which racial discrimination and financial strain influence the dynamics of couple relationships over time. The analyses spanned a 2-year period from wave 5 to wave 6, when the couples' average age was 48 for the women and 50 for the men. The key question was the extent to which the partner's level of stress affected his or her effectiveness as a source of social support. Once again,

financial strain was associated with lower relationship quality, and experiences of racial discrimination were associated with higher relationship quality. Women's initial level of financial strain was a significant *negative* predictor of her partner's evaluation of her supportiveness over time. By contrast, women's initial level of experienced racial discrimination was a significant *positive* predictor of her partner's evaluation of her supportiveness over time. The same pattern of associations was found between men's financial strain and racial discrimination and women's subsequent evaluation of their supportiveness, but the paths did not attain statistical significance. Surprisingly, women's stressful experiences affected men's assessments of their partner's supportiveness more than men's stressors affected the partner supportiveness assessments of women.

Why were experiences of racial discrimination associated with more positive interaction behavior and more positive assessments of the partner as a source of social support, especially among men? One possibility is that the experience of racial discrimination may promote in-group bonding behaviors (Dovidio & Gartner, 2010). A tendency toward preferential evaluation of in-group members may become more pronounced when the esteem of one's in-group is threatened by an out-group member (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). Thus, men may evaluate their partner's behavior more positively when she is victimized. From the perspective of the female partner, racial discrimination may increase her awareness of her partner's race-based vulnerabilities, and she may ramp up her supportive behaviors in light of such awareness. Indeed, research has shown that helpful behavior is more common when interacting with in-group members versus out-group members (Dovidio & Gartner, 2010). A variety of explanations are possible for the unexpected differences in interactions and perceptions among African American couples following racial discrimination versus other kinds of stressors, and more research is needed to adequately understand these dynamics.

Resources That Promote Relationship Quality and Stability

Education and Religious Engagement as Protective Resources

Education renders people less vulnerable to stress through its association with more consistent, better-paying employment and more opportunities to accrue resources (Day & Newburger, 2002). Individuals with adequate financial resources experience fewer negative life events (Thoits, 2010) and less financial strain (Conger et al., 1990), which leads to lower tension and higher stability in relationships (Bodenmann et al., 2007; Conger & Donellen, 2007).

Education and income are also associated with more stable relationship types. Higher income predicts marriage rather than cohabitation (Bumpuss & Lu, 2000). Approximately 40 % of cohabiting couples have children in the home; among African Americans, this figure is approximately 54 % (Simmons & O'Connell, 2003). Thus, cohabitation has become an important context for childrearing among

African American couples. Studies have found higher levels of relationship quality and stability among married compared to cohabiting couples (Brown, 2003; Stafford, Kline, & Rankin, 2004; Bumpuss & Lu, 2000), although the stability difference is somewhat smaller among African Americans than European Americans (Osborne, Manning, & Smock, 2007). Both education and employment status also predict biological-father presence in the home (Futris, Nielson, & Olmstead, 2010). Low-income mothers are more likely to remain in a relationship with their child's father if he is employed (Futris et al., 2010). African American fathers who lack financial resources may view themselves as failures and withdraw from their family (Toth & Xu, 1999). We predicted that education and income would be associated with lower financial strain, with marriage rather than cohabitation, and with the presence of both biological parents of the target child, which in turn, would be associated with greater relationship stability.

Religion and spirituality are central coping strategies for African Americans, especially women (Shorter-Gooden, 2004). African Americans frequently employ religious and spiritual coping when confronting problems (Shorter-Gooden, 2004), especially in the Southern United States, and derive from their religion a sense of community, shared values, and the strength to accept adversity (Brodsky, 2000; Chatters et al., 1999). Religiosity and church attendance are associated with attitudes favorable to commitment and family stability (Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2007). In the current study, we operationalized religious involvement as a combination of spirituality (the importance of religious or spiritual beliefs in daily life) and frequency of church attendance and involvement in church activities. We predicted that religious involvement would be associated with marriage and biological-family status rather than stepfamily status, which in turn, would predict greater relationship stability.

Predictors of Relationship Quality

With each partner's education and religious involvement as starting points, we found two major pathways to higher relationship quality, one through low financial strain and the other through marital status (see Fig. 8.1). Both men and women with higher levels of education reported significantly higher incomes, which resulted in lower levels of perceived financial strain for both men and women. Lower financial strain predicted higher levels of reported relationship quality for both men and women.

A second type of pathway led to marriage, and in turn, to higher relationship quality. Being married rather than cohabiting was associated with higher levels of relationship quality for both men and women. Higher education and income among men were associated with a greater probability of marriage than cohabitation. Interestingly, women's education and income did not appear to have a significant influence on marital status. Instead, women's *religious involvement* was the resource that predicted marital status. Highly religious women were more likely to be married than cohabiting.
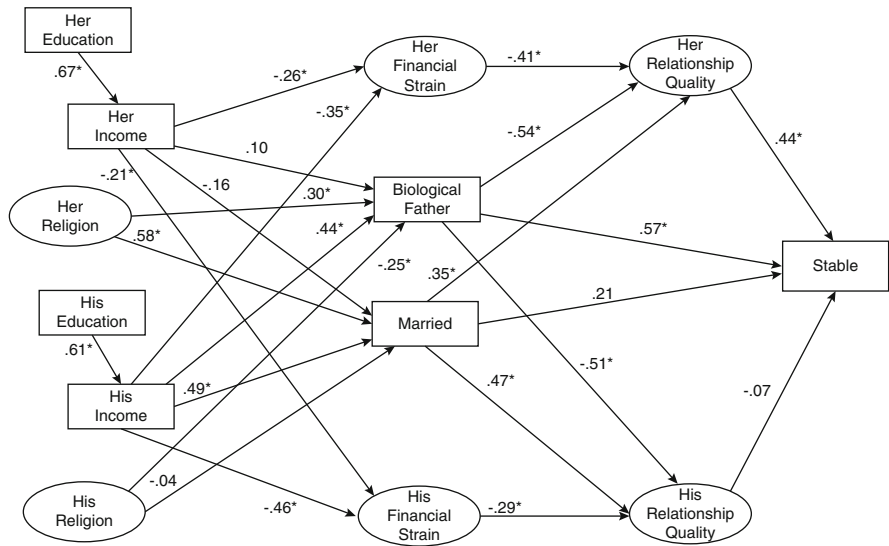
Fig. 8.1 Predictors of relationship quality and stability. *Cutrona, C. E., Russell, D. W., Burzette, R. B., Wesner, K. A., & Bryant, C. M. (2011). Predicting relationship stability among midlife African American couples. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 79(6), 814–825. Published by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission*

Surprisingly, biological-family status was negatively associated with reported relationship quality for both men and women. A key difference between biological families and stepfamilies was the duration of their relationships. Biological-family couples had been together for an average of 12.6 years, in contrast to stepfamily couples, who had been together for an average of only 3.7 years. Although relationship stability increases with relationship duration, relationship satisfaction erodes over time (e.g., Van Laningham, Johnson, & Amato, 2001). Stepfamily couples may simply have been earlier in the erosion process at the time of the assessment.

Predictors of Relationship Stability

We also examined the resource variables of education and religious involvement as predictors of relationship stability over the first 5 years of the FACHS study, from wave 1 in 1997–1998 to wave 3 in 2002–2003 (Cutrona et al., 2011). Overall, 25 % of the couples reported dissolving their relationship over the study period. Once again, we found two pathways to relationship stability, one through women's relationship quality and the other through relationship structure, specifically, biological-family status.

As noted above, the education levels of both partners were associated with higher income and lower financial strain, which allowed relationship quality to flourish for both men and women. In turn, women's reported relationship quality was a

significant predictor of relationship stability but men's was not. The greater importance of women's relationship quality in the prediction of relationship dissolution is consistent with previous findings that wives monitor relationship quality more closely than men (Steil, 1997) and are more likely to end their marriage than husbands are (Amato & Previti, 2003).

Education and religious involvement also influenced relationship stability through their associations with relationship structure. Couple relationships in which the biological father and mother were present were more likely to persist than those in stepfamilies. Interestingly, a different resource was most influential in predicting biological-family status for men and women. Among men, higher education and income predicted biological-father presence. Among women, higher religious involvement predicted presence of the biological father in the family. Although two-biological-parent couples were the most stable, they did not report a high level of relationship satisfaction; thus these unions may be sustained by ideals of commitment and conventionality. These qualities may be derived from a desire to sustain a respectable social position among men and from religious beliefs and proscriptions among women; however, any explanation remains highly speculative without further investigation.

In sum, the resource variables of education and religious commitment operated somewhat differently for nonurban African American men and women. For both men and women, education was associated with higher income and lower stress from financial worries, which allowed couples to enjoy higher-quality relationships with one another. In addition to relationship quality (especially women's relationship quality), the structure of the couple relationship was important. For men, higher education and income predicted marriage and two-biological-parent status; whereas for women, higher religious involvement predicted both of these more stable relationship structures.

Conclusions

African American couples who live in nonurban settings face many of the same stressors as those in big cities, including impoverished neighborhoods, inadequate income, and racial discrimination. However, many couples show considerable resilience, even in challenging contexts.

We examined three different kinds of stressors, living in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood, racial discrimination, and personal financial strain. Somewhat unexpectedly, each stressor had a distinctive set of consequences for the nonurban African American couples in our sample. Those who resided in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods displayed lower levels of warmth to one another than those in more affluent neighborhoods. It appears that affectionate and supportive behaviors are quite sensitive to the context in which couples reside. Even when couples were personally financially secure, they showed lower warmth toward each other when their neighborhood was characterized by high rates of poverty and

unemployment. Life in such neighborhoods is difficult because resources like health care providers, food and supply stores, recreational facilities, and public transportation are absent or substandard, especially in rural areas (Burton et al., 2013). The strain imposed by navigating daily life in such a setting requires energy (e.g., traveling long distances for work), and people may return to their homes feeling depleted and unable to extend enthusiasm or warmth to their partner.

Although residence in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood was associated with lower observed warmth between nonurban couples, it was not associated with higher levels of observed hostility. By contrast, couples with higher levels of financial strain did show higher levels of hostility to one another, both concurrently and prospectively (Clavél et al., 2014). The tendency to display hostile behavior in response to financial strain was stronger among men than among women. The expectation that men will serve as the breadwinner for their family is strong in African American and rural cultures (Sherman, 2009; Tucker, 2000). Thus, men may have experienced greater strain than women over their perceived failure in a highly valued role and may show that strain through negative behavior toward the partner.

Furthermore, African American couples with high financial strain reported lower levels of relationship quality (Cutrona et al., 2011), and among men, they evaluated their female partner more negatively as a support provider if she reported experiencing financial strain (Clavél et al., 2014). Many nonurban couples have limited access to full-time, well-paying jobs, and the strain this imposes can be quite damaging to their relationship (Conger & Donellen, 2007; Hotz et al., 2002). However, among couples with higher levels of education and income, low levels of financial strain appeared to be a key factor in maintaining a high level of marital quality (Cutrona et al., 2011).

Rural communities are not immune to racial tensions, which have increased following the migration of inner-city and immigrant ethnic and racial minority group members to less costly small towns and suburbs (Keene et al., 2010). Prior research has documented the destructive mental and physical health consequences of racial discrimination (Brondolo et al., 2008; Clark et al., 1999; Dolezsar et al., 2014; Gibbons et al., 2014). Thus, we expected that the stress of racial discrimination would have negative effects on relationships. To our surprise, we found that using two different approaches to measure experiences of racism (neighborhood-level and individual-level) and two different outcome measures (observed behavior and perceived quality of social support), couples showed more *positive* outcomes in their relationships when they faced racial discrimination. Seeing one's partner as victimized by unjust and uncontrollable forces appears to mobilize empathy and solidarity, especially among men. This finding highlights one type of resilience among African American couples, who find strength through bonding with one another in the face of a very potent stressor.

As noted previously, the most rapid recent changes in family structure among women with children have occurred in rural locations (O'Hare et al., 2009). Until recently, rural women were likely to marry as their first union and prior to childbearing (Snyder et al., 2004). However, unmarried cohabitation has increased rapidly

among nonurban women with children (O'Hare et al., 2009). As in urban locations, we found that among nonurban African Americans, cohabitation was a less stable relationship context than marriage; step-parent couples were also less stable than two-biological-parent families (Cutrona et al., 2011). Interesting differences were found between men and women in the resources that were associated with more stable family structures. For men, higher education and income were associated with marriage rather than cohabitation. For women, religious involvement was the key predictor of entering a more stable union (Cutrona et al., 2011). Women may have been more willing to marry men with higher levels of financial resources, given traditional emphasis on the male role as breadwinner (Tucker, 2000). Women's education and income were not associated with a higher probability of marriage, suggesting that their "value" on the marriage market is associated with different kinds of assets. By contrast, women's religious involvement was associated both with marriage and biological-family status. The link between religious involvement and marriage has been documented in nationally representative samples (Lehrer, 2004) and among low-income African American couples (Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2007), presumably because religious institutions promote and support marriage as an important manifestation of morality.

Finally, we found a second important gender difference in the prediction of relationship stability such that women's, but not men's, relationship quality predicted relationship stability. This is consistent with research showing that women are more sensitive to the quality of relationships (Steil, 1997). It is interesting that even in rural contexts, with more traditional gender roles, women more frequently initiate relationship dissolution than men. Researchers recently tried to identify social characteristics of women and men that predict a higher likelihood that one or the other will initiate dissolution, but concluded that women are more likely to initiate, overall, across demographic categories (Hewitt, Western, & Baxter, 2006).

Methodological Challenges in Studying Rural Families

One methodological challenge in studying rural families is the many ways that rurality is defined and measured. Depending on how rurality is defined, the US population includes from 17 % to 49 % rural residents (Cromartie & Bucholtz, 2008). Urban and rural are multidimensional concepts and distinguishing between them can be difficult. Distinctions can be made based on many factors, including population density, geographic isolation, population size, land use patterns, and location outside of urban boundaries (Cromartie & Bucholtz, 2008). As defined by the Census Bureau, rural areas include open countryside and settlements with fewer than 2500 residents. This upper limit has been set at different levels by different agencies and has ranged from 2500 to 49,999 (Cromartie & Bucholtz, 2008). The life experiences of people residing in locations outside of urban boundaries differ dramatically depending on how far they are from the many resources that accompany higher density population. Clearly, the purpose of the research must govern the choice of how to define rural areas.

A number of additional methodological challenges accompany research with rural populations. When population density is low, it is more costly to recruit and collect data from widely dispersed participants. Rural residents may be less familiar with research and may be resistant to recruitment efforts. In small towns, residents may be highly aware of each other's activities, and confidentiality may be more challenging to maintain (e.g., recruitment of people with a specific mental or physical health problem). Multigenerational studies may be difficult to conduct because young adults often leave rural areas for greater job opportunities in larger cities. Norms of self-sufficiency among rural populations may make it difficult to elicit candid information about sensitive topics like mental illness and substance abuse. Furthermore, when the number of minority residents is low in a rural community, people may face realistic concerns over the ability of others to identify them from their location and ethnic/racial identity.

Future Research Directions

Despite these challenges, it is important to conduct rigorous research on rural minority families and youth. Given the increasing representation of ethnic and rural minority families in rural areas, information on their needs, barriers, and well-being is especially needed. For example, when African American families move from a large city to a more-affordable small town, they may encounter discrimination based on stereotypes derived both from their urban origins and their race. They may find it difficult to become integrated into small communities that are suspicious of newcomers. African American families who have lived for many years in rural communities may find themselves in highly racially segregated communities, with associated inequalities in quality of resources (Keene et al., 2010; Schafft, 2006). Overcoming the challenges of sparse employment opportunities may be especially difficult for ethnic and racial minority individuals (Hotz et al., 2002). How African American couples and families adapt and succeed in such environments is an important topic for future research.

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Chapter 9
Minority Families in the Rural United States: Family Processes, Child Care, and Early Schooling

Mary Bratsch-Hines, Claire Baker, and Lynne Vernon-Feagans

Over the last 10 years, large-scale national studies, policy briefs, and qualitative examinations of family life in the United States have described the alarming and growing "opportunity gap" between more-educated middle-class families who have thrived over the last 30 years and less-educated working-class families who have actually lost ground over the last 30 years (Duncan & Murnane, 2011; McClanahan, 2004). The opportunity gap has stemmed from increasing income, education, and work disparities that have impacted parental time with children, provision of resources for children, child participation in outside-of-school activities, and access to educational opportunities (Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Lareau, 2003). All of these factors contribute to an "achievement gap" for children from under-resourced versus well-resourced families. Most of the discussion of the opportunity and achievement gaps has focused on urban families, with much less attention focused on rural and/or rural minority families, even though rural children comprise almost one quarter of the school-aged population in the United States and minority populations in the rural United States are growing (O'Hare, 2009). This chapter will outline how disparities play out in the rural United States, with a focus on the unique experiences of minority families.

Early gaps in children's opportunities are concerning in part because later school difficulties have been linked to limited early resources. Children who struggle in school are generally from poorer and less-educated families. If poor children do not

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learn to read by early elementary school, they are set on a trajectory of failure for their entire school career (Duncan et al., 2007; Entwisle & Alexander, 1999). Longstanding evidence shows that African American and Latino children who are poor enter school with lower school readiness skills than more advantaged children (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005). The gap between minority, low-income children and more advantaged nonminority, non-low-income children continually grows over the years, with low-income children and especially minority, low-income children becoming progressively further behind in school (Grace, Zaslow, Brown, Aufseeser, & Bell, 2011; Mulligan, Hastedt, McCarroll, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). This trend appears to lead to disaffection with school for low-income minority youth who are more likely to drop out of school if they do not receive early intervention to improve their academic skills (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). School trajectories for minority children are even more constrained in rural areas, especially low-wealth rural areas, where teachers have less training and where children and families have fewer opportunities to access high-quality resources such as libraries and after-school programs (O'Hare, 2009; Smith & Tickamyer, 2011; Vernon-Feagans, Gallagher, & Kainz, 2010).

Children in the rural United States have higher poverty rates than urban and suburban children. The gap between urban and rural child poverty rates has grown, especially since the 2008 recession (Vernon-Feagans, Burchinal, & Mokrova, 2015). Rural children also tend to live in deeper poverty and for longer periods of time compared to their more urban counterparts (O'Hare, 2009). Furthermore, minority families in the rural United States are twice as poor as nonminority families, another gap that is much greater in rural than urban areas (Lichter & Graefe, 2011). A 2009 report from the Carsey Institute found that one in five young rural white children, two in five young rural Hispanic children, and one in two young rural African American children were living in poverty (O'Hare, 2009).

Lower reading levels at kindergarten entry translate into lower literacy levels during adolescence and adulthood, contributing to lower lifetime earnings, higher unemployment levels, and a continued cycle of poverty (Craig & Washington, 2006). Thus, inequities related to poverty and opportunities in the home environments begin from the earliest years of life and continue into school. To explore the lives of rural minority families in this chapter, we will frequently describe findings from the Family Life Project (FLP), a representative sample of 1292 children living in low-wealth rural areas in the United States who were followed from birth (see Vernon-Feagans, Cox, and the FLP Key Investigators, 2013 for more details). FLP oversampled for families in poverty and African American families, with these populations comprising 70 % and 40 % of the full sample, respectively. This chapter will provide background on the early development of these children in preschool and the transition to school, using key findings from the FLP study. We will focus on ecological factors that have been linked to school readiness, including: (a) rural isolation, work, and poverty; (b) child care; and (c) parenting. At the end of the chapter, we will discuss future directions, including implementing effective interventions in rural schools and conducting sensitive and efficacious studies in rural minority communities.

Theoretical Foundations for Studying Ethnic Minority Families

Ecological, sociocultural, and integrative frameworks are valuable for investigating family processes and child development in minority families (García Coll et al., 1996). An ecological framework places the child at the center of a network of environmental systems, with the interrelatedness of the systems influencing the child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Not only does the environment affect the child but the child also impacts the environment through reciprocal actions and relationships. Ecological theory posits that both distant (*distal*, such as economic contexts) and immediate (*proximal*, such as parenting) factors influence children's development. Sociocultural theory maintains that early childhood is an important time during which children learn to interact in culturally specified ways with family members, other children, nonfamilial adults, and community members (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rogoff, 2003). The strength of these relationships works in conjunction with children's individual attributes to set a foundation guiding how children develop positive self-concepts, use language, develop racial pride, approach learning, and engage in subsequent peer and teacher relationships (Rogoff, 2003; Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008).

Most studies have been conducted without recognizing historical and current inequities underlying ethnic minority children's early schooling outcomes (Cabrera, Beeghly, & Eisenberg, 2012; García Coll et al., 1996). To better understand how inequities impact minority children and families, García Coll et al. (1996) embedded the ecological framework within an integrative model of minority child development (see Fig. 9.1). The integrative model includes important ecological contexts for all children but pays special attention to unique factors related to the development of minority children, including experiences related to racism, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression as well as the resulting segregation of minority families through both residential and economic segregation. Inhibiting and promoting factors in families, neighborhoods, and schools are shown to be related to children's language, academic, and social skills. These constructs are particularly important when studying the lives of minority families. For instance, FLP used the integrative model to find evidence suggesting that higher levels of perceived discrimination by African American mothers was related to greater maternal depression. Yet, this study also showed how optimism and church-related social support helped mothers suffering from severe depression (Odom, Vernon-Feagans, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2010). Thus, investigating some of the unique constructs of minority family life may be particularly important in understanding children's normative positive development. Throughout this chapter we attempt to address these unique factors in the lives of minority children as they traverse through early childhood and the transition to school. Below, we explore how rural economic restructuring, parental educational attainment, and constraints on parental investments and family stability may impact child care stability and quality, parenting characteristics, and children's early and later development. Although the findings
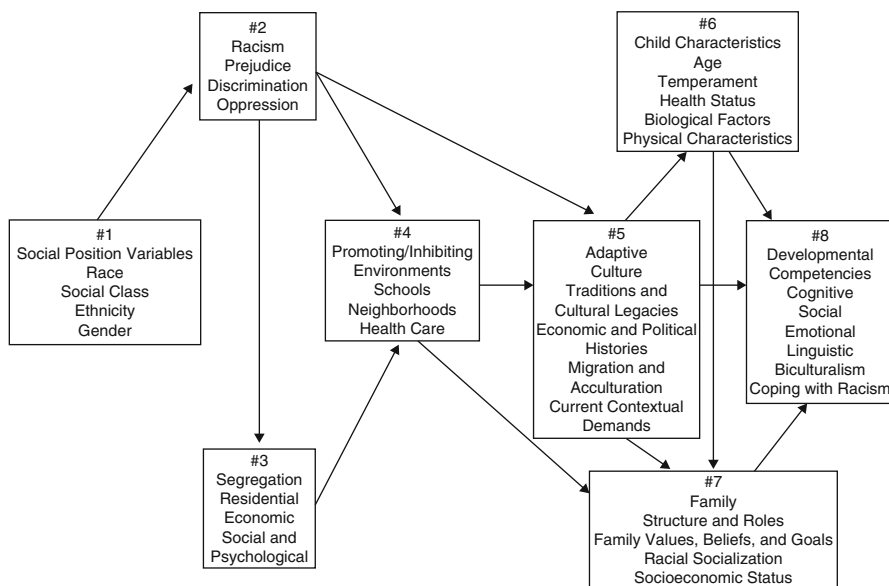
Fig. 9.1 Integrative model

discussed below will reference the experiences of minority children living in rural areas where possible, we will also draw on a larger body of work in order to fully explore the factors that influence children's transition to school.

Transitioning to School for Ethnic Minority Children

The transition to school is a time of greater responsibility for children, as they take on the role of "student" with a new collection of rules and obligations, a new set of adults, and a larger group of peers (Entwisle & Alexander, 1999; Mayer, Amendum, & Vernon-Feagans, 2010). Interactions with teachers are more academically focused and structured and typically less warm than children experience with family members or child care providers (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). Additional changes that children may experience for the first time include comparison with other children, evaluation of skills, and early tracking by teacher-perceived ability (Entwisle & Alexander, 1999). Further, schools are often spaces in which children first learn about race and its nuances (Noguera, 2003). Given these demands and children's need to synthesize new information, this transitional period can set the stage for children's later schooling (Vernon-Feagans, 1996). Across six large-scale studies, for example, academic achievement in children's late elementary years was most strongly predicted by school-entry reading, math, and attention skills (Duncan et al., 2007).

For low-income minority children, the transition to school has the potential to lead to academic success if they attend effective schools that provide high-quality instruction, set high expectations for children, and have a strong commitment to serve all students (Noguera, 2003). Unfortunately, not all children experience strong educational environments, which may be particularly true in rural areas, where rural schools have fewer resources and fewer well-trained teachers (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010). Therefore, parents and other family members as well as prior educational exposure (e.g., high-quality child care) are important components of children's success. For example, African American and Latino parents often believe that education is associated with social mobility for their children (Holloway, Rambaud, Fuller, & Eggers-Pierola, 1995). Parents' views on school readiness are shaped both by their personal, experiential understanding of what happens in schools and by public discourse (Barbarin et al., 2008). As children's first teachers, parents choose activities, learning materials, and how they want to socialize their children, imparting values that they deem or have been told are most important (Lareau, 2003). Minority families have been shown to strongly value education (Fields-Smith, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010), and in order to best aid their children, often equate successful adaptation to school with their children's academic preparedness (Barbarin et al., 2008). Despite efforts of rural ethnic minority families to prepare their children for school and promote school success, distal factors such as economic disparities and poverty often reduce their children's opportunities for a successful transition to school.

Economic Restructuring and Rural Families Massive restructuring of the United States economy and continued globalization have changed the quality of family life over the last 30–40 years. Rural economic changes have been fueled by the disappearance of family farms (Dimitri, Effland, & Conklin, 2005) and furniture, textile, steel, and railroad manufacturing jobs (Smith & Tickamyer, 2011; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2015), all of which provided steady and reliable work for rural adults 30 years ago. The disappearance of key industries has had a greater impact on minority than nonminority adults, as minority adults are even more likely to work in service industry jobs (e.g., retail, fast food, and home health), which are characterized by lower wages, poorer benefits, and nonstandard work hours (Smith & Tickamyer, 2011). Thus, rural families have been uniquely affected by changes in the United States economy compared to their more urban counterparts. The combination of the outmigration of young adults to urban areas and the disappearance of key industries in rural areas have created the context for greater poverty in rural than urban communities (Glasmeier & Salant, 2006; Petrin, Schafft, & Meece, 2014).

The economic restructuring in the rural United States has had a profound impact on the ability of rural families to provide optimal contexts for their children's development. Longer work hours, less vacation time, more low-paying jobs with nonstandard work hours, and the rise in the necessity for two wage earners to meet families' needs have disproportionately affected working-class and minority families (McClanahan, 2004; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2015). A shift in work has clearly

not happened only in the rural United States but the impact may be greater in rural areas, where poverty is more prevalent and fewer jobs are available to provide standard working hours, benefits, and high pay (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010).

Educational Attainment The outmigration of educated and talented young adults in the rural United States seeking better opportunities in urban/suburban areas further decreased community social capital and resources (Hornberger & Cobb, 1998). Those left behind were often older adults and young adults with less education and skills. Outmigration, coupled with reduced access to higher education in the rural United States, has created a dramatic difference in the college graduation rates between urban and rural adults, with 17.5 % of rural adults having a college degree compared to 31 % of urban adults (USDA Economic Research Service, 2012). These differences are even more exaggerated for minority adults, with only 7 % of rural African American adults with a college degree in comparison to 18 % of their urban counterparts (Harris & Worthen, 2003). Differences in educational attainment between urban and rural areas have fairly negative implications for families and their children. For instance, in 1970, almost half of adults without a high school degree and 60 % of high school graduates were in the middle class, but by 2007, the proportion had fallen to 33 % and 45 %, respectively. Since 1970, people with college degrees or greater have remained in the middle class or "boarded the escalator upwards" to the highest income levels as compared to high school graduates who have lost ground economically (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010).

Rural economic trends may also be driving a convergence in the lives of less-educated adults, such that adults with less than a high school education and those with a high school education only are more alike compared to the more advantaged college-educated adults. Jobs that may have been relegated previously to the least educated (i.e., women without a high school degree) are now also being filled by women with a high school degree or even some college. At the national level across the rural/urban continuum, the trend for high school graduates to be employed in lower-paying jobs that once were mostly filled by non-high school graduates may be one of the reasons for the rising income gap between the college-educated and the noncollege-educated groups, as well as, the gap between minority and nonminority families (Presser, 2003).

Constraints on Parental Investments Family poverty directly exerts its influence on child development through the resources that parents are able to provide, including books in the home, child participation in outside school activities, and child academic enrichment activities (Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Reardon, 2011). Some evidence has shown that poverty indirectly influences child development through parental educational levels and nonstandard work hours. For example, a recent study by Kalil, Ryan, and Corey (2012) examined the relationship between maternal education and the amount of time mothers spent in various activities with their children at different ages. They reported what they called a "developmental gradient," such that college-educated mothers shifted their time with children in response to child developmental needs. College-educated mothers spent much more time during

early childhood in basic care and play with their children in comparison to less time in these activities by the noncollege-educated mothers. College-educated mothers then continued to shift their time allocations across childhood in accordance with child needs, such that they spent more time teaching their children in early childhood and more time helping manage children's activities at school-age. This shift in time allocation was not apparent in the noncollege-educated mothers' time allocation, suggesting a divergence in beneficial parenting practices between the college- and noncollege-educated mothers. The gap in parenting by maternal education may be even greater in the rural United States because of the larger percentage of noncollege-educated adults.

Nonstandard Work Hours Although the time parents spend with children is clearly related to parents' educational levels, the time and activities that mothers and fathers engage in with children are also related to their work hours and how those work hours mesh with the developmental needs of their children. Even though 80 % of rural households have a full-time working adult, many of the available jobs pay low wages with few benefits and often involve nonstandard work hours that put families and children at risk (Lichter, Roscigno, & Condron, 2003). The rise in the "24-hour economy" (Presser, 1999, 2004), wherein an increasing number of adults are working evening, overnight, rotating and variable shifts, and weekends, has changed the structure of family life. This change in work schedules has disproportionately affected lower-educated adults (Presser, 2004). In FLP, over 40 % of the working mothers living in rural North Carolina and Pennsylvania had nonstandard work hours (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2015).

A number of sociologists have argued that nonstandard work hours have negatively impacted the lives of families (Enchautegui, 2013; Smith & Tickamyer, 2011). Nonstandard work hours have been implicated in the actual time and activities that parents are able to participate in with their children. Enchautegui (2013) examined diary entries recording the amount of time parents spent with their children as a function of whether they had a standard or nonstandard work schedule. Although she did not control for education level, Enchautegui reported that mothers and fathers who worked in nonstandard work schedules spent considerably less time with their children from infancy to age 18. Presser (2004) reported that parents who worked in nonstandard shifts spent fewer nights having dinner with their children, with 64 % of single working mothers missing about half the dinners with their children each week compared to only 23 % of single mothers who work during the day. This trend was similar for both mothers and fathers in dual-earner families.

In addition, nonstandard work hours have now been associated with poorer outcomes for children, including greater behavior problems for children in elementary school (Joshi & Bogen, 2007). For African American families in FLP, maternal employment in nonstandard work hours at 24 months was associated with lower expressive language skills at both 24 and 36 months. This finding was mediated by maternal engagement, suggesting that nonstandard work hours decreased mothers' ability to engage in sensitive parenting behaviors (Odom, Vernon-Feagans, & Crouter, 2013).

Family Stability The economic and social forces described above have increased the likelihood that some rural children will experience less supportive environmental conditions, including greater household chaos. Rurality and poverty place severe stress on families who may need to drive long distances to jobs, health services, and schools, while juggling work and family schedules. The strain on family life can create increased chaos and poorer parenting, leading to poorer child outcomes (Hofferth, 1998; Vernon-Feagans, Garrett-Peters, Willoughby, & Mills-Koonce, 2012; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2015). Household chaos has been defined by family instability and disorganization. Instability includes people moving in and out of the household, household moves to a different location, and changes in the mother or father figure in the home. Disorganization includes lack of schedules and routines, clutter, and noise in the home. Family chaos may be particularly salient in rural households (Evans, 2006; Vernon-Feagans, Garrett-Peters, De Marco, & Bratsch, 2012) as families cope with limited public transportation and geographic isolation, which make access to work, school, and essential services difficult. In a recent FLP papers (Vernon-Feagans, Garrett-Peters, Willoughby & Mills-Koonce, 2012), family disorganization negatively predicted children's earlier and later language outcomes. Thus, chaotic living conditions not only affect poor children but potentially place all rural children at risk (Dewees, 2000; Lee & Burkam, 2002). Rurality is significantly linked to poorer outcomes for children as they enter formal schooling, not simply in the presence of poverty but due to chaotic home lives that are often associated with rural families' work schedules, geographic isolation, and marginalization.

Child Care Providing high-quality child care may be an important way to help ethnic minority children successfully transition to school and to lessen the achievement gap (McCartney, Dearing, Taylor, & Bub, 2007). For example, higher-quality care has been shown to be an especially strong protective factor for African American children as they progress through elementary school (Votruba-Drzal, Coley, Maldonado-Carreno, Li-Grining, & Chase-Lansdale, 2010) as well as for Latino children (Bassok, 2010). Although research on child care has not sufficiently explored or disaggregated data on the accessibility, quality, and stability of child care and its influence on the transition to school for minority children living in rural communities (Bratsch, 2011; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005), we highlight a sampling of relevant literature below.

Accessibility High percentages of rural and ethnic minority children attend out-of-home child care during their earliest years. A National Household Education Survey estimate of rural families' participation in childcare was 62 % (Swenson, 2008), similar to urban areas and the United States as a whole. ECLS-B data showed that, nationally, child care attendance for African American and Latino children increased from 65 % and 47 % at 9 months to 85 % and 78 % at 4 years, respectively (Bassok, 2010). These figures highlight the fact that national data is often disaggregated by race or geographic location, but not both. Thus, data from longitudinal projects such as FLP help to fill in the gap of knowledge of the child care experiences for minority families living in rural areas. In FLP, 53 % of African American children were in child care at 6 months (56 % informal/44 % formal), which increased to 68 % at prekindergarten

(4 % informal/96 % formal). As expected, rural African American children in FLP increased in the likelihood of attending child care outside of the home and changed from primarily informal care as infants (e.g., friend or relative care, family child care homes) to formal care (e.g., center-based care) as preschoolers.

Although rural families may be able to find child care, whether that care is preferred or beneficial for their children remains questionable. Child care accessibility for rural families continues to be constrained by geographic isolation and cost (Forry & Walker, 2011). Rural families make child care decisions based on minimizing the distance to child care, thus reducing travel costs (Li-Grining & Coley, 2006). In a study exploring child care availability for families living in rural communities, respondents from a rural community in Maryland revealed that the only formal child care option was in a neighboring county 50 miles away (Walker & Reschke, 2004). Further, rural families tend to pay more for child care than families living in urban areas (Smith & Gozjolko, 2010), with rural single-parent families paying over one-third of their income on infant care (Walker & Reschke, 2004). Families may not be best situated to understand the characteristics of high-quality care or be able to make decisions about child care based on quality. Thus, rural families make child care choices based on location, cost, convenience, and/or subsidy receipt, restricting their access to a variety of care options, including options they might prefer (Bratsch, 2011). In FLP, families who had access to child care subsidies (approximately one-third of the full sample from 6 to 36 months), however, were able to select higher-quality child care, particularly center-based care (De Marco, Vernon-Feagans, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2014).

Quality Given the high prevalence of children from ethnic minority families attending child care, understanding whether that care is high in quality becomes an important task. Despite the known benefits of high-quality care, the majority of children across the United States experience only average quality care (Vandell et al., 2010). For low-income families in particular, the combination of low availability of programs such as Head Start (Clements, Reynolds, & Hickey, 2004), child care costs that are a disproportionate share of their income (Smith & Gozjolko, 2010), and limited amounts of publicly funded child care subsidies (Weinraub, Shlay, Harmon, & Tran, 2005) make accessing high-quality child care a challenge. An additional barrier specific to ethnic minority families may be the challenge of accessing child care programs specifically designed to provide culturally sensitive care for their children (Howes, 2010). Using FLP data, rural African American children were shown to experience lower-quality child care than their non-African American peers at ages two and three (De Marco, Crouter, & Vernon-Feagans, 2009). In other findings, FLP children at 36 months who experienced low maternal language diversity or complexity in the home but positive caregiving interactions in child care had better language skills at 36 months and pre-K (Vernon-Feagans, Bratsch-Hines, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2013), even after controlling for home environment and child care quality. Finally, for FLP children in prekindergarten, analyses showed support for a relationship between higher child care quality and lower problem behaviors (Burchinal, Vernon-Feagans, Vitiello, Greenberg, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2014). Thus, stimulating,

high-quality child care (e.g., high amounts of verbal interaction, better classroom management) is a key ingredient in promoting children's behavioral, language, and emergent literacy skills for both African American and non-African American children in the rural context.

Intensive child care interventions such as the Abecedarian project and the Perry Preschool project, which predominantly served African American children in poverty, found that children who received child care services experienced short-term gains in academic achievement and long-term advantages such as exposure to higher education, employment opportunities, and better physical health in adulthood (Campbell et al., 2014; Pungello et al., 2010; Schweinhart, 2005; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997). Longitudinal studies have also linked high-quality child care to children's academic and social development. Data from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development, which included rural and minority children but did not disaggregate findings, showed that higher-quality child care predicted higher academic achievement and lower rates of externalizing behaviors up to age 15 (Vandell et al., 2010).

Stability Researchers focusing on child care quality have not always considered that children often attend several different child care settings prior to age five, experiencing sequential changes from month to month or year to year (Bratsch-Hines, Mokrova, Vernon-Feagans, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2014) and/or simultaneous changes within a given week (Morrissey, 2009). These changes, termed *child care instability*, are a common experience for most children in the United States (Adams & Rohacek, 2010). While previous research has focused on the links between child care instability and outcomes for children from low-wealth families, limited work has explored this phenomenon for rural ethnic minority families. For the 96 African American children in FLP who were consistently in nonparental child care arrangements from 6 to 36 months (only 17 % of the African American sample), higher child care instability was associated with lower social competence skills at 36 months. This finding was moderated by home environment quality, such that children who experienced lower home environment quality and higher child care instability had the highest likelihood of being rated as having low social competence skills by their child care providers at 36 months (Bratsch-Hines, Vernon-Feagans, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2013). Despite contributions from longitudinal projects such as FLP, more work is needed to understand how child care quality and instability are associated with social and academic development for rural ethnic minority children as they transition into elementary school.

Parenting

Children's home environments and experiences with parenting have the most salient influences on their early development. Parenting in ethnic minority families is shaped by cultural values, beliefs, and skills. Sociocultural theorists posit that

didactic interactions with more knowledgeable members of society (e.g., parents) are necessary for children to acquire new skills (Vygotsky, 1978). In relation to school readiness, sociocultural theory suggests that child development is a socially determined process, in which children depend on assistance from parents to master new cognitive and behavioral challenges (Vygotsky, 1978). As a result, early interactions with parents lead to continuous changes in children's development that vary from culture to culture. The social transmission of knowledge from parent to child is especially salient prior to school entry because parents serve as the first teachers of their young children (Baker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2014). Parents who provide developmentally appropriate cognitive stimulation and model appropriate behaviors during joint learning activities (e.g., quiet listening during book reading) can enhance children's academic functioning and ensure their readiness for school. Sociocultural theorists argue that this kind of parenting not only helps children understand how to learn but also how to execute specific tasks. Recent empirical studies with ethnic minority families have provided some support for these suppositions and highlight the importance of several family processes in families with young children, including (a) sensitivity, (b) control/discipline, (c) interfamily conflict, (d) learning and language stimulation, and (e) cultural socialization. Although work has increasingly studied these processes in ethnic minority families, less work has focused specifically on rural ethnic minority children; we will highlight that work where possible below.

Sensitivity Evidence presented above described how distal factors place constraints on parental investments. Findings from FLP have suggested strong connections for rural families between proximal influences such as the ability to parent sensitively and distal characteristics such as economic and social circumstances. For example, Newland, Crnic, Cox, Mills-Koonce, and The Family Life Project Key Investigators (2013) found that for African American and non-African American families, maternal anxiety and depression mediated the relationship between maternal report of economic pressures and observed sensitive parenting behaviors (Newland et al.,2013). Specifically, mothers who had higher economic pressures reported increased anxiety, depression, somatization, and hostility, which affected their ability to parent sensitively.

Additional research has directly and indirectly linked maternal sensitivity to ethnic minority children's positive developmental outcomes. Findings from a longitudinal study of Black, White, and Hispanic children showed that maternal sensitivity, starting when children were 6 months old and continuing throughout elementary school, was associated with gains in children's cognitive skills and social-emotional functioning from 3 to 10 years of age (Landry, Smith, & Swank, 2006). FLP researchers recently compared two parenting models during early childhood: the family investment model (importance of availability of economic resources to provide advantages to children) and the family process model (importance of relationships and interactions between parents and children). They found that while a cumulative risk index (low maternal education, low-income, single-parent household, high number of children in the household, negative life events, parental unemployment, and unsafe neighborhoods) predicted children's later development, both

models of parenting were significant partial mediators, particularly the family process model (Vernon-Feagans, Cox, and The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2013). Assessing a national sample of African American children from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), which included rural children, Baker and Iruka (2013) found that after controlling for multiple demographic risk factors, maternal sensitivity mediated the relation between maternal depression and children's kindergarten reading achievement. Although more comprehensive research is needed, these studies suggest that parental sensitivity has the potential to enhance the developmental trajectories of ethnic minority children from diverse economic contexts.

Control and Discipline Mothers who combine warmth with an adequate amount of control and discipline tend to have children with better developmental outcomes (McLoyd & Smith, 2002). Maternal discipline, in particular, allows parents to demonstrate concern for their children's well-being by setting boundaries for children's daily behaviors and activities. Based in part on the definition of parenting constructs, however, studies have shown mixed support for the link between maternal control and child outcomes. In some samples of low-income minority children, studies have shown that mothers' provision of control and discipline are positively related to children's cognitive and social-emotional development (Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002; McLoyd & Smith, 2002). In a study of low-income rural African American children and their mothers, Brody and Flor (1998) linked aspects of maternal control (e.g., no-nonsense parenting) to enhanced cognitive and social-emotional competence in a sample of 9-year-old children. Similarly, Mistry et al. (2002) used a sample of low-income urban African American and Latino children to show that economic hardship was related to less maternal warmth as well as less control/discipline, which predicted lower teacher ratings of behavioral competence among children aged 5 through 12 years old.

While maternal control may have some positive benefits for some ethnic minority children, research on other aspects of parenting such as intrusive parenting suggest more complicated relationships. An FLP subsample of mothers of African American boys showed increasing intrusive parenting behaviors across their first 3 years. While initial levels of intrusive behaviors were not associated with expressive communication/language development, inhibitory control, and intellectual functioning at age three, the increase in intrusive behaviors lead to poorer adjustment in these domains (Clincy & Mills-Koonce, 2013).

Interfamily Conflict Several FLP studies have examined the influence of interfamily conflict on children's developmental outcomes. For both African American and non-African American FLP families whose biological mother resided with a romantic partner when their child was three, interparental aggression increased the risk for conduct problems and ADHD symptoms (Towe-Goodman, Stifter, Coccia, Cox, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2011). Similarly, mother–grandmother conflict in three-generational FLP homes was predictive of children's problem behaviors at 3 years (Barnett, Mills-Koonce, Gustafsson, Cox, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2012). Similar findings were shown for FLP children

at 58 months, such that exposure to higher levels of interparental conflict as well as higher household chaos and sustained poverty uniquely contributed to children's ability to recognize and control negative emotion (Raver, Blair, Garrett-Peters, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2015). Together, these studies indicate that parenting is complicated by a number of distal and proximal factors that influence children's optimal development.

Learning and Language Stimulation Additional literature suggests that home learning stimulation can have lasting positive benefits for ethnic minority children (Britto & Brooks-Gunn, 2001; Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006). In a small sample of low-income, Latino children, Farver et al. (2006) found that mothers who participated in more frequent home learning stimulation had children with better emergent literacy and social skills at 6 years of age compared to mothers who engaged in less frequent home learning stimulation. Data from nationally representative studies have also shown that African American and Latino children whose mothers and fathers read to them frequently, told stories, sang songs, and played informal learning games had more advanced cognitive and social-emotional skills in preschool and kindergarten (Baker, 2013; Baker, 2014a). In FLP, paternal rather than maternal language inputs at 6 months (i.e., diverse vocabulary during a shared book task) significantly contributed to children's communication skills at 15 months and expressive language at 36 months (Pancsofar, Vernon-Feagans, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2010). However, a recent FLP study found that maternal language vocabulary and complexity during a wordless picture book task in the home at 36 months of age were predictive of children's 36-month language outcomes and pre-K school readiness skills (Vernon-Feagans, Bratsch-Hines & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2013).

Cultural Socialization Cultural socialization is typically defined as practices that advance children's knowledge about their race, ethnicity, or heritage (Hughes, 2003). The ways that ethnic minority parents transmit messages of cultural socialization to their young children has been increasingly studied. Research that has focused primarily on adolescents has shown that discussions about ethnicity and race are salient components of parenting in ethnic minority families (García Coll et al., 1996; Hughes et al., 2006). In addition to engaging in home learning stimulation, African American and Latino parents have been shown to transmit information about unique aspects of their culture, including their racial, ethnic, and religious heritage (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes, 2003; Hughes et al., 2006).

A paucity of research has investigated African American and Latino mothers' efforts to engage in early cultural socialization and its subsequent relation to early school readiness and academic success. In one exception, O'Brien-Caughy and colleagues (2002) found that home-based cultural socialization practices were related to greater factual knowledge (measured using the Kaufman Assessment Battery for children) and better problem-solving skills among African American preschoolers. In addition, African American mothers who socialized their preschool children to be proud of their heritage reported fewer problem behaviors. Data from national samples of African American children and their mothers have yielded

similar results. For example, Baker (2014b) linked parenting and cultural socialization to higher science and social studies scores in kindergarten among African American children from the ECLS-K. Evidence from ethnic minority families living in rural contexts suggests that some aspects of cultural socialization can promote racial pride, which has been linked to positive self-esteem during adolescence (McBride Murry et al., 2005; Murry, Berkel, Brody, Miller, & Chen, 2009). Yet, no studies have examined whether and how cultural socialization practices may promote the positive development of African American or Latino children from rural families during early childhood. Thus, culturally responsive research that can address this limitation is needed.

Improving Rural Students' Trajectories

In FLP, African American children entered school with standardized scores at or above the national average (kindergarten Woodcock Johnson Letter-Word Identification, $M = 107.39$, SD = 12.06) and similar to their non-African American peers ($M = 107.29$, SD = 12.12). Over time, however, these scores began to diverge, although the African American children were still at the national average (third grade Woodcock Johnson Letter-Word Identification, $M = 99.92$, SD = 11.15) compared to their non-African American peers ($M = 104.36$, SD = 11.97, $p < 0.05$). These data suggest that, at the earliest grades, developing programs that can change this disparity is needed. In addition to families, teachers have an enormous responsibility to improve the early academic trajectories for their students. Like families, teachers, particularly those living in rural areas, face barriers to supporting children's optimal developmental pathways. For example, teachers in rural areas often do not have access to high-quality professional development programs that supply them with the necessary tools to enhance children's reading readiness (Vernon-Feagans, 2009; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010).

In an effort to address these realities and promote children's literacy skills, Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, and Amendum (2013) developed a professional development intervention for rural early elementary teachers (The Targeted Reading Intervention; TRI). The TRI is part of a new generation of early interventions preparing classroom teachers to use specific strategies with individual learners to prevent reading failure, with an end goal of children reading independently, fluently, and with high levels of comprehension (Amendum, Vernon-Feagans, & Ginsberg, 2011; Vernon-Feagans, Kainz et al., 2013). The TRI is unique in that it uses coaches to deliver ongoing professional development via web-based technology to teachers in remote rural schools. Literacy coaches observe teachers instruct an individual struggling reader in one-on-one sessions and provide immediate feedback to help classroom teachers choose the best individualized, instructional strategies. Using webcam technology is more cost effective and feasible in rural areas where geographic isolation may prevent access to high-quality professional development (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010). Effectiveness data from previous

randomized controlled trials have shown effect sizes between 0.36 and 0.63 on student reading gains (Vernon-Feagans, Kainz et al., 2013). Two independent groups who conducted further analyses with TRI data have endorsed the TRI as one of very few effective early reading programs: Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development* and Rand Corporation's *Promising Practices Network*. Programs such as the TRI are promising ways to help rural ethnic minority children attain and maintain academic achievement.

Methodological Challenges and Strategies

In this chapter, we discussed findings from a number of studies, including nationally representative, descriptive, and intervention studies that described how parenting and schooling processes impact the social and academic trajectories of rural minority children. We were particularly interested in sharing our work using Family Life Project data, because we believe this longitudinal, representative dataset uniquely captures the home, child care, and early schooling experiences of children living in low-wealth rural areas. A particular contribution of FLP was the over-sampling for African American families, which provides a window into their lives and helps us understand the normative developmental processes that guide their children's growth.

Our work with FLP data collection has taught us many lessons about how best to work with rural low-wealth study participants. We learned that building trust in communities and with families takes an enormous investment of time and resources. Researchers must allow for a number of months or even years to gain access to the level of trust that families in FLP have displayed. One key strategy used by FLP was an ethnographic study that researchers completed during the first year of the study, prior to quantitative data collection. Interviews were conducted with families from FLP locations to determine which family and community processes were important at the proximal level. These data allowed the quantitative design and questionnaires to be more relevant to the lives of rural and minority families. In addition, FLP researchers worked with local organizations to promote the study and get buy-in at the community level. Another key strategy was that FLP employed research assistants (all women) who were from the study counties. In North Carolina, the majority of the research assistants were African American. Thus, FLP families often shared or developed a bond with the women who represented FLP in the research field.

A challenge that FLP research assistants commonly encountered was the high levels of poverty and chaotic home lives of the study participants, which influenced their ability to participate in the study, both at a given time point and over time. One research assistant's work was entirely devoted to tracking participants' locations and making sure updated contact information was available. FLP children experienced not only child care instability but also residential and income instability, which were impediments to continuous study participation. Because the research assistants were locally hired, they could draw on a number of family and community networks to stay in touch with families.

Research work in rural communities tends to be expensive. Due to the costs associated with the time and mileage logged by research assistants, their local availability was an important advantage. In addition, FLP researchers piloted all questionnaires and measures with a smaller subsample of families. This allowed for an understanding of the feasibility of data collection with dozens of families prior to data collection with hundreds of families.

Conclusions

National goals demand that all children enter school ready to learn. Available evidence suggests that children's ability to succeed at the start of school is largely determined by economic characteristics and early parenting. Although early experiences with parents appear to play an important role in children's academic trajectories, our knowledge of these processes in ethnic minority families is limited, especially those exposed to rural poverty. This is especially important because too many low-income children enter school without the precursory skills needed for school success. Evidence from large and small-scale studies provides promising evidence that parent warmth, control/discipline, home learning stimulation, and cultural socialization can enhance kindergarten readiness in ethnic minority families. In addition, the provision of accessible, high-quality, and stable child care may be an important avenue for enriching early developmental trajectories and lifelong achievement. However, more work is needed that provides an even broader view of the ecology of schooling transitions in rural ethnic minority families. Importantly, research focusing on the *capacities* of rural families, rather than *deficits*, is needed. Studies that elucidate strengths in rural ethnic minority families have the potential to inform intervention programs that serve minority children living in these communities. Future efforts to create culturally sensitive measures of family processes in minority families will be vital. These measures should include family processes that have been largely ignored in the prior research with minorities, such as religion and racial pride. Understanding how rural ethnic minority families successfully navigate economic hardship and reduced employment opportunities and how children attending rural schools meet academic success are important avenues for future research.

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Chapter 10
Rural Latino/a Youth and Parents on the Northern Great Plains: Preliminary Findings from the Latino Youth Care Project (LYCP)

Gustavo Carlo, Lisa J. Crockett, Cara Streit, and Ruth Cardenas

As of 2013, there were an estimated 54 million Latinos in the United States, representing approximately 17 % of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). From 2000 to 2012, the Latino population in the United States experienced a 50 % increase, while the total US population increased by only 12 % (Brown, 2014). Moreover, Nebraska (and the Northern Great Plains region) has experienced dramatic changes in its ethnic and racial composition (Carlo, Carranza, & Zamboanga, 2002; Pew Hispanic Center, 2013), which have far exceeded national growth trends. Relative to other ethnic minority groups, the Latino population in Nebraska increased by more than 87 % in one decade, from 92,836 in 2000 to 173,909 in 2010 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013); however, the number of Latinos is substantially underestimated (by as much as 50 %) because many are undocumented and others migrate according to seasonal work opportunities (Carlo et al., 2002). Further, there are high rates of population growth within rural counties. From 2000 to 2010, the Latino population in rural countries in Nebraska increased by an estimated 80.1 % (Bailey & Preston, 2011).

Although Latinos make up only 9.4 % of the total population in Nebraska (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013), in small communities, minor increases in the number of immigrants can have a strong impact on the community as a whole (see Ogbu, 1991). This is dramatically illustrated by school enrollment statistics. For example, Hispanics account for approximately 3.5 % of public school students in Lincoln, NE but 45 % of students in Schuyler, NE. The percentage of Latino residents, which

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shows tremendous variation across relatively small and rural Nebraska communities, is expected to influence Latino youth development and provides a unique context for research. Features of Latino culture and social status, combined with diverse community contexts (rural versus urban location; differences in community size; differing proportions of Latinos), also create particular challenges for conducting research. In this chapter, we describe an ongoing study of Latino youth in Nebraska (the Latino Youth Care Project; LYCP) that was designed to take community characteristics as well as Latino culture into account. We describe the conceptual model guiding the study, review pertinent prior research, present preliminary findings, and summarize challenges and recommendations for future research. We use "Latino" to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Central and South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race or gender (Center for Mental Health Services, 1999), with the understanding that there are wide variations between subgroups.

Theoretical Frameworks for the LYCP Study

Three theoretical frameworks were adapted to examine Latino youth development. The first framework (Laosa, 1990) emphasizes characteristics of the receiving community, characteristics of the family and the child, life events, characteristics of the school context, and the cognitive interpretive processes of the child as key factors influencing the development of minority children (see also Boss, 2002; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Garcia Coll et al., 1996). The second framework was Berry's model of acculturative stress (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Berry proposes that acculturative stress (i.e., pressures associated with exposure to a society that holds different beliefs, values, and customs) is contingent on a number of moderating variables including characteristics of the receiving society, characteristics of the acculturating group, modes of acculturation, demographic and social characteristics of the individual, and the psychological characteristics of the individual. The third model was Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model of the emotion system, which accounts for individual differences in stress responses. According to this model, the relations between personality, environmental characteristics, and stress responses are linked to cognitive appraisal processes (Lazarus, 1991). When anticipating stressful events, individuals who make threat appraisals (i.e., anticipate losses) tend to experience stronger negative emotional and physiological reactions, whereas individuals who make challenge appraisals (i.e., anticipate gains) tend to experience positive emotional and physiological reactions (Tomaka, Blascovich, Kelsey, & Leitten, 1993).

Taken together, these theoretical frameworks suggest that Latino youth's adaptation and development are contingent upon individual and social contextual characteristics, as well as intrapersonal processes. Of particular interest for the LYCP is the impact of acculturative stress on Latino youth. Acculturative stress refers to physiological and psychological changes brought about by acculturation-related

demands on an individual (Berry & Kim, 1988; Berry et al., 1987). These changes induce coping responses aimed at reducing those demands. According to Berry's model, individuals from ethnic minority groups may experience relatively high levels of acculturative stress when they migrate involuntarily, reside in contexts that emphasize assimilation (pressure to conform to majority group standards), have only temporary contact with the majority society (e.g., sojourners), wish to maintain ties with both the culture of origin and the new culture, or wish to assimilate to the new culture. Issues of language, cultural differences, acculturation, ethnic identity, and discrimination are compounded when communities do not have adequate social structures (e.g., bilingual services) to respond to the needs of Latino residents (see Marín, 1993; Locke, 1992). These acculturation-related processes place Latino children at heightened risk of physical, emotional, behavioral, mental, and social problems (see Garza & Gallegos, 1995, for reviews). Ultimately, these processes may compromise positive youth and family development (see Locke, 1992).

Many social institutions (e.g., schools, community services, job market) and communities intentionally or unintentionally exert acculturative pressure on Latino children and families to conform to the values and expectations of the dominant culture. Low levels of acculturation, low ethnic identity, and living in highly stressful environments (e.g., experiencing language barriers or financial problems) might contribute to subjective stress and conflict, and in turn, to developmental problems. Many of these pressures result from a lack of understanding in the receiving community regarding the structures, practices, laws, and rules that are the foundation of cultural systems (e.g., immigrant vs. native born; voluntary vs. involuntary migrants) (see Locke, 1992). Over time, these pressures can lead to cognitive and social developmental problems and to intergenerational (as well as intercultural) conflicts that impede successful adjustment.

Although Latinos experience adversity, they also have a pool of strengths and resources that contribute to their resilience (see Cuellar, Arnold, & Gonzàlez, 1995). For example, Latino families have a culture (including ethnic foods, music, and language) and cultural values (e.g., *familism, personalismo, respeto, simpatia*) that support them in dealing effectively with life challenges. These resources are particularly relevant to Latino children and families living in mostly White, European American communities, which may be less sensitive to their culture and needs. Identifying and exploring the impact of diverse personal and social contextual factors that are normative to Latino populations provided an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding Latino children's development.

Drawing primarily from Laosa's, Berry's, and Lazarus and Folkman's theories, we proposed an integrative model (see Fig. 10.1) that incorporates knowledge regarding stress appraisal (Lazarus, 1991), acculturative stress (Berry et al., 1987), ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990), sociocognitive development (Work & Olsen, 1990), value-based behaviors (Knight, Bernal, & Carlo, 1995), and broader contextual influences on Latino youth development (Laosa, 1990; see also Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Based on existing models of appraisals and stress (Compas, 1987; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), we propose that cognitive processes (including stress appraisals,
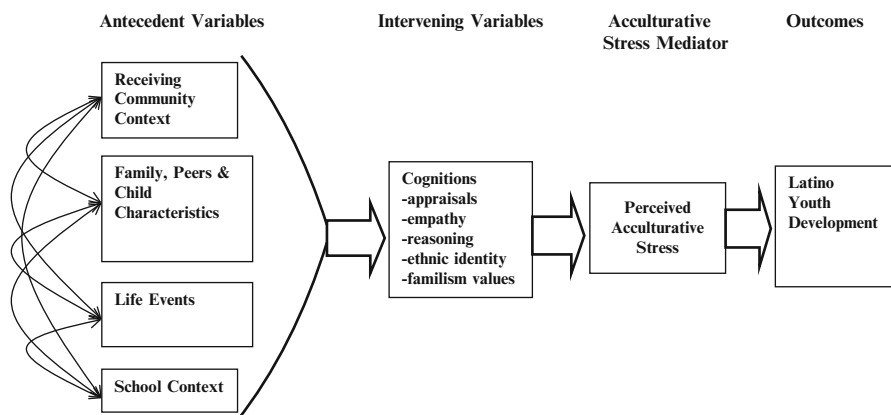
Fig. 10.1 Theoretical Model of Latino Youth Development (see Carlo & de Guzman, 2009; Raffaelli et al., 2005)

empathy, ethnic identity, familism values, and moral reasoning), which are mediating variables in Laosa's (1990) model, are linked to youths' experience of acculturative stress. The receiving community and school context, characteristics of the family and child, and life events are posited to influence the development of the cognitive processes that influence acculturative stress, which in turn, influences Latino youth development (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Although not depicted in Fig. 10.1, due to space limitations, we also expect bidirectional effects from acculturative stress and developmental outcomes to contextual and personal characteristics. In the following paragraphs, we discuss each of the key variables and review relevant empirical findings.

Receiving Community Context Characteristics The characteristics of the receiving community are a factor that Latino youth have no control over but which may nevertheless influence their development. For example, the proportion of Hispanics in the community might impact Latino youth development (Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Knight et al., 1995). Latino adolescents who reside in communities with a relatively large proportion of Latinos might retain a stronger sense of ethnic identity because their peer and community institutions foster and reward beliefs and behaviors consistent with their Latino roots (Carlo & de Guzman, 2009). This could affect their well-being, as prior research has shown that minority children who strongly identify with their culture of origin tend to show more positive adjustment compared to those who reject their culture of origin (Phinney, 1990).

The proportion of Latinos in a community is also likely to affect Latinos' social status and their acceptance by non-Latinos, which may have implications for their well-being. When individuals are in a numerical minority, they are more likely to be categorized according to group membership and perceived and treated in stereotypical ways (Crocker & McGraw, 1984). Furthermore, numerical minority status may lead to chronic feelings of distinctiveness and lack of social support (Pollak &

Niemann, 1998). Numerical minority Latino youth may feel isolated and more dissatisfied with school and may not perform up to their potential. In addition, numerical minorities might experience stereotype threat, which occurs when individuals fear confirming negative generalized beliefs about their social group. This anxiety undermines performance, causing individuals to perform beneath their skill levels (Steele, 1997).

In line with this notion, youth residing in communities with a higher proportion of Latinos were found to report larger decreases in perceived discrimination over time compared to youth residing in communities with a lower proportion of Latinos (White, Zeiders, Knight, Roosa, & Tein, 2014). Furthermore, Goldsmith (2003) found that Latinos in schools with relatively high proportions of Latinos reported less discrimination and exhibited better educational achievement.

Scholars have also examined the influence of neighborhood contexts on youth development (see Roosa et al., 2005). Roosa and colleagues (2005) found that Mexican American youths' experiences of stressful events, delinquent peer affiliations, and parent–child conflict mediated the relations between neighborhood risk (i.e., more crime and lower neighborhood quality as reported by mothers) and youths' externalizing behaviors. This study demonstrated that neighborhood risk can influence Latino youths' adjustment through a number of intervening processes.

Child, Family, and Peer Characteristics According to social ecology theory, the most direct influences on youth development are person characteristics and immediate context variables (see Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Context influences include the child's family and peer group. Because supportive parents and peers often model and promote positive social behaviors, socialization theorists (Hoffman, 1983; Steinberg & Silk, 2002) have hypothesized links between parent and peer relationships and children's development. Consistent with this notion, empirical studies indicate that supportive parenting is generally associated with high levels of prosocial behaviors and low levels of internalizing and antisocial behaviors (see Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006). Moreover, positive peer relationships are associated with positive developmental outcomes (Rubin, Wojslawowicz, Rose-Krasnor, Booth-LaForce, & Burgess, 2006); in contrast, hostile or rejecting parents and peer rejection are related to negative developmental outcomes in children (see Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Rubin et al., 2006). Whereas supportive families may benefit children and adolescents, there is substantial evidence that high levels of stress and conflict in the family lead to low levels of well-being and social competence (Masten et al., 1988; Zeiders, Roosa, & Tein, 2011) perhaps because supportive parenting is disrupted.

Researchers have shown that Latinos strongly endorse connectedness with family members and respect for authority and elders—characteristics of societies with a collective/interdependent orientation (Fuligni, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). The strength of family ties in Latino families could serve as an important source of social support for Latino children who experience acculturative stress and difficulties in adjusting to the receiving community (Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997). For example, there is evidence that familism and family acceptance protect Latino adolescents from substance use (Broman, Reckase, & Freedman-Doan, 2006; Gil,

Wagner, & Vega, 2000; see Crockett & Zamboanga, 2009 for a review), and support from parents was found to buffer the effects of acculturative stress among U.S. Mexican college students (Crockett et al., 2007). Family cohesion has been found to protect against internalizing symptoms in Latina adolescents (Raffaelli, Iturbide, Carranza, & Carlo, 2014). However, longitudinal research that assesses the direct links between familism or family connectedness and children's development among Latino youth is sparse (but see Kerr, Beck, Shattuck, Kattar, & Uriburu, 2003).

Like families, peers can serve as a source of support, which is often related negatively to stress (Barrera, 1986). The characteristics of peer relationships differ somewhat from those of parent–child relationships. Peers are more equal in social status and power and may provide opportunities for children to explore new behaviors (Youniss, 1980). Furthermore, peers can expose children to alternative values, beliefs, and behaviors than those of parents. Generally, research shows that European American children with strong attachment to and support from peers exhibit positive adjustment and prosocial behaviors (Laible, Carlo, & Raffaelli, 2000). Unfortunately, there is little theorizing on the role of peers in Latino youth's development. Schwartz et al. (2006) proposed that peers, via social comparisons, may be especially important sources of information for Latino youths' self-concept development. Consistent with expectations, they reported that peer support predicted depressive and externalizing problems (Schwartz et al., 2006). Furthermore, Rodriguez and colleagues (2003) found that among Latinos, peer support was a somewhat stronger predictor of well-being than family support.

Life Events Research confirms that youth who experience negative life events are at heightened risk of negative behavioral and psychological outcomes (e.g., Compas, Howell, Phares, Williams, & Giunta, 1989; Jackson & Warren, 2000). Furthermore, Laosa (1990) notes that Latinos are particularly prone to a "pile up" of life changes and events that put them at high risk for negative social outcomes (see also Boss, 2002; Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1985). However, sociocognitive and socioemotional traits (e.g., stress appraisals, empathy, moral reasoning, ethnic identity, familism; see review below) would be expected to filter the impact of stress-inducing life events leading to individual differences in perceived stress, and ultimately, in Latino youth development. It is also possible that cultural variables such as familism and ethnic identity moderate the associations between acculturative stress and outcomes. For example, a positive ethnic identity can serve to buffer the negative effects of discrimination on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment (Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012).

Specifically, researchers have suggested that Mexican cultural values mediate the relations between adolescents' discrimination experiences and adjustment, such that exposure to discrimination triggers closer cultural affiliation which in turn should facilitate positive outcomes (Brittian et al., 2013). Brittian et al. (2013) found that adolescents' perceived discrimination was associated with multiple forms of prosocial behaviors over time. These relations were partially mediated by Mexican cultural values (e.g., familism, respect, religiosity) such that perceived discrimination

was positively associated with such values, which, in turn, were positively associated with several forms of prosocial behaviors.

School Connectedness There is strong evidence that Latino youth in the Great Plains region are prone to difficulties in the school context. School dropout rates among Hispanic youths in the Lincoln (Nebraska) Public School system have increased considerably in recent years and are high compared to Whites and other ethnic minority groups (Gonzalez-Kruger et al., 2000). Although a number of school variables are likely relevant to youth's learning and development, the existing research suggests that school connectedness is an important factor (Bernal, Saenz, & Knight, 1995; Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997). Ethnic minority and immigrant youth confront distinct barriers to establishing a strong connection to their schools. Language issues are often salient for youth whose home language is not English. Furthermore, parents from other countries may not understand how the US school system functions (see Delgado-Gaitan, 1994) and may be reluctant to get involved, although scholars have documented the importance of parent–school involvement in predicting Latino adolescents' feelings of school belonging (Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenex, 2008). Finally, ethnic minority and immigrant youth might experience prejudice or discrimination in school, making it difficult to establish a sense of belonging at school. In one of the few studies of the importance of school connectedness among Latino youth in rural communities, lower school attachment was associated with more risky behaviors (Diaz, 2005). Moreover, as students attended more community events, they experienced greater school attachment, highlighting the importance of both the school and community settings for Latino youth in rural areas.

Sociocognitive and Socioemotional Processes The pattern of positive adjustment exhibited by many children stems in part from the development of sociocognitive and socioemotional competencies including stress appraisals, moral reasoning, empathy, ethnic identity, and cultural values. For example, there is extensive empirical support for the positive mediating role of challenge appraisals and the negative mediating role of threat appraisals on adjustment (see Lazarus, 1991). However, coping has been demonstrated to serve as both a mediator and moderator of the relations between stress and youth outcomes (Compas, 1987). For example, individuals who use challenge appraisals tend to use approach or problem-focused coping strategies that reduce the source of the stress and minimize loss; in contrast, individuals who use threat appraisals tend to use avoidance or passive coping strategies that are linked to high stress and exacerbate loss (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Based on the literature, several reviewers have concluded that moral reasoning, perspective taking, and empathy are associated positively with prosocial development and negatively with antisocial behavior (see Eisenberg et al., 2006). For example, children who act prosocially engage in higher levels of moral reasoning (Eisenberg et al., 2006), whereas lower levels of moral reasoning are associated with aggression and delinquency (Blasi, 1980). Furthermore, Miller and Eisenberg (1988) showed an overall negative relation between empathy and externalizing behaviors. On the other hand, perspective taking (i.e., understanding others'

thoughts, emotions, and situation) may foster positive outcomes by helping children understand stressful life situations (Kurdek & Fine, 1993; Work & Olsen, 1990) or by enhancing problem solving and reasoning skills (Spivak & Shure, 1988). Moral reasoning (thinking about moral situations), perspective taking, and sympathy (i.e., feelings of concern or sorrow for another) have also been linked to positive development among Latinos (Carlo & de Guzman, 2009; Knight et al., 1995). Most recently, researchers have demonstrated that perspective taking mediates the relation between Mexican American early adolescents' familism values and several forms of prosocial behaviors, whereas prosocial moral reasoning mediates the relation between familism values and altruistic helping (Knight, Carlo, Basilio, & Jacobson, 2015). These studies emphasize the importance of sociocognitive and socioemotional processes for Latino youths' prosocial behaviors.

Another potential mediating variable is ethnic identity. Identity development has long been regarded as a key task for adolescents (Erikson, 1968). Identity development is complicated for ethnically minority adolescents because in addition to negotiating the traditional domains of identity (e.g., occupation, religion), they must also decide what their ethnicity means to them (Quintana, 2007; Phinney, 1990). Research reveals that Latino youth who have a well-developed sense of ethnic identity also have better psychosocial outcomes, for example, enhanced self-esteem and positive social interactions (see Phinney, 1990; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). Additionally, research suggests ethnic identity is indirectly (through self-esteem) positively associated with academic grades and negatively associated with externalizing symptoms (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2007). However, the question of what factors are linked to the development of a positive sense of ethnic identity among Latino youth remains largely unanswered.

Several theorists (Gonzales, Fabrett, & Knight, 2009; Raffaelli, Carlo, Carranza, & Gonzales-Kruger, 2005) suggest that Latino parents attempt to instill cultural values (e.g., familism) that in turn affect children's behavioral development. Familism is associated with Latino youths' positive development through its promotion of a collective sense of self, warm connections to others, and a sense of obligation and care for others (Knight et al., 2015; Parke, 2004). Consistent with these suggestions, a sense of obligation to the family is associated with greater psychological well-being among Latinos (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). Additionally, parent-reported familism values have been negatively linked to youths' externalizing behaviors (Germán, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2009), and adolescent-reported family obligation values (an aspect of familism) have been associated with lower substance use (Telzer, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2014). Finally, there is recent evidence that adolescents' familism values mediate the relations of parenting and ethnic identity to specific forms of prosocial behaviors (Armenta, Knight, Carlo, & Jacobson, 2011; Calderón, Knight, & Carlo, 2009; Knight et al., 2015). The findings suggest that cultural values, especially familism, might be associated with Latino youth positive development.

Acculturative Stress Immigrants are particularly susceptible to stress associated with changes in adjusting to a new culture (i.e., acculturative stress), and there is substantial evidence that acculturative stress is linked to negative adjustment and

developmental outcomes among minority populations, including Latinos (Crockett & Zamboanga, 2009; Kim, Hogge, & Salvisberg, 2014; McGinley et al., 2010). However, McGinley et al. (2010) documented a positive association between acculturative stress and several types of prosocial tendencies but a negative association only between acculturative stress and costly (altruistic) prosocial tendencies. As discussed earlier, one would expect the impact of acculturative stress on Latinos to depend on their appraisals of stress; however, no studies have examined this possibility. Taking a different tack, researchers have examined the role of social support and coping in moderating the effects of acculturative stress. In one study, the positive association between perceived acculturative stress and symptoms of depression and anxiety was buffered by social support from family and use of active coping strategies (Crockett et al., 2007).

The LYCP Study

The primary goal of the LYCP project is to examine the mediational impact of sociocognitive processes and acculturative stress on the relations between individual difference and social contextual variables and Latino youth development. To accomplish this goal, we proposed a culture-based theoretical model. Measures of both positive and negative outcomes were included to provide information about Latino youth strengths and challenges.

Table 10.1 Select descriptive characteristics of the LYCP Latino/a parents

Variables	n	Percentage
Education completed (primary caregiver)	71	
Graduated from high school (preparatoria) or received GED but no further education	26	36.6 %
Some college or technical school	15	21.1 %
Graduated from 2-year college or technical school	10	14.1 %
Graduated from 4-year college	12	16.9 %
Professional or graduate degree (Ph.D, M.D., M.A., J.D., etc.)	8	11.3 %
Estimated family annual income from last year	160	
Under $15,000	32	20 %
Between $15,001 and $30,000	57	35.6 %
Between $30,001 and $45,000	37	23.1 %
Between $45,001 and $60,000	18	11.3 %
More than $60,001	16	10.1 %
Family's housing situation	162	
Rent apartment, house, mobile home, or room	68	41.9 %
Own home	78	48.1 %
Own mobile home	11	6.8 %

Note. Not all categories sum to 100 % responses because of missing data or because some small percentage categories were excluded

Table 10.2 Descriptives and correlations among the selected main study variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Peer Support	–										
2. Parental Support	.22**	–									
3. Threat Appraisals	-.16*	-.14	–								
4. Challenge Appraisals	.27**	.29**	-.15*	–							
5. Pressure to Acculturate	-.16*	-.07	.26**	-.25**	–						
6. Emotional PB	.39**	.21**	.09	.31**	-.01	–					
7. Compliant PB	.38**	.27**	-.01	.31**	-.10	.69**	–				
8. Dire PB	.31**	.17*	.12	.29**	.03	.70**	.64**	–			
9. Aggression	-.19**	-.32**	.21**	-.19**	.23**	.01	-.14*	.02	–		
1. Delinquency	-.12	-.21**	.11	-.16*	.25**	-.12	-.20**	-.04	.32**	–	
11. Depression	-.18*	-.21**	.39**	-.36**	.31**	.06	-.06	.06	.32**	.23**	–
Mean (SD)	3.85 (.53)	2.57 (.41)	2.22 (.78)	3.47 (.91)	2.42 (.99)	3.61 (.88)	3.68 (1.00)	3.61 (.88)	2.06 (.77)	1.14 (.24)	1.67 (.45)

Note. PB prosocial behaviors; **p<.01 level, *p<.05 level

We recruited 244 Latino youths aged 14–18 (*M* age = 15.4 years; 49 % girls; see Tables 10.1 and 10.2 for details) from schools in four communities in Nebraska. We also obtained data from the students' primary caregivers. Communities were identified on the basis of: (a) established connection between investigators and the community, (b) different population sizes, (c) differing proportions of Latinos (e.g., 3.6 % in Lincoln versus 40 % in Grand Island), and (d) differing per capita income. After obtaining approval from the school districts, the schools, and the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, recruitment flyers in both English and Spanish were distributed to parents (e.g., via their child) asking for their voluntary participation. We recruited at schools, community centers, churches, and cultural events. Data collection was begun in two communities (Lincoln, Grand Island) but expanded to two additional communities (Crete, Omaha) to attain the target sample size. Home visits were scheduled with families who wished to participate. At the home session, a parent (typically the mother; otherwise the child's primary caregiver) and the youth were interviewed separately by trained interviewers to ensure privacy.

A set of predictor and developmental outcome variables that fit the constructs depicted in the theoretical model (Fig. 10.1) was identified. As we identified possible measures, among the various considerations, we evaluated each measure based on prior evidence of reliability and validity in use with Latino samples. Most of the proposed measures had been used in previous research with Latino populations. However, some measures required refinement and others required translation. Therefore, in these few cases, we translated measures and ensured that bilingual members of the investigative team carefully reviewed all translations. In all cases, items were redrafted as necessary, although the intent was to stay as close to the original meaning of the original instrument as possible. Following this step, parallel English and Spanish versions of the measures were created, using procedures to ensure that the different language versions have the same meaning (Knight et al., 2009).

Although data collection is still ongoing, we present some preliminary findings from the project. First, we present descriptives of the demographic characteristics of the caregivers in the sample. Second, correlations among a subset of the main study variables are presented. And third, findings from a preliminary test of an aspect of the conceptual model are presented. For this preliminary analysis, we selected variables representing background variables (e.g., parenting, peers), a sociocognitive mediator (e.g., stress appraisal), perceived acculturative stress mediator, and a subset of prosocial and maladjustment outcomes. Based on prior theory and research, we generally expected high levels of parental and peer support and challenge appraisals to be associated with positive outcomes (e.g., prosocial behavior). In contrast, we expected low levels of parental and peer support and challenge appraisals but high levels of threat appraisals and pressure to acculturate to be associated with negative outcomes. More importantly, we expected the relations of parental and peer support to outcomes to be mediated by individual differences in stress appraisals and pressure to acculturate.

The descriptive statistics findings show that the Latino caregivers (mostly mothers) are mostly middle-aged (*M* age = 39.13 years, *SD* = 7.22), mostly married (72 % *married*, 15 % *divorced*), have low levels of education, deem themselves very religious (82 % rated themselves as *Quite* or *Very Religious*), and self-identify as Mexican or US Mexican (see Table 10.1 for select descriptives). Unemployment figures for the primary caregiver and the other parent are relatively high (32.8 % and 24.9 % unemployed, respectively). Similarly, family annual income is relatively low such that most are living below the US poverty level. A substantial percentage rent, rather than own, housing. These latter figures showcase the economic hardships of many rural Latino families in this region.

Table 10.2 presents the correlations among the selected main study variables. In general, zero-order relations are as expected. Parental and peer support are both positively related to challenge appraisals and prosocial behaviors and negatively related to threat appraisals and maladjustment indices. Peer support was also negatively related to pressure to acculturate. Threat appraisals were positively related to depression and aggression, whereas challenge appraisals were positively related to prosocial behaviors and negatively related to maladjustment. Pressure to acculturate was positively related to maladjustment.

Path analysis was conducted to test direct and indirect relations among peer and parent support, stress appraisals, pressure to acculturate, and Latino youth maladjustment (aggression, depression, delinquency) and prosocial behaviors (dire, emotional, compliant forms). Predictor variables were observed, and outcome variables were latent constructs. The findings and test statistics are provided in Figs. 10.2 and 10.3. One test of the mediation model included threat appraisal; the other test included challenge appraisals (see Figs. 10.2 and 10.3). Results of the threat
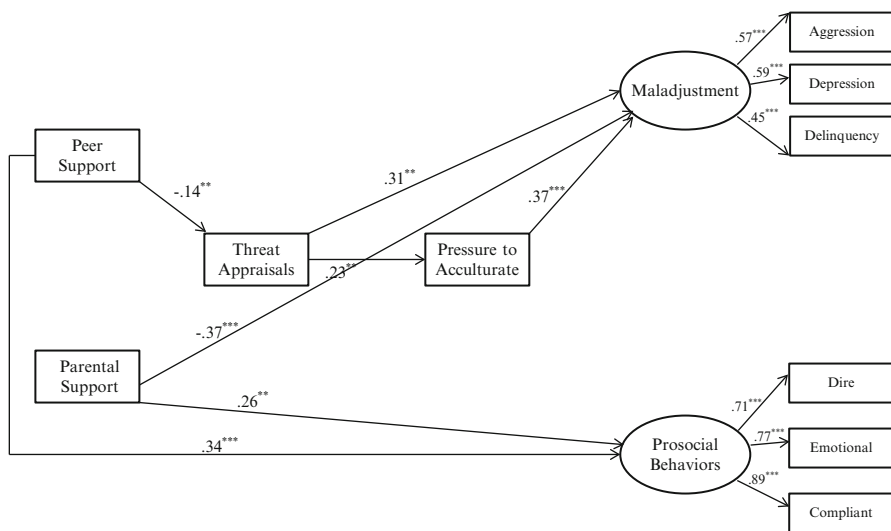
Fig. 10.2 Threat Appraisal Model. *Note.* $\chi^2 = 76.76$, *df* = 31, *p* = .01, CFI = .91, and RMSEA = .08. Gender was controlled for in all analyses. ***$p < .001$ level, **$p < .01$ level, and *$p < .05$ level
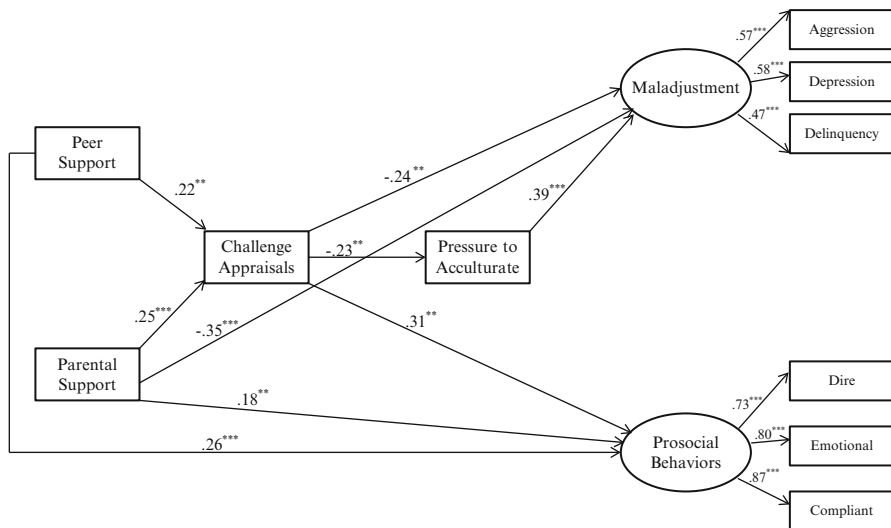
Fig. 10.3 Challenge Appraisal Model. *Note.* $\chi^2 = 76.76$, $df = 31$, $p = .01$, CFI = .91, and RMSEA = .08. Gender was controlled for in all analyses. ***$p < .001$ level, **$p < .01$ level, and *$p < .05$ level

appraisal model test indicated that parental and peer support showed direct positive relationships to prosocial behaviors, and parental support showed a direct negative relationship to maladjustment. In contrast to these direct effects, the relationship of peer relationships to maladjustment was indirect and operated through threat appraisals and pressure to acculturate. Specifically, a closer relationship to one's best friend was negatively associated with threat appraisals; in turn, threat appraisals were positively associated with maladjustment both directly and indirectly through perceived pressure to acculturate. Tests of mediation showed that both threat appraisals and pressure to acculturate accounted for the relations between peer support and maladjustment.

Findings for the challenge appraisal model showed that both parental and peer support were positively linked to prosocial behaviors and challenge appraisals. Parental and peer support were both directly and indirectly linked to prosocial behavior, through challenge appraisals. In addition, parent support was negatively linked to maladjustment both directly and indirectly through challenge appraisals. Finally, peer support was negatively linked to maladjustment indirectly through challenge appraisals and pressure to acculturate. Tests of mediation showed that challenge appraisals partially accounted for the relations between both parental and peer support and both prosocial behaviors and maladjustment. In addition, pressure to acculturate directly predicted maladjustment but not prosocial behaviors.

Overall, the preliminary results provide supportive evidence for the mediating roles of sociocognitive tendencies and perceived acculturative stress in the relations between parental and peer support and prosocial behaviors and maladjustment. The support for mediation is relatively stronger in predicting maladjustment than proso-

cial behaviors, where predictive paths were often direct. Furthermore, the findings concur with prior findings that suggest a more adaptive role of challenge appraisals versus threat appraisals and that pressure to acculturate seems to better predict maladjustment rather than positive adjustment. There is also evidence of distinct pathways related to challenge appraisals and threat appraisals; in that challenge appraisals helped account for the associations of both parental and friend support to maladjustment and prosocial behaviors, whereas threat appraisal accounted only for the relationship between peer support and maladjustment. Although these findings are tentatively supportive of the proposed conceptual model, data collection is still ongoing and further tests of the model with a larger sample are needed.

Conclusions and Future Directions

The challenges to understanding Latino youth development in rural regions of the United States are major, and the extant literature is sparse. Based on sociocultural, developmental, and social psychological theories, a multidisciplinary team of researchers is conducting a study designed to examine developmental outcomes of Latino youth as a function of personal and social contextual variables. Data collection is ongoing and will be completed in 2015. We expect the findings will inform existing scientific theories on the mediating mechanisms linking Latino youths' social ecologies to their positive and negative psychosocial development. Furthermore, the research will refine age- and ethnic-appropriate measures to use with Latino youth and their families. Finally, the findings are expected to inform practitioners, program developers, and social policy makers on important conceptual issues relevant to both positive and negative development in Latino families.

Conceptually, we propose that identification and measurement of ethnic-related mediating and moderating mechanisms (e.g., ethnic identity, cultural stress, cultural values) are critical to better account for individual and group differences in Latino youth outcomes. Such mechanisms need to be grounded in theoretical and conceptual models alongside traditional developmental (e.g., moral cognitions, emotions) and social (e.g., stressful life events) processes (Raffaelli et al., 2005). With regard to methodological issues, successful completion of the project is dependent upon access to social (e.g., trust, cultural sensitivity) and pragmatic (e.g., transportation, funding, adequate childcare, tracking) resources. Moreover, careful consideration of recruitment and sampling issues (including retention) and selection and validation of instruments is important to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and to maintain scientific integrity. Finally, our preliminary findings reflect some of the strengths (e.g., religiousness) and challenges (e.g., economic hardships, low levels of perceived parental support) facing Latino caregivers and their youth in this region of the United States. The findings to date provide partial support for our conceptual model that social cognitions and perceptions of acculturative stress account for relations between parent and peer influences and Latino youth positive and negative outcomes. Such research is important to provide a balanced perspective on the roles

of context, stress exposure, and individual characteristics on outcomes in Latino/a families and youth from the rural Northern Great Plains.

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Chapter 11
Suicide and Substance Use Disorder Prevention for Rural American Indian and Alaska Native Youth

James Allen, Sarah Beehler, and John Gonzalez

Some of the most stimulating and innovative work in prevention science over the past two decades has surfaced in recent efforts with rural American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities directed toward addressing youth suicide and substance use disorders (SUD). Much of this work can be characterized by the use of a community-based participatory research (CBPR) perspective involving intensive community engagement and collaboration, and an attention to culture as a critical component of the intervention. Increasingly, "culture as prevention" has served outright as the focus of intervention. The reasons for the attention to preventive intervention strategies, and for the focus on youth in rural AIAN communities, are largely community and culturally driven. Many rural tribal communities have been deeply impacted by alcohol and suicide in very painful ways, and any explanation of the sources of the immense disparities in mortality that AIAN people experience, in contrast to the US general population, implicates these behavioral health concerns. The focus on prevention rather than treatment of already existing problems is consistent with values and preferences for strengths-based, positive approaches to health promotion in many rural tribal communities and is in contrast to deficit models that focus on risk and pathology. Finally, the majority of tribal communities share a deep interest in the welfare and the future of their youth; hence the focus of much of the prevention work in tribal communities has been upon their youth. Though studies remain sparse and much work needs to be done, interventions to prevent rural youth suicide and SUD are among the most robustly researched areas

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in AIAN health intervention. This chapter provides an overview of several notable research efforts over the past two decades in order to glean what we have learned and what we have yet to learn. The intent of this review is to pose fresh research questions, highlight promising methodologies and approaches, and guide future intervention efforts.

To set the stage, basic epidemiological data on AIAN suicide and SUD and their co-occurrence, and important contextual factors that inform some of the implications of these basic findings will be reviewed. With this explored, we next review the literature on relevant rural intervention efforts among AIAN youth in order to highlight major, recurrent findings and common approaches. We then review key intervention processes and characteristics. In doing this, we do not attempt to compare intervention effectiveness, which assumes a degree of equivalence across intervention efforts (e.g., outcome, sample, measurement) that we cannot ascertain from these studies. Finally, we discuss what has been learned about effective practices and approaches in suicide and SUD prevention with rural AIAN youth, critical shortcomings in current work, and promising practices and directions for future work.

Suicide and Substance Use among American Indian/Alaska Native Youth

Substance use occurs at higher rates among AIAN youth age 12–17 years, compared to youth of this age in the general US population (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Mental Health Services Administration & Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2011). Of additional concern, in contrast to their use of other drugs, AIAN youth in this age group use alcohol at similar rates to the general US youth population; however, AIAN adults age 18 years and over are approximately twice as likely as the general US population to be classified as needing treatment for an alcohol or other substance use problem in the past year (SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, 2010). After accidents, suicide is the second most common cause of death among AIAN individuals aged 15–34 years; this suicide rate is 2.5 times higher than that of the general US population (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2010). Further, there is evidence of shared risk and co-occurrence in the general US population, with substance abuse emerging as a clear risk factor for suicide (Nock et al., 2008). Data from 16 states indicates that about one-third of those who commit suicide test positive for alcohol and one-fifth test positive for opiates (Karch, Logan, McDaniel, Parks, & Patel, 2012). In summary, AIAN youth are at substantial elevated risk for SUD and for suicide (Manson, Bechtold, Novins, & Beals, 1997), underscoring the need for preventive interventions. Effective preventive interventions to address these twin concerns in adolescence would have a significant impact on reducing health disparities in this population.

Interpretation of Epidemiological Data with American Indian/ Alaska Native Populations

In interpreting the epidemiological data, it is critical to note there are 566 federally recognized tribes in the United States, along with approximately 100 additional tribes recognized by individual states (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2014). These tribes represent a broad array of quite distinct and disparate cultural groups that speak hundreds of tribal languages, occupy sharply contrasting geographic, climactic, and social contexts, and collectively engage in very different life ways, economies, and spiritual beliefs. Further, they have different histories and experiences with colonization. Given these immense contextual differences, it should be no surprise that the epidemiologic evidence indicates substantial differences in the prevalence of behavioral health concerns, including suicide and SUD, across and within AIAN cultures (Beals et al., 2005; Beals, Manson, Mitchell, Spicer, & AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2003). In other words, suicide and SUD are not uniformly high in prevalence across all rural tribal communities. Instead, rates of suicide and SUD can vary enormously, with some tribal communities evidencing lower rates than the US general population, while other communities are experiencing even higher rates than the AIAN composite rate. Understanding this variation is critical to developing effective preventive interventions, as generalizing across the rich array of tribal experiences ignores meaningful differences in local determinants of health as well as culturally distinct risk and protective factors. The benefit of this diversity is in how we can learn from the strengths and unique characteristics that are fostering resilience among tribal communities with low prevalence of youth SUD and suicide, thereby using this knowledge to inform prevention efforts in higher risk communities.

Implications of Cultural Distinctiveness and Rurality

Nonetheless, cultural distinctiveness, along with characteristics of the rural setting, also poses significant challenges for prevention science as currently practiced. Trickett et al. (2011) provide a critique of current practice in intervention science with particular relevance to work in tribal communities. They note significant limitations to an intervention science largely focused upon individual behavior change and packaged as universal to all populations, in which intervention programs are defined and standardized through their form. Form describes the approach to defining an intervention through specific components that demarcate the particular intervention model. According to this approach, replication of these intervention components defines fidelity to an intervention model. Cultural distinctiveness raises important questions regarding the applicability of prevention programs defined in such ways; some of these questions for researchers include whether it is universally appropriate to culturally adapt components of prevention programs that were developed in a non-tribal setting for implementation in a tribal setting, as well as whether

it is universally appropriate to adapt interventions developed within one distinct tribal context for implementation in another.

Local rural AIAN community responses to these concerns have emerged through a number of innovative culture-specific, often grassroots approaches to prevention. Empirical evaluation of the problem of suicide and SUD in widely diverse tribal settings, along with numerous culture-specific local prevention programs proposed as potential solutions to this problem on a tribe-by-tribe basis poses significant challenges to epidemiology (Beals et al., 2003) and to an intervention science that seeks to develop universal approaches through replication of component-based intervention models (Trickett, 2009). Some of the challenges posed include a need to frame research questions and activities to meet specific local community needs and attendant problems in definition of the population of inference, problems in balancing comparability with cultural specificity, and challenges associated with requirements of maintaining scientific rigor while balancing community acceptability and cultural appropriateness, along with the realities of rural research logistical constraints.

Tribal reservations and Alaska Native villages are generally located in rural, often remote and geographically widely dispersed regions of the United States, which present a set of unique challenges to prevention program implementation and research. These challenges are manifold and include the logistical costs of travel and the access difficulties involved in work with remote, low population density settings, as well as data analytic challenges associated with the small samples typical of small population research.

Implications of Contemporary Demographic Trends

Two contemporary demographic trends related to migration and multiculturalism are currently impacting AIAN people. Though most reservations and Alaska Native villages are in rural and often geographically remote regions of the United States, 78 % of AIAN people now reside off reservation lands, typically in urban centers (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012). As much as the AIAN youth population was a rural reservation-based population throughout much of the twentieth century, the twenty-first century AIAN youth population is an urban one, and rural AIAN youth now constitute a minority within a minority group.

A second demographic trend also has potential importance for future prevention efforts in AIAN communities, especially for culturally based behavioral health intervention: in addition to growing rapidly, the AIAN population is increasingly multiracial and multicultural. The number of people who now endorse AIAN on the most recent 2010 U.S. Census has grown an astonishing 400 % since 1960; one explanation for this dramatic increase is that more individuals chose to identify with their AIAN heritage (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). However, the 2000 and 2010 census also allowed individuals the option of marking more than one "race" category. The AIAN group reporting multiple race membership is growing at more than twice

the rate of the group reporting AIAN race membership alone (Norris et al., 2012). Nearly half of AIAN people now describe themselves as a member of multiple races on the U.S. Census. As an emerging trend in AIAN demographics, this is most pronounced among AIAN youth, and the trend has important implications for youth prevention that are only beginning to be considered by current intervention efforts with AIAN youth. Clearly, circumstances call for fresh strategies and innovation in prevention science, and for multiple approaches, developed to fit the emergent demographics of diverse community contexts and guided by what is being learned through current prevention research efforts.

Conclusions from the Epidemiology of American Indian and Alaska Native Youth Suicide and Substance Abuse Disorder Risk

While mindful of the important caveats to their interpretation noted earlier, existing epidemiological data converge upon four preliminary conclusions that guide our understanding of the existing prevention literature on suicide and SUD with rural AIAN youth. First, the findings document substantial health inequities in comparison to the general US population for SUD and suicide risk first appearing in early adolescence, indicating a need for programs targeting this age group. Second, the data suggest a high prevalence of suicide and SUD sharing a similar developmental pathway of risk and protective factors within many AIAN populations. Therefore, preventive interventions that address both suicide and SUD are more likely to be effective than those that address only one. Third, the presence of clear AIAN regional and community differences in suicide and SUD rates shows that care should be taken in making generalizations on a population level. It is important to design preventive interventions that address suicide and substance abuse as culture-bound issues with shared risk and protective factors and with patterns of occurrence and co-occurrence that differ across regions, tribes, and groups. And fourth, there is need for fresh attention to new and innovative local solutions responsive to the need for programs and to local, regional, and cultural distinctiveness.

Preventive Interventions for Substance Use Disorder and Suicide in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities: Types of Interventions and Key Findings

Despite the level of documented risk, there remain significant gaps in the existing knowledge base on how to prevent SUD and suicide among youth in rural AIAN communities. There is growing recognition of the issues of SUD and suicide as complex and interrelated, with co-occurrence and with shared risk and protective

factors at the cultural, community, family, and intrapsychic levels, in the US general population research (Hawton, 2009; Mann et al., 2005) and with research on AIAN groups (Hawkins, Cummins, & Marlatt, 2004; LaFromboise & Howard-Pitney, 1994, 1995). However, published reports of preventive interventions typically describe efforts focused on preventing either substance abuse or suicide alone.

Further, published research accounts do not consistently describe the process of community engagement necessary to create the relationship and trust required for effective preventive interventions in AIAN communities. This level of engagement is also necessary for generating approaches that tap community strengths and protective cultural values and to address issues defined by the local community in ways consistent with local AIAN cultures.

Accordingly, in the next section, we extend previous reviews of SUD interventions (Hawkins et al., 2004; Whitbeck, Walls, & Welch, 2012) and of suicide prevention interventions (Clifford, Doran, & Tsey, 2013; Harlow, Bohanna, & Clough, 2014; Middlebrook, LeMaster, Beals, Novins, & Manson, 2001) in AIAN communities by (a) adopting a focus on *rural* AIAN youth, (b) selectively highlighting findings that can guide future prevention work with rural AIAN youth; and (c) emphasizing process elements in the research relationship over time and in the role of culture in rural AIAN youth interventions.

Prevention of Substance Use Disorder

We identified two reviews of the literature that included descriptions of SUD preventive interventions among AIAN adolescents (Hawkins et al., 2004; Whitbeck et al., 2012). The majority of interventions described as implemented in rural areas targeted change at the individual-level, including peer-led skill-building efforts (Carpenter, Lyons, & Miller, 1985) or school and community-based cognitive-behavioral skill-building interventions for youth (Schinke et al., 1988; Schinke, Tepavac, & Cole, 2000). In these interventions, a general life skills model was tailored to be culturally relevant to AIAN youth by incorporating lndigenous values and concepts of health in each session.

While these interventions focused on the development of individual skills among the adolescents who participated, some of the most innovative work described in reviews of SUD prevention programs instead consisted of community-level interventions characterized by multiple components involving different community segments. One example is the *Parent, School and Community Partnership* (Petoskey, Van Stelle, & De Jong, 1998), which sought to reduce SUD among AI youth from three rural reservations in Wisconsin and Minnesota. This program included a school-based and culturally informed curriculum implemented in grades 4–12. In addition, the program provided training for community adults to promote community health. The training taught skills that allowed adults to access resources and to engage in planning efforts to positively impact youth by reducing the effects and the burden of substance use on their community. Intervening at multiple levels of the

broader social context that surrounds the youth appears particularly important for preventive interventions grounded in AIAN culture, given the cultural emphasis on the necessity of collective, community healing in conjunction with individual recovery and prevention efforts (Petoskey et al., 1998). The importance of targeting change at the community level is a notable theme within the rural AIAN prevention literature. Initial empirical evidence for the importance of targeting community-level change emerged in a study of predictors of protection from suicide and alcohol abuse among Alaska Native youth, which found community-level characteristics as the most robust predictors of protection, when contrasted with individual, family, and peer effects (Allen et al., 2014).

Prevention of Suicide

Four extensive reviews of preventive interventions for suicide have included studies conducted with rural AIAN youth populations (Clifford et al., 2013; Harlow et al., 2014; Middlebrook et al., 2001; Wexler et al., 2015). Similar to many of the SUD interventions, one striking commonality to these tribal rural suicide prevention programs is that most interventions were initiated specifically in response to community concerns and direct requests for action to address rising youth suicide rates.

One example of a structured suicide prevention program is the *Zuni Life Skills Development Program,* which was collaboratively developed by Zuni tribal members and university researchers in response to a rise in teen suicides (LaFromboise & Howard-Pitney, 1995). The school-based program focused on skill building, including social skills, problem solving, increased communication, self-esteem, and the ability to identify emotions and stress. The original intervention was implemented by non-Zuni teachers who worked in tandem with Zuni community members to provide 100 sessions (three sessions a week) during the academic year. Sixty-nine students attending the Zuni Public High School participated in the original intervention study, while 59 were assigned to a nonintervention condition. Matched pair analysis was used to correct for pretest group differences, as random assignment was not possible due to unspecified institutional constraints. Results indicated that students in the intervention group were less suicidal and reported feeling less hopelessness than those in the comparison group.

The *Zuni Life Skills Development Program* was based on a Zuni culture-specific adaptation of a generic skills-training approach (LaFromboise & Lewis, 2008) and has since been adapted into a more general curriculum for use by other tribal groups. The adapted *AI Life Skills Development* program is intended to be generalizable and relevant to a broad cross-section of AIAN communities. The program has been widely adopted by tribal communities though it has been implemented with varying degrees of fidelity. For example, the intervention is rarely implemented in its original length or intensity of 100 in-school sessions (LaFromboise & Lewis, 2008). In contrast to earlier findings with the *Zuni Life Skills Development Program*, a randomized controlled trial of the *AI Life Skills Development* program produced

negative findings when contrasted with a comparison group who participated in a prevention program that was not adapted for use with AIAN cultural groups (LaFromboise, 2009). Additional tests of the *AI Life Skills Development* intervention's effectiveness are currently underway.

In direct contrast to the planned and piloted Zuni intervention is the *Wind River Behavioral Health Program* (Tower, 1989), which was an immediate response to a cluster of suicides on the Wind River Reservation. Within a two-month period, the small population of this reservation experienced 12 suicides and 88 suicide attempts. The immediate response to this community crisis involved counseling for the friends and family members of suicide decedents. However, over time, the response broadened to include community events, including alcohol-free dances and gatherings, which were organized to create spaces for adolescents, young adults, and families to discuss openly the suicides and related issues. Local law enforcement policies were also changed to increase police presence in high-risk areas, and individuals who threatened suicide, who were once arrested and jailed, were hospitalized instead. Tribal leaders conducted a traditional ceremony to aid in community healing and to increase community cohesion. These efforts all occurred within the tribe, as members felt that outside experts would not be helpful in this particular situation. The long-term response that evolved out of the initial immediate response focused on preventing suicide and alcohol abuse and involved various efforts focused at levels beyond the individual youth, who were the focus of concern, to include such efforts as community education, use of the media, and broad-based universal programming within the schools and in the broader community. None of these community-based initiatives were systematically evaluated; we will return later to a discussion of this point.

Combined Substance Use Disorder and Suicide Prevention

A select group of studies involved interventions that addressed both SUD and suicide together (Davis, Hunt, & Kitzes, 1989; Fleming, 1994; Fox, Manitowabi, & Ward, 1984). The *Elluam Tungiinun* (toward wellness) and *Yupiucimta Asvairtuumallerkaa* (strengthening our Yup'ik identity) studies evaluated the feasibility of a community intervention to prevent suicide and alcohol use disorder (AUD) among rural Yup'ik Alaska Native youth in two rural communities. Using a community-based participatory research process, the intervention was based in an Indigenous model of protection. Outcomes measures were derived from earlier measurement work, as part of a long-term researcher-community relationship (Allen, Mohatt, Beehler, & Rowe, 2014) that began with qualitative and mixed methods discovery-based research seeking to describe local models of protection, then moved to a process of collaborative measurement development described by Gonzalez and Trickett (2014) and on to psychometric testing (Allen et al., 2014). Alongside these developments, work also proceeded to elaborate and implement a

multilevel cultural intervention to prevent suicide and AUD (Rasmus, Charles, & Mohatt, 2014) and to compile the *Qungasvik* (toolbox), a manual describing an intervention approach for promoting reasons for life and sobriety among youth.

The *Qungasvik* is made up of 36 modules that use cultural scripts to provide a framework for creating experiences in Yup'ik communities that build strengths and protection against suicide and AUD. Instead of a prescriptive cookbook for intervention, it describes an intervention development process grounded in culture and local process, and nurtured through a syncretic blending of Indigenous and Western theories and practices.

The intervention research contrasted implementation process and outcomes across the two communities (Mohatt, Fok, Henry, People Awakening, & Allen, 2014). As this was a feasibility study, there was no comparison group, and dose effects were used to infer intervention effects. In both communities, the number of intervention activities attended produced significant effects on outcome variables protective from suicide and AUD. In one community, effects were stronger, and the enhanced resources supporting the intervention in this community led to a greater number of activities, which appeared to at least in part explain community differences in these outcomes.

Hawe, Shiell, and Riley (2004) describe an alternative approach to standardization in controlled designs that emphasizes intervention function (e.g., key steps in the change process) rather than form (e.g., format). In the *Qungasvik* approach to community intervention, the key functions that intervention activities deliver across settings are a specific set of protective experiences. These protective experiences are the replicable elements, not fixed intervention components (Henry et al., 2012). Underlying function remains the same while also allowing these two communities to implement a module in ways that are consonant with their distinctive and at times different local cultural practices, values, and resources. In this way, distinct groups participating in the intervention can accomplish the same things in different, but locally meaningful, cultural ways. Further, by incorporating local community expertise and competence, community ownership may be maximized. We believe understanding and defining an intervention through its function has potential to address a number of challenges currently faced by AIAN researchers in their work often characterized by culture-specific intervention strategies and culturally distinct tribal settings.

Preventive Interventions for Substance Use Disorder and Suicide in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities: Process Descriptions

Process descriptions, which delineate how the researchers engaged the community, then co-developed and implemented the interventions, were present in the literature we reviewed, and this literature also noted the importance of and considerable effort

directed toward collaboratively working with tribal communities, typically using a CBPR perspective. These descriptions also emphasized the role of culture in formulating the intervention and implementation.

Collaboration and Community Engagement

Community collaboration was mentioned in the majority of studies. This reporting typically involved description of areas of community input into select aspects of the intervention design and evaluation, but explanations of the specifics of how these collaborations unfolded were often unclear. Descriptions of the relationship between researchers and community members over time were often haphazardly presented, and, in general, this relationship has not been acknowledged as central to the success of health interventions (Trickett, Trimble, & Allen, 2014). The process of researcher entry into study communities was rarely described, and details of the evolving roles of research staff over the course of the projects were largely absent. One notable exception was a description of the community-based participatory/ tribal participatory research process (CBPR/TPR; Fisher & Ball, 2002) involved in the *Healing of the Canoe* collaboration (Thomas et al., 2009), in which a year-long planning/negotiation process was detailed and lessons learned from the research collaboration shared. A second example appears in a series of articles providing an ecological description of the 18-year research relationship that surrounded the *Elluam Tungiinun* and *Yupiucimta Asvairtuumallerkaa* community interventions (Allen & Mohatt, 2014). Greater attention to CBPR processes, including community entry and engagement, culturally relevant/appropriate approaches to shared decision-making, and organizational strategies for implementation are needed in the rural AIAN literature.

Where collaborative processes were described, the scope and timing of community involvement varied. *The Seventh Generation Program* was designed by combining knowledge from the research literature and community expertise in a process that involved the AI community from the beginning (Moran & Bussey, 2007). These two sources, however, were incorporated in different ways: the research literature was used to determine the intervention focus on developing personal and social skills, while meetings with community groups resulted in identifying a unifying theme reflected in the project name and a list of seven core cultural values that provided a cultural framework. In contrast, the *Zuni Life Skills Development program* (LaFromboise & Howard-Pitney, 1995) involved community input during the development of the curriculum to ensure its compatibility with Zuni culture, customs, beliefs, and values. Further, two Zuni individuals assisted the non-Zuni teachers in delivery of the intervention, where they functioned as cultural resource persons. Allen, Mohatt, Beehler, and Rowe (2014) expand on additional themes in their work directed at rural Alaska Native youth, noting the importance of describing research processes thoroughly in published reports given the centrality of CBPR in contemporary AIAN intervention research.

Infusion of Culture

Perhaps due to the apparent variation across studies in community involvement throughout all stages of intervention, the degree of culture infused in the different interventions varied greatly. In general, culture often informed the content rather than the structural and organizational design aspects of the interventions and their implementation. For example, descriptions often included how program language, exercises, and examples were adapted to increase cultural relevance through their content and format. Further, culture was often described in a limited way. In other words, the definition of culture was not fully elaborated to allow the reader to understand if and how culture was foundational to the intervention. Leaving the reader to assume what AI culture is can lead to ethnic gloss. Ethnic gloss refers to simplistic categories that overgeneralize with regard to ethnocultural groups, ignoring unique cultural and ethnic differences (Trimble & Dickson, 2005). American Indian and Alaska Native actually represent over 500 extremely diverse tribal units, and individual members within each tribe often reflect varying acculturative orientations. Because of this, specific information about what elements of culture are engaged by the intervention and how these elements are used in the intervention are critical.

The majority of interventions worked toward SUD prevention by attempting to strengthen cultural/ethnic identity or bicultural competence. Examples include the *Seventh Generation Program* (Moran & Bussey, 2007) and interventions to strengthen bicultural competence (Schinke et al., 1988; Schinke et al., 2000). Marlatt et al. (2006) also provide a description of an intervention designed to prevent AIAN youth from initiating substance use, to reduce harm associated with substance use and to engage in social behaviors other than drinking and violence by increasing cultural identity and bicultural competence. The project continues to study the effectiveness of an eight-session life skills course that uses cultural metaphors and symbols to teach skills, such as decision-making and goal setting, and to provide information on substance use. Preliminary results in this report showed positive effects on self-efficacy related to resisting SUD.

Limitations of the Current Literature

The epistemological discord between AIAN ways of knowing and the Western worldview of science creates potential difficulties in assessing the true limitations in this area of research. For example, a report by the Institute of Medicine (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994) identified key criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of prevention interventions. The criteria called for rigor through well-defined (a) risk and protective factors of the population and integration of these factors in the development of prevention strategies; (b) targeted population group; (c) description of the intervention itself; (d) research design used to test the program; (e) evidence concerning the implementation; and (f) evidence concerning the

outcome. While investigators in the studies reviewed above may have attempted to subscribe to these criteria, local AIAN communities often do not place similar importance on these factors and may even at times find elements of their implementation to be unethical. Perhaps related to this tension, and to logistical challenges in rural research, the methodological and reporting limitations in all six of these areas make it difficult to assess the impact of rural AIAN youth SUD and suicide preventive interventions to date. Some difficulties common to nearly all of the published studies include a lack of adequate information on the nature of the interventions themselves and the processes of cultural adaptation involved (which is particularly relevant if interventions will be applied with multiple AIAN populations); lack of longitudinal, prospective research on risk factors; lack of adequate description of collaboration with and involvement of community members in various stages of intervention development and implementation; and lack of rigorous evaluation of locally developed innovative programs using validated measurement strategies with the specific cultural group.

Overall, all of the existing reviews of the rural AIAN suicide and SUD prevention literature conclude that more culture-informed, strengths-focused interventions are needed, in addition to more rigorous research and evaluation. Collectively, these reviews also highlight the importance of cultural relevance and ongoing community involvement in all aspects of program development and implementation.

A central critique stated in each of the reviews was that none of the programs was adequately evaluated or involved designs that could establish intervention efficacy. Compounding complications for adequate evaluation, many of the rural AIAN communities studied are too small to statistically evaluate the efficacy of a program by comparing treatment to control or comparison groups using mainstream statistical techniques. There currently exists a poverty of established statistical techniques and methodological approaches for small samples analysis, and methodological advances in this area are sorely needed.

Additional limitations warrant comment. The majority of interventions were designed to address youth suicide and SUD as isolated issues despite substantive evidence to suggest the issues are often interrelated, and in particular, that protection from one is shared with protection from the other. In addition, while there were reports of multilevel interventions engaging youth as well as community members and organizations, the majority of the reported interventions involved individual-level, peer-led, and bicultural competence skills-training interventions.

Conclusions

It is useful in assessing the accumulated work on SUD and suicide preventive interventions with rural AIAN youth populations to view them as a series of tensions between the cultures of science and the cultures of Indigenous communities (e.g., Whitbeck et al., 2012). For example, the presumed scientific rigor provided by randomized controlled designs has been described as culturally unacceptable and

perhaps unethical in some tribal contexts (Mohatt & Thomas, 2006). Working in small, isolated communities and within the cultural contexts of AIAN tribal communities necessitates flexibility and creativity. Flexibility is required in research design to address important methodological challenges associated with small sample size and logistical limitations and with community and cultural priorities that range from different approaches to time, social protocol, and ways of organizing efforts.

Further, community desire to address emerging health issues often takes precedence over the methodological demands associated with rigor in formal evaluation. Indigenously developed programs often face significant resource and funding constraints that can relegate evaluation to a secondary place in the face of the unmet services needs and funding constraints typical in many rural AIAN communities. The *Wind River Behavioral Health Program* (Tower, 1989) discussed earlier is a very real example of these issues for AIAN communities. Descriptions of such programs provide much-needed examples of community mobilization in response to local crises and the kinds of "grassroots" efforts emphasized by Whitbeck et al. (2012). However, responding to the immediate situation understandably trumped the use of scarce resources to gather extensive process or outcome data, much less the development of a randomized controlled trial, or even some variant of a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of this community response.

Indeed, AIAN communities may see the very nature of Western science as foreign. For example, Papago (*Tohono O'odham)* tribal members internally developed the Papago Psychology Service (Kahn, Lejero, Antone, Francisco, & Manuel, 1988) to address the mental health needs of the tribe and made an intentional decision not to evaluate the program according to Western research standards. Western research standards were regarded by the community with suspicion and viewed as an unneeded drain on resources that were intended to address overwhelming, immediate service needs. In much the same way, the Wind River report provides documentation of the existence of a broader movement, composed of "grassroots prevention programs [that] are based on cultural knowledge, guided by cultural values, and evaluated informally. They remain 'under the radar' of EA [European-American] prevention science in that they are rarely if ever published" (Whitbeck et al., 2012, p. 430). Recognizing that rural AIAN communities have their own priority issues and research values, a collaborative research process that embraces community-driven problem specification and community-directed design, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of the intervention in response to this problem is needed. This approach is most likely to lead to research conducted in accordance with local culture, strengths, needs, and resources and is most likely to build local trust, acceptance, and understanding regarding research, and its value and potential direct benefit to communities. The imperative for community-directed research represents possibly the best opportunity to learn from and describe these community-driven rural efforts currently underrepresented in the published reports of preventive interventions.

Together, these considerations converge to highlight the importance of locating the scientific limitations of the current rural AIAN suicide and SUD prevention

literature within opposing tensions that include the constraints of prevention science as currently practiced and the context of the historical and current ecologies of rural AIAN tribal communities. They further suggest the value and critical importance of reporting extensively on the processes as well as the outcomes of suicide and SUD prevention work with rural AIAN communities. Current publication practices and space limitations often preclude reporting in sufficient detail to assess intervention processes critical to work in rural AIAN communities (Trickett et al., 2014).

Lastly, we wish to offer our thoughts on two specific challenges confronting researchers who want to work with youth in rural AIAN communities. Foremost is establishing trust in order to gain permission and access to work in these communities with their young people. Research occurs within the historical context of mistrust of outsiders, particularly those associated with the government. These circumstances make the establishment of trust not only critical but exceedingly difficult to accomplish. A second challenge involves how most AIAN reservation-based research takes place in rural communities that are geographically dispersed and remote. Study logistics become expensive and the resulting samples in rural research generally are small. Therefore, procedures maximizing trust and participation are imperative for cost-effective studies among these small, geographically dispersed populations (Johnson, Farquhar, & Sussman, 1996; Murray, Moskowitz, & Dent, 1996). More importantly, they represent an ethical necessity, as probably the only way to document and learn from the innovation present in current grassroots prevention efforts in these communities. Given the cohesive, kinship nature of these communities, continuity of the relationship between researchers and communities is critical for sufficient trust to develop and endure to allow for this type of work (Allen, Mohatt, Markstrom, Novins, & Byers, 2012).

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Chapter 12
Rural African American Adolescents' Development: A Critical Review of Empirical Studies and Preventive Intervention Programs

Velma McBride Murry, Na Liu, and Magaela C. Bethune

The rural Southern coastal plain that reaches across Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee is one of the most economically disadvantaged regions of the United States (US Census, 2013). More than 50 % of African Americans live in this region, and the percentage of African Americans continues to grow (CDC, 2010; Dalaker, 2001; US Census, 2011). African American families raising children in the rural South are not only more likely to be poor but are also more likely to be living in conditions characterized by persistent, "deep" poverty (US Department of Agriculture [USDA], 2013).

Rural southern environments often lack structural resources that are available to families in urban settings (Proctor & Dalaker, 2003). Consequently, parents and other caregivers of rural African American children must deal with a restricted range of employment, long distances to businesses and services, limited public transportation, and lack of recreational facilitates and outlets for their children (Murry, Berkel, Brody, Miller, & Chen, 2009; USDA, 2013). Further, because rural African Americans have fewer educational opportunities than their urban counterparts (Rojewski, 1995; Witherspoon & Ennett, 2011), most jobs available to them are labor intensive and low paid (Brody, Kim, Murry, & Brown, 2005). The strain of such demanding work depletes families' time and energy resources. These challenges have been associated with heightened psychological distress that can

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compromise parenting (Brody & Flor, 1997) and lead to increased risk vulnerability among their children (Murry et al., 2005). Several theoretical explanations have been offered for the spillover effects of chronic poverty on family functioning and children's development and adjustment (e.g., Murry et al., 2008).

Garcia Coll et al.'s (1996) integrative model for the study of developmental competences in minority children contends that there are critical aspects of some children's environment that are profoundly influenced by racism, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and segregation. Thus, these authors contend that studies of children of color should include race, ethnicity, and social class as core variables, rather than as peripheral contextual processes, to understand and explain their development. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development was also selected to guide our review. This theory describes ways in which proximal and distal processes affect and influence developmental outcomes of humans. This theory contends that human development is a product of dynamic relational interactions that are inextricably linked with and infused into multiple interlocking contextual systems. It further notes that, while humans are influenced by their environments, they also are active agents in their environment with capacities to influence, as well as be influenced (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). As active agents, humans have the capacity to engage in behaviors that shape social interactions and change the directional influence of environmental settings in ways that affect subsequent development (Lerner, 1982).

Moreover, the youth who are able to overcome adversity tend to have the following attributes and resources—competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring relationships, which Lerner describes as the 5Cs of the Positive Youth Development model (Lerner, 1982). Merging the Coll et al. model, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, and PYD model provides a conceptual framework to explain the mechanisms through which the nature of individual–context relations for some individuals is met with numerous environmental, social, political, and economic challenges that influence the course of their growth and development. And, these perspectives allow one to consider ways in which individuals thrive and survive despite growing up on poverty and being subjected to racial discrimination (Ferguson & Zimmerman, 2005; Masten, 2001; Murry et al., in press). It is this premise that served as the impetus for our chapter review of rural African American adolescent development.

We begin our review with a description of the organization and scope of the chapter, followed by a rationale for the significance of examining the development and adjustment of rural African American adolescents, and proceed with summarizing extant studies that have examined both normative and nonnormative development patterns and adjustment.

Organization and Scope of Chapter

The current review was undertaken to assemble otherwise scattered research results about areas of disparities that are often associated with African American youth development and to pull together a list of evidence-based programs that have

been designed to reduce or eliminate problems and behaviors that might compromise the full potential of youth, including life opportunities and overall health. Our chapter is organized into two distinct parts. Part I summarizes extant studies published in the past two decades that examined developmental and adjustment outcomes of African American youth aged 9–18 years. Our initial plan was to provide a greater understanding of the diverse experiences and development of rural African American adolescents. This strategy proved too limiting because the majority of studies focused primarily on low-income, African American adolescent, urban samples. When available, we acknowledge those studies that have specifically targeted rural African American youth. In Part II, we link the research to practice by critically evaluating the foundational basis of various evidence-based programs, with specific attention given to the extent to which the programs are informed and guided by relevant theories and empirical studies of rural African American families and youth. In the final section, recommendations for next steps in research studies and in the design, development, and implementation of preventive interventions targeting rural African American adolescents are offered. Before beginning our review, we provide a brief rationale for the need to focus on rural African American adolescents.

Why Focus on Rural African American Adolescents?

While African Americans and other people of color are at risk for experiencing discrimination, the vestiges of slavery, Jim Crow laws, racism, and discrimination continue to stifle the life opportunities and advancements of African Americans (Murry & Liu, 2014). These circumstances are particularly challenging for African American adolescents who reside in the rural South, as these adolescents are at increased risk for academic problems, school failure, school dropout, and low educational attainment, which increases risk for unemployment (Farmer, Goforth, Leung, Clemmer, & Thompson, 2004; Kim, Brody, & Murry, 2003). Thus, the overrepresentation of rural African Americans in rates of low educational attainment, early sexual onset, adolescent pregnancy, and high-school dropout is often attributed to growing up in poverty with limited opportunities for future advancement (Berkel et al. 2009). In the next section, we summarize extant studies that have identified factors and processes associated with variability in African American adolescents' academic performance.

Academic-Related Outcomes

Development, including academic outcomes, does not occur in a vacuum. Our summary of extant studies begins with a synthesis of studies of academic performance and achievement among rural African American adolescents by describing how community contextual factors contribute to school-related outcomes.

Community Factors in the Rural South Many African American adolescents in the rural South reside in under-resourced communities with high concentrations of poverty (Murry et al., 2009; USDA, 2013). As noted earlier, persistent poverty among African Americans in the South is often associated with the vestiges of the Jim Crow laws, which enforced racial segregation and encouraged discrimination, including resource restrictions based on skin color (Murry et al., 2008). While growing up in low-resource communities has been consistently associated with lower educational attainment, research studies that have examined ways in which community contextual influences affect academic-related outcomes of rural African American adolescents are rare. Available studies have primarily focused on explaining the connections of low-resource communities, school environment, and quality and stability of school personnel to rural students' academic disparities.

Rural school districts receive disproportionately fewer state funds (Howley, 2003). Locally, rural southern schools are embedded in communities that suffer from persistent poverty, high unemployment, with low tax base that hinder community stakeholders' ability to invest in the educational systems and infrastructure. For example, compared to urban and suburban schools, rural schools have the lowest per capita income, are more likely to close when funding shortages emerge, and often attract less prepared teachers due to low wages. Given the financial constraints and insufficient school personnel in many rural schools, rural educational systems have been characterized as being in a state of urgency (Beeson & Strange, 2003).

Lack of financial support and related problems in rural school districts is a long-standing problem. It is not surprising that many African American adolescents are, and multiple generations of their family members have been, educated in schools characterized as under-resourced, with large classes taught by inexperienced and insufficiently uncertified teachers. Further, students are confronted with being educated in institutions that have limited course offerings, particularly college-prep classes, and limited access to technology (Barton & Coley, 2009). These processes are often associated with the "mis-education" of rural African American youth.

School Environmental Influences Schools in rural settings tend to serve wide geographic areas, often located great distances from the students' homes, creating challenges for parental school involvement, which in turn can greatly compromise youth's ability to do well in school. Yet, rather than focusing on ways that macro-system level variables could help to eliminate educational disparities, the majority of studies identified in our review focused primarily on microsystem level factors to explain variability in academic outcomes of African American adolescents, with limited consideration given to disentangling the contributions of social structural constraints and rurality to educational outcomes.

Another issue that is often considered in school-related experiences of African Americans is disciplinary practices. African American males, in particular, are more likely to receive detentions, suspensions, expulsions, and assignments to alternative schools or special education classes (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). While these strategies are often implemented to reduce classroom disruptions, they may have life long consequences for African American youth. According

to Wang and Hugley (2012), racial discrimination from teachers toward African American students is quite pervasive and has been associated with several negative outcomes. To avoid such stressful conditions, students cognitively and physically disengage from school. Recent studies have shown that reported teacher victimization among rural African American students is directly associated with increased school absences, student alienation, academic deterioration, high-school drop, delinquency, crime, and substance use (Strange, Johnson, Showalter, & Klein, 2012). This suggests the need for greater awareness of institutional barriers that may affect the educational outcomes of African American students and to provide training to ensure that all students receive a quality education and feel safe in school settings. While teachers serve a pivotal role in the educational outcomes of rural African American adolescents, peers also play a part in this process.

A plethora of studies have documented ways in which peers influence all facets of a student's life, including academic-related outcomes (Fries-Britt, 1998; Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 1998). The association between academic outcomes of African American students and peer affiliation is often captured by applying Ogbu's (1987, 2004) cultural ecological theory of minority academic achievement and the theory of the "looking glass self" (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). These theoretical explanations, in essence, imply that the social position of African American students' in the US society facilitates the use of survival strategies that may hinder academic success. The skills include the development of an ambivalent academic orientation that reflects associating academic astuteness with skills germane to "white people." Further, academically successful African American students are viewed as "acting White" and may experience marginalization in school settings (Ogbu, 1992). In such settings, youth may receive a message, directly or indirectly, about their inability to achieve academically. Ogbu further suggests that the youth may engage in self-protection behaviors, often camouflaging their academic ability, and consequently may jeopardize their academic performance and school success (Ogbu, 1992). Ogbu (1987) characterized this pattern of behavior as academic self-presentation. Thus, these coping behaviors may become a self-fulfilling prophecy, resulting in school disengagement and low academic performance. Further, while this theory has been highly cited, these hypotheses have not been adequately tested.

Peer as Academic Influencers Studies of academic outcomes often ignore the positive contributions of peers. Gonzales, Cauce, Friedman, and Mason (1996) reported that peers provide opportunities for students to formulate study habits, academic self-concept, academic motivation, and attitudes and perceptions regarding school importance and academic and career achievement (Gonzales et al., 1996). Further, Farmer, Irvin, Thompson, Hutchins, and Leung (2006) observed that high-achieving rural African American students were more likely to be characterized as popular and academically astute by their peers compared to low-performing students. Murry and colleagues (2009) reported similar findings. Sanders (1997) research findings on urban African American adolescents may offer insight; they revealed that the association between rejecting the acting White persona and high academic achievement was mediated through heightened racial pride. Further, other research studies of urban African American adolescents and college

students also have found a strong positive connection between racial centrality, self-esteem, and academic success (Chavous, Bernat, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, & Zimmeman, 2003; Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001). In their study of urban adolescents, Wang and Hugley (2012) found that preparation for racial bias and feelings of pride for one's racial heritage moderated the association between racial discrimination at school and African American youths' academic outcomes. Such youth who had been socialized to reject negative racial discriminatory messages and perceptions and those who exhibited high racial pride were able to cope more effectively with racial discriminatory experiences in school settings. Thus, as several authors have noted, adaptive racial socialization serves a protective function for AA youth development and adjustment, including the promotion of school success (Murry et al., 2009).

Family Factors Parents and other caregivers can socialize their children in a positive way, through which the youth learn to be aware of racism yet cope with it through hard work, putting forth great effort toward education (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Sanders, 1997). Heightened regard for one's racial group increased awareness of discrimination and rejection of negative societal messages about one's race and facilitated academic success among urban African American adolescents (Chavous et al., 2003; Smith & Brookins, 1997). Murry and colleagues (2009) found similar patterns in a sample of rural African American adolescents. Adaptive racial/ethnic socialization was indirectly associated with academic success through the elevation of racial identity and self-esteem. These protective processes reduced the likelihood that the youth would utilize academic self-presentation strategies to impress their peers (Murry et al., 2009). Taken together, these studies demonstrate the powerful role of African American parents in fostering positive academic outcomes for their children.

In sum, structural inequalities alone do not explain variability in academic outcomes of African Americans. We identified several factors and processes that have been found to buffer rural African American adolescents from succumbing to challenges associated with growing up in low-resource communities. Having positive caring relationships with teachers who have high expectations for youth's abilities and being exposed to teachers who engage in affirming classroom practices, including curricula, educational materials and academic activities that are inclusive and culturally relevant are important in fostering school engagement, which will in turn foster academic success. It is also important that school policies are designed to facilitate preventative and proactive restorative justice to ensure that disciplinary strategies are fair and equitable for all students. There is a need for greater emphasis on the role of parents and families in the academic performance of their children. In a series of studies of rural African American families, Brody and colleagues revealed that parenting practices, including being an actively engaged parent, attending parent-teacher conferences, and checking in with teachers to see how their child is performing, facilitated increase attentiveness of the teachers toward the child, because teachers anticipated future contact and inquiries from involved parents. These actions may also promote positive caring relationships between teacher and child, as a consequence of favorable interactions with his/her parents. Proactive parent-teacher interactions were indirectly linked with increased cognitive and social competencies through the enhancement of self-regulatory

competence (Brody & Flor, 1998; Brody, Stoneman, Flor, & McCrary, 1994; Murry et al., 2009). Hill et al. (2004) has associated parent academic involvement with reduced behavioral problems, such as aggression and other social problems, that may interfere with school performance. The proposed cascading effects of parent-teacher interactions on youth academic outcomes have not been fully examined and warrant further investigation.

In sum, the associations among poverty, disorganized, stressful neighborhoods, and heightened risk vulnerability among youth have been well documented (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Murry, Berkel, Gaylord-Harden, Copeland-Linder, & Nation, 2011). The conditions are thought to place the youth at risk because they compromise individuals' future orientation and sense of efficacy to achieve their goals. Further, since there are few opportunities for employment and educational outlets beyond high school, these youth may be less likely to delay engaging in behaviors that may have long-term negative consequences for their future. This includes behaviors that may derail school completion. In the following section, factors and processes that inhibit or promote psychosocial developmental outcomes and adjustment among African American adolescents and, when available, investigations that targeted rural African American adolescents are highlighted. We begin with research studies examining conduct problems.

African American Adolescents' Psychosocial Development

Conduct Problems

Adolescent behavior problems continue to be of great concern in the United States and as with other problem behaviors, this is the developmental stage, from age 11 and peak at 17 years of age, when the youth are more likely to be involved in delinquent behavior. Problem behavior patterns gradually decrease as the youth transition into young adulthood (Moffitt, 1993). There are groups, however, that are at risk for continued disruptive, violent, crime behaviors across the life course (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992), characterized as "life-course-persistent" group. They tend to be early starters and are disproportionately involved in other high-risk behaviors, including academic failure (i.e., learning difficulties, dropping out of school), peer rejection, risky sexual practices, and initiation and escalation of alcohol and substance use (Cadwallader et al., 2002).

Youth development does not occur in a vacuum but is inextricably linked with and infused into multiple interlocking contextual systems. Thus, adolescents' capacities and developmental outcomes are products of the dynamic relational interactions that occur within these contexts, such as community, family, school, peers, and also interactions with various social media. A brief overview of the role of contexts in youth development is provided below.

Community Context Studies linking community context to African American adolescents' behavior often are captured through explanations, wherein conduct problems are characterized as co-occurring with other externalizing behaviors,

such as risky sexual behaviors, alcohol and substance use, academic failure, and delinquency. No studies, to our knowledge, have sufficiently demonstrated the mechanisms through which neighborhood settings directly affect youths' behavioral problems (Vazsonyi, Trejos-Castillo, & Young, 2008). Further, while numerous community factors—namely, institutional resources, community norms, and collective efficacy—have the potential to influence youths' behaviors (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000) through peer affiliation and community level social control processes, such as adults supervising and monitoring youth behaviors, such studies have not been conducted with rural African American populations. This gap in studies of rural African American youth is somewhat surprising, given that rural African American communities are often characterized as cohesive, with available adults who monitor the whereabouts of youth (Berkel et al. 2009; Brody et al., 2001).

Family Context Research studies on rural African Americans have shown strong associations among exposure to frequent family conflicts, coercive parent–child communication, and conduct problems (Brody et al., 2003). Many rural African American families live under conditions of severe and chronic economic stress that can take a toll on parents and their interactions with their children. Financial distress can create detrimental effects on parents' psychological functioning; increase the use of inconsistent, harsh parenting (Conger & Elder, 1994; Conger et al., 2002); and compromise parent–adolescent relationship quality (Brody & Flor, 1997; Murry & Brody, 1999). Despite such adversity, many rural African American families have important strengths that foster resilience and, in turn, help their children to develop into competent individuals, despite the stressors with which they live (Brody & Ge, 2001; Brody et al., 2002, 2003, in press; Murry & Brody, 1999; Murry, Bynum, Brody, Willert, & Stephens, 2001). According to Murry and colleagues (2005), the parenting behaviors that rural African American parents engage in represent adaptive responses to living in challenging environments and have been shown to foster competence among children. Specifically, involved, supportive, and vigilant parenting protects African American youth from conduct problems by promoting self-control and self-regulation (Brody et al., 2002; Simons et al., 2002).

In sum, given the scarcity of studies on academic-related outcomes and behavioral adjustment and development of rural African American adolescents and their families, additional research is greatly needed. In the meantime, review of the available studies included in this section suggests that there are several modifiable factors operating at the community, family, and individual youth level that can guide preventive intervention efforts to reduce academic disparities to avert conduct problems. Specifically, residing in a highly cohesive community, affiliating with prosocial peers, adaptive racial socialization that prepares the youth for racial bias, and instilling a sense of pride in one's ancestral heritage foster prosocial development among rural African American adolescents. In the next section, an overview of studies that have identified risk and protective factors associated with other domains of adolescent development is presented.

Sexual Risk and Substance and Drug Use

While adolescence is a time of exploration and experimentation, some behaviors have long-term consequences that can derail young people's future. Namely, high-risk sexual behavior and alcohol and drug use and abuse are commonly associated with several negative outcomes, including pregnancy and early parenthood and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

In terms of prevalence, approximately half of all high-school students in the United States are sexually active (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013; Yan, Chiu, Stoesen, & Wang, 2007), with 6.2% of high-school students reporting having their sexual debut before age 13 (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Further, racial/ethnic comparison studies revealed that African American youth are 3.5 times more likely than Whites to have initiated sexual activity before their 13th birthday. Further, African American males are disproportionately represented in early sexual initiators, as 21.2 % report having had sex before turning 13 years old, as compared to 5.2 % of White male youth. Youth who become sexually active at an early age tend to lack skills to effectively prevent pregnancy and STIs, tend to have more lifetime sexual partners, and are disproportionately represented in pregnancy rates.

While all racial/ethnic groups reported decline in pregnancy rates over the past decade (CDC, 2013), in 2009, more than 400,000 adolescent girls aged 15–19 had given birth (Finer & Zolna, 2011). Further, African American adolescents are 2.5 times as likely to experience an unintended pregnancy compared to White women. In addition, African American males accounted for 70 % of new HIV infections, reflecting a rate more than 6.5 times that of White males and 2.5 times that of Latino males. Recent predictions indicate that one in 16 African American males will be diagnosed with HIV at some point in their lifetime (CDC, 2010).

Patterns of risky sexual behaviors are more prominent among rural African Americans. Milhausen et al. (2003), in their rural and nonrural comparison study of African American high-school students, found that rural males and females were more likely to have ever had sexual coitus and were less likely to have used a condom at last coitus compared to nonrural counterparts. While no differences were observed with regard to STD/HIV infections among rural and nonrural males, rural African American females engaged in behavior that elevated their risk for STD/HIV and pregnancy. More risky patterns were observed among rural high-school females who reported elevated depression. Rural depressed females, for example, were 2.5 time more likely to report having sexual intercourse, 47 % more likely to have had sexual debut occur at age 15, 79 % more likely to have had three or more sexual partners, 63 % more likely to have engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse, and 81 % more likely to have used alcohol and/or drugs at last sexual encounter. These scholars also found positive associations between depression and early sexual onset and non-condom use among rural African American males (Milhausen et al., 2003). While Milhausen and associates did not examine the causal effects of depression among rural African American adolescents, several plausible explanations include the challenges associated with

growing up in resource-scarce communities, including fewer opportunities for recreational outlets, isolation, loneliness, and limited opportunities for educational advancement and employment.

Stress coping theory contends that life stressors may evoke maladaptive responses to manage negative life events (Ferguson & Zimmerman, 2005), such as engaging in behaviors that evoke immediate gratification, including sexual encounters and excessive alcohol and/or drug use, when confronted with limited life opportunities (Martin, Tuch, & Roman, 2003; Murry, Simons, Simons, & Gibbons, 2013). Results from a longitudinal study of rural African American young adults provide support for this conjecture, illustrating the connections and cyclic effects of stressful life conditions of rural communities on emotional development and maladaptive coping behaviors, including risky sexual behaviors and initiation and escalating use of alcohol and other substances (Brody, Chen, & Kogan, 2010).

Alcohol and Substance Use

Similar to risky sexual practices, adolescents also are at risk for initiating alcohol and drug use at an early age. Data from a national study of high-school students revealed that 46 % actively drink alcohol and 24 % engaged in binge drinking (5 or more drinks for males and 4 or more for females on one occasion). Rates of alcohol use vary by age: 2 % of 12–13-year-olds, 11.1 % of 4–15-year-olds, 24.8 % of 16–17-year-olds, and 45.8 % of 18–20-year-olds. While the prevalence of alcohol use is higher among rural youth in general, compared to urban counterparts, White youth are disproportionately represented among users. African American adolescents, both rural and urban, are the least likely of all racial/ethnic groups to use alcohol and substance use (French, Finkbiner, & Duhamel, 2002). Adolescent development researchers continue to grapple with explaining the low incidence of alcohol/drug use among African Americans. In the following section, an overview of studies that have identified protective factors and processes that dissuade alcohol and substance use among African Americans is provided. We end this respective section with the following summative statement—*there is no single pathway or set of life experiences that evokes or dissuades risky behaviors* (Murry, McNair, Myers, Chen, & Brody, 2014). Whether an adolescent experiences sexual debut at an early age, has unprotected sexual encounters, engages in sexual activities with multiple partners, or drinks and uses other substances, choices and decisions are influenced by an array of factors that are products of the dynamic relational interactions that occur at the community, family, and individual levels. Embedded in these interlocking systems are malleable protective factors that can be targeted to prevent or reduce adolescent risky behaviors. In the following section, we focus on investigations that have explored the linkages among individual, family, and community structures that buffer rural African American adolescents from engaging in risky behaviors.

Protective Nature of Community, Family, and Peers

Despite the challenges associated with growing up in low-resource, often geographically isolated, communities, many rural African American adolescents fare well, do well in school, avoid delinquent behaviors, and are not engaging in high-risk behaviors. Their ability to overcome the odds can be attributed to the mechanisms that foster positive development and growth, in particular, the functionality of their social relations and the extent to which the relational processes are reciprocal and mutually influential (Lerner, 2002).

We begin our review by acknowledging that there is a paucity of research that has characterized the unique contributions of rural contexts to the development of African American youth, as the majority of studies have been conducted on their urban counterparts. Available studies that have considered the significance of ecological systems to adolescent development, beginning with the protective nature of community structure and institutions, are summarized below, beginning with the contributions of community contexts for youth development.

Community Context Communities are settings where youth are presented with opportunities and resources that serve to protect them from risky situations and buffer the deleterious effects of risk exposure. Yet, it remains unclear how community contexts or neighborhoods, particular disadvantaged ones, become linked with adolescents' risky behavior. A general assumption is that community residents influence youths' behavior by providing the norms, values, and standards that can guide and inform them on how to act. Moreover, growing up in close-knit communities, in which adults use strategies to support each other, including monitoring neighborhood children, a process referred to as collective socialization (Burton & Jarrett, 2000), can encourage positive developmental pathways for rural African American adolescents. Community norms and expectations for youth behaviors provide social control, as the youth are socialized on behaviors that are sanctioned by the community and protocols and procedures for correcting misbehavior (Simons, Simons, Conger, & Brody, 2004). A benefit of having other adults invest in the well-being of youth is that it provides an additional monitoring system that extends beyond household boundaries. Extant studies of rural communities have shown collective socialization to have long-term protective effects against risk-engaging behaviors among rural youth by dissuading them from affiliating with deviant peers (Brody et al., 2001; Murry et al., 2009; Simons et al., 2004).

Asset-based studies have shown that church involvement facilitates moral development, racial pride, healthy self-esteem, and self-efficacy and in turn increased prosocial competence, including academic success and civic engagement, among both rural and nonrural African American youth (Brody et al., 1994; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Williams, 2000). That Black churches have a pivotal role in the development of youth is not surprising given that this institution has historically served as a place of refuge and support for African Americans. For African American youth, the church also increases their connections to other adults with whom they

can build supportive relationships. Williams (2003a, 2003b) characterizes the Black church as "a 'village opportunity' to provide positive experiences for youth" (p. 27), and another village phenomenon, collective socialization, also is available in many rural African American communities (Berkel et al., 2009). The benefits of "the village" may impact adolescents directly as well as indirectly through the support that their parents gain from church members and neighbors (Black, Cook, Murry, & Cutrona, 2005).

Family and Peer Contexts As significant socializing agents, parents transmit attitudes, values, and norms regarding appropriate behavior and consequences for misbehavior (Jaccard, Dittus, & Gordon, 2000; Jaccard et al., 1996; Whitaker & Miller, 2000). Thus, the mechanism through which parents are able to influence their children's behavior is through youths' internalization of parental norms, values, and expectations. Internalization is more likely to occur when youth and parent engage in frequent positive communication behaviors (Brody & Flor, 1998; Whitaker & Miller, 2000). Moreover, parental articulated expectations regarding sexual activities and alcohol and drug use significantly influenced their adolescents' decisions about risk engagement (Murry et al., 2014). Open communication between parents and adolescents also shapes youths' images of risk-taking peers (Williams, 2003a, 2003b), increases self-regulation and self-control, and increased their willingness to avoid risk opportunity situations and resist peer pressure (Berkel et al., 2009; Murry et al., 2013). Both research and theory suggest that deviant peer affiliations serve as a proximal link to early sexual debut, onset of alcohol use, and disengagement from conventional activities such as academic achievement (Elliott, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Mosbach & Leventhal, 1988; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). Moreover, Whitaker and Miller (2000) as well as Brody et al. (2005) and others (Hill & Craft, 2003; Hill & Tyson, 2009) contend that positive parent–child communication about risky behaviors moderates the effects of peer pressure on youths' decisions about sexual activity and using alcohol and other substances.

In sum, despite growing up in circumstances that can hinder successful development of rural African American adolescents, extant studies provide greater insights on the mechanisms through which community members, including teachers, parents, and peers, contribute to the positive development of rural African American adolescents. Drawing from the 5C of the Positive Youth Development model, our review affirms that connections with caring adults and institutions can facilitate character (integrity and moral centeredness) and confidence (in one's abilities and capacities to be socially, intellectually, psychologically, and emotionally competent to be successful) and help youth resist risk opportunities. Thus, the 5Cs may hold promise for forecasting successful developmental trajectories of rural African American adolescents by providing specific targets for preventive interventions (Murry et al., 2014).

The first part of our review was informed by the Institute of Medicine (1994) recommendation that prevention research be guided by a comprehensive systematic review of extant studies. For part two of our review, we sought to determine the extent to which programs designed and developed to prevent or reduce various

disparities among rural African American adolescents met the standards set forth by IOM. In this regard, we pose the question: Are risk prevention programs targeting rural African American adolescents theory driven and research based?

To begin this process, we sought various sources to identify evidence-based programs that targeted rural African American youth or included these youth in the study trial. The website search included Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Blueprints Programs, and the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices. Programs that were designed to prevent or reduce the following behaviors: academic-related issues, conduct, and other externalizing problems, including drug/substance use, risky sex behavior, drinking, and smoking, were selected for review. A total of 11 programs met the criteria. In preparation for our review, we organized these programs and developed a list that included first author/developer's name, program title, and a synopsis of efficacy trial findings. A description of each of the programs is presented in Table 12.1.

As noted in Table 12.1, two of the eleven programs focused only on academic-related issues (i.e., The Carolina Abecedarian Project (CAP) and the Good et al. mentoring program), and only one program (Teens Outreach Program) was designed to address conduct problems, and one program targeted both academic performance and conduct problems (e.g., School Engagement Program). While the CAP program included parental involvement as one of their intervention targets, programmatic change was primarily attributed to increases in youths' cognitive, social, self-help, and language skills, which in turn fostered increased IQ, improved test scores, and fewer assignments to special education and grade retention. Thus, intervention-induced change in academic improvement was attributed to programmatic effects on youth-related factors, as CAP did not influence parental involvement, and this protective factor was not associated with changes in youth-targeted outcomes.

Good et al.'s (Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003) mentoring program was designed to increase rural African American youths' math performance by reducing students' math anxiety and their association of math performance to racial stereotype threat. Each of the programs was theoretically driven but lacked reliance on empirical studies to guide selected intervention targets. For example, factors that have been shown to promote school performance and academic achievement, and to reduce conduct problems, were not included as malleable targets. Further, these programs focused primarily on facilitating change at the individual adolescent level, for example, reducing externalizing problems by increasing decision-making, interpersonal competence, and social cognitive maps. Thus, lack of programmatic change may be attributed to the need to include programmatic targets that are informed and guided by relevant empirical studies, which specify mechanisms through which academic-related outcomes can be enhanced and conduct problems can be averted.

The remaining programs (e.g., STAND, School/Community Program for Sexual Risk Reduction among Teens, The Strong African American Families Program, The Rural African American Families Health Program, and Adults in the Making) were designed to prevent HIV-related risk behaviors, specifically by delaying sexual debut, increasing condom use among sexually active youth, and deterring the initiation and escalation of alcohol and substance use. SAAF, RAAFH, and AIM programs

Table 12.1 Overview of preventive intervention programs targeting rural african american youth

Domain		Program and citation(s)	Implementation design	Population of interest	Design	Intervention mediators	Intervention-targeted outcome
Academic Performance		The Carolina Abecedarian Project (Campbell & Ramey, 1995)	Two intervention phases. Phase 1—preschool intervention includes 90 10-min individual sessions over 45 weeks; Phase 2—school-age intervention delivered by home/school resource teacher in the first 3 school years	High-risk AA[a] students at middle adolescence. High-risk families nominated by local agencies (98 % AA)	RCT[b] with three intervention groups—I1: Preschool intervention only ($n=24$); I2: Preschool + school-age intervention ($n=22$); I3: School-age intervention only ($n=24$) and control group ($n=23$), IQ scores at 2, 3, 4, 12, 15, and 21. Math and reading test scores at ages 12 and 15	Cognitive and fine motor development, social and self-help skills, language, and gross motor skills; parental involvement	At age 12 and 15, participants in the preschool intervention groups still got higher IQ score and test scores; fewer assignment to special education or grade retention
		Good, Aronson, and Inzlicht (2003)	Two individual mentoring sessions and weekly email exchange in a year. 25 mentors were randomly assigned to students	Minority adolescents (7th graders) in rural districts (63 % Hispanic, 15 % Black)	RCT ($n=138$) with three intervention groups (incremental, attribution, combination) and one control group (antidrug)	Students' perceptions of learning difficulties and development of intelligence	Math scores increased. Gender gap disappeared
	Conduct Problems	Teen Outreach Program (Allen & Phillier, 2001)	Nine-month multicomponent SB program	Students in grades 7–12 in 30 schools nationwide	Quasi-experimental design. One treatment group and one comparison group ($n=1487$)	Values, human growth and development, relationships, family stress, skill development, and emotional social competence to transition into youth adulthood	Long-term reductions in behavior-related problems (i.e., pregnancy, school suspension, class failure, and/or school dropout)
		School Engagement Program (Cadwallader et al., 2002)	9 weekly 2-hour sessions. Each session included 1 hour in music and 1 hour in photography	Rural AA youth in two rural southern counties (191 males, 250 females)	RCT with intervention condition ($n=201$) and control condition ($n=240$). Measurement was at pretest and immediately after intervention	Interpersonal Competence (ICS-T), Social Cognitive Maps (SCM)	Intervention increased the social network centrality of non-aggressive youth but don't have much to do with the aggressive boys

Sex and Drug Risk	STAND (Smith & DiClemente, 2000, 2000)	36-hour peer educator training program delivered over a 4-month period. One 5-hour group session and then twice/week 1-hour meetings thereafter	SB[c] sample of 10th graders identified as opinion leaders by their peers. (71 % AA, 29 % White; 52 % female)	Two-part pilot study. Efficacy trial—1 intervention group (I1; $n=21$) and 1 comparison group (C1; $n=53$). Diffusions trial—1 intervention county (I2; $n=167$) and 1 comparison county (C2; $n=74$). Measurement was at pretest, posttest, and 8-month follow-up	STI/HIV prevention and reproductive health knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors; communication with peers and adults	Communication with friends about BC/condoms/STDs (I1>C1); sexual risk-reducing behaviors (I1>C1); no significant differences in changes for I2 vs. C2
	School/Community Program for Sexual Risk Reduction Among Teens (Koo, Dunteman, George, et al., 1994)	Comprehensive, multicomponent SB program, includes parents, teachers, peer educators, public service messages, and health-care professionals to encourage delayed sexual debut and condom use among sexual active teens	Rural SB sample of multiethnic (primarily White and Black) students ages 14 to 17	Quasi-experimental design. One treatment group and one comparison group	Sex education and contraceptive knowledge, parents as role models for youth; media coverage of health-related topics	Long-term reduction in county-level teen pregnancy rate, return to higher teen pregnancy rate when intervention components discontinued
Alcohol and Substance Use	SAAF (Gerrard et al. 2006; Murry et al., 2005; 2011)	FB[e] skills training intervention. 7 consecutive weekly group meetings. Each meeting consists of a 1-hour session for parents and youth separately and then a 1-hour concurrent session for parents and youth, 14 hours total	SB convenience sample. Participants were AA 11-year-olds (mean age = 11.2 year, 54 % female)	RCT with 1 intervention group (I; $n=371$), and 1 control group (C; $n=299$) that receive mail-outs promoting healthful behaviors in youth. Measurement was at pretest, 3-month posttest, 29 month long-term follow-up, and 65-month long-term follow-up	Intervention-targeted parenting behaviors (i.e., racial socialization, involved vigilant parenting, sex communication, expectations for alcohol use)	Change in intervention-targeted parenting practices (I>C); increased racial pride, self-regulation, and resistance efficacy, which in turn delayed sexual debut, substance and drug use avoidance, 54 months post-intervention (Murry et al., 2009), with sustaining effects 65 month post-intervention from pretest to multiple follow-up (I>C)

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

Domain	Program and citation(s)	Implementation design	Population of interest	Design	Intervention mediators	Intervention-targeted outcome
	Rural African American Family Health Project (Brody et al. 2012; Kogan et al. 2011, 2012)	FB skills training intervention. 6 consecutive weekly group meetings. Each meeting consists of a 1-hour session for parents and youth separately and then a 1-hour concurrent session for parents and youth	SB convenience sample. Participants were AA 10th graders (age = 16 year, 51 % female)	RCT with 1 intervention group (I; n=252) and 1 attention control group (C; n=250) that received a FB intervention to promote healthful behaviors among adolescents. Measurement was at pretest, posttest, and 22-month long-term follow-up	Family problem-solving, parent–youth risk communication, academic support, youth future planning and goal setting, youth risk behavior attitudes and knowledge	Change in intervention effects on protective family management skills (I>C), which in turn was associated with future orientation and goal setting; increase risk avoidance attitudes, reduce unprotected intercourse (I<C), increase condom use efficacy (I>C), substance use (I<C), substance use problems (I<C)
	Adults in the Making (Brody et al., 2010, 2012)	FB skills training intervention. 6 consecutive weekly group meetings. Each meeting consists of a 1-hour session for parents and youth separately and then a 1-hour concurrent session for parents and youth	SB convenience sample. Participants were AA juniors or seniors in high school (mean age = 17.7 year, 58.5 % female)	RCT with 1 intervention group (I; n=174) and one control group (C; n=173). Measurement was at pretest, posttest, 16-month follow-up, and 28-month follow-up	Risk-taking tendencies, susceptibility cognitions for alcohol use	Young adults in the control group experienced higher levels of stress and greater involvement in health-risk behaviors than those in the prevention group, pretest–posttest–follow-up (I<C)

[a]AA African American

[b]RCT Randomized controlled trial

[c]SB School-based

[d]BC Birth control

[e]FB Family-based

were specifically designed and tailored for rural African American youth and their caregivers. STAND is a universal, peer education program designed to reduce risky sexual practices among 10th grade females and included rural African Americans in the randomized controlled trail (RCT). Results from an efficacy test revealed initial changes in several targeted outcomes, including increased condom use and reduced STIs for intervention versus control groups; however, these changes were not sustained overtime (Smith & DiClemente, 2000).

The Reducing the Risk Community Program for Sexual Risk Reduction among Teens is a multisystem and multicomponent program designed to prevent and reduce pregnancy and repeated births among adolescent females. Program topics include sexual knowledge and information and parent–adolescent communication skill building which were shown to have long-term positive effects on pregnancy reduction, as long as the youth were exposed to educational information. Noteworthy is that the authors observed that risk-engaging patterns reemerged among teens when the program was discontinued.

The Strong African American Families (SAAF), Rural African American Families Health Project (RAAFH), and Adults in the Making (AIM) were specifically developed for rural African American adolescents and their parents. Each program includes individual parent sessions, youth sessions, and family sessions. Of the three programs, SAAF is the longest standing, testing a sample of 677 rural African American families with 11-year-old children. Results have yielded favorable behavioral outcomes, including delaying both sexual debut and substance/drug use 54 months post-intervention, with sustained HIV risk reduction patterns, such as increased condom use and fewer sexual partners among sexually active SAAF youth 65 months post-intervention. Each of these three programs met the IOM standards. In particular, each program's theoretical and empirical underpinnings were based upon data that the investigators had gathered for more than a decade from the target population (e.g., Murry et al., 2005). Further, community members, including religious leaders, were involved in numerous aspects of each of the program's design, development, and implementation. Community members provided feedback on the cultural relevance and sensitivity of measures, protocols, and procedures for rural African American parents and youth. They also provided feedback about families' and communities' cultural identities, meanings, customs, religious practices, languages, expectations, worldviews, and cultural values, all of which impact the successful design and implementation of each of the programs. Finally, SAAF, AIM, and RAAFH included intervention targets that reflect various components of the 5Cs of PYD as mechanisms of change, were designed and developed through community partnership, and were theoretically and empirically driven.

In conclusion, while many of the programs listed in Table 12.1 show some promise in addressing disparities discussed in our chapter, most of the programs, with the exception of SAAF, RAAFH, and AIM, do not appear to have been informed and guided by relevant theories and empirical studies of African American families and youth in general and rural African Americans specifically. Given the urgent need to identify ways to reduce the widening academic gap, the overrepresentation of African Americans in criminal justice systems, and increasing new cases of HIV

among rural African Americans, there is a need for more research on rural African American families and youth that identifies pathways that promote positive developmental outcomes. Moreover, the disparities gap can be narrowed through the discovery of new knowledge and its application in real world settings by translating research findings into evidence-based programs and policies. Further, greater consideration needs to be given to ways to harness the strengths of rural African American adolescents and their families, in both research and practice.

Conclusions

Despite the challenges associated with growing up in often low-resource rural communities, many rural African American adolescents are able to survive and thrive. Our review identified several protective processes that explain how and why many are able to overcome odds and do well in school, engage in prosocial skills, and avoid risk opportunities such as delinquency, and sexual risk and substance use. Several common protective factors emerged across each domain. Having caring and supportive parents, teachers, and other adults forecasts character building, confidence, and competence among adolescents, characteristics that have been associated with academic success, self-regulation, and self-control to avoid risk opportunities. The "village" phenomenon is central to promoting successful development among rural African American adolescents. The challenge for the field of prevention science is to harness and integrate important aspects of rural African American adolescents' village in preventive intervention programs to prevent or close the gap on various disparities addressed in our chapter.

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Chapter 13
Strengths-Based Educational Interventions in Rural Settings: Promoting Child Development Through Home–School Partnerships

Lisa L. Knoche and Amanda L. Witte

Children's early academic performance has significant and lasting implications for their future success; children who succeed early on are more likely to maintain positive outcomes well beyond high school graduation. For example, reading abilities in third grade are linked to reading skills in ninth grade, likelihood of high school graduation, as well as college attendance (Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, & Gwynne, 2010). Furthermore, notable gaps in academic achievement have been identified between ethnic minority students and their nonminority peers and are particularly persistent in rural communities (Fryer & Levitt, 2002; Graham & Provost, 2012). Thus, interventions implemented in educational settings are needed to support the academic and social success of rural children and rural ethnic minority children in particular. Educational research on effective strategies to promote students' social, emotional, and learning needs has burgeoned in recent years and resulted in the availability of numerous evidence-based interventions, curricula, and approaches accessible to schools and communities.

Educational interventions are influenced by the ecology of communities and schools in which they are implemented. Factors such as resource availability within schools and districts as well as district and community priorities, along with teacher educator perspectives and backgrounds, contribute to intervention effectiveness (Blase, Kiser, & Van Dyke, 2013). For racial/ethnic minority children and families residing in rural communities, these characteristics are particularly salient considerations for effectively executing interventions in school settings. This chapter focuses on instructional, behavioral, and social–emotional interventions for rural children and families, including rural minority families. Home–school partnership is emphasized as an essential intervention element, and intervention programs based on this

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principle, and implemented successfully in rural communities, are described. Finally, methodological challenges for intervention research in rural communities with minority children and families are outlined along with strategies to overcome the obstacles.

Rural Context and Educational Interventions

Unique characteristics of rural communities must be considered in identifying effective educational interventions to promote the academic and social success of children and youth. The landscape of rural communities and relevant characteristics of ethnic minority youth and families are described elsewhere in this volume [see Bratsch-Hines et al. (Chap. 9), Markstrom & Moilanen (Chap. 7), and Stein et al. (Chap. 3)]. Key highlights, including the (a) socioeconomic status of children and youth in rural communities, (b) educational background of families, and (c) availability of resources to support learning and development, are reviewed as they relate to educational practices and interventions.

Rural child poverty has been historically higher than urban child poverty (USDA, 2014). In 2012, 26.7 % of nonmetro children were living in poverty compared to 20.9 % of metro children (USDA, 2014). Ethnic minority children in rural communities are particularly likely to experience poverty—more than half of American Indian/Alaska Native and Black students in remote rural areas attended high-poverty schools (NCES, 2013). These students are at significant risk for dire developmental outcomes, including school failure, learning disabilities, behavior problems, and health impairments (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Wood, 2003).

Moreover, for families in rural communities, the educational level of parents is often lower than their counterparts in urban communities, particularly for families in poverty (Garrett-Peters & Mills-Koonce, 2013). Rural children are less likely to have parents with at least a bachelor's degree, and rural Black children are significantly more likely than non-rural Black children to have parents without a high school diploma (Grace et al., 2006). Lower levels of parental education result in fewer options for employment in communities that already have limited economies and few high-paying jobs. Parents may be forced to travel greater distances from home to obtain employment and experience a greater likelihood of unpredictable and inconsistent work schedules (see Bratsch-Hines et al., Chap. 9). Furthermore, lower levels of parent education have been associated with fewer verbal exchanges with children (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2003). Thus, rural parents with low educational attainment may be less available for engagement with children at home and with school, thereby increasing the need for educational intervention.

Finally, children in rural communities often have less access to resources that promote healthy development (Vernon-Feagans, Gallagher, & Kainz, 2008). Museums, libraries, and other cultural activities are limited. High-quality preschool options are also generally less available. Rural children are 60 % more likely to be

placed in special education in kindergarten than their non-rural counterparts (Grace et al., 2006). Furthermore, special services for children (e.g., mental health supports) are often unavailable, inaccessible, or unacceptable (DeLeon, Wakefield, & Hagglund, 2003). If children require services beyond the school setting, rural families may have to travel significant distances to access necessary services, with little or no public transportation.

Given the landscape of rural communities, ethnic minority students can benefit from additional educational supports provided as part of the school setting. Interventions that address rural minority students' individual needs and capitalize on rural communities' unique strengths and resources are needed. Moreover, because schools are often a vital source of influence and connection in rural communities (Lyson, 2002), interventions that target the partnership between family and school staff hold particular promise. Thus, improving and supporting the way in which ethnic minority children, youth, and their families interact with schools—and the way schools interact and engage with families—is critical.

Home–School Partnership: An Essential Feature of Educational Intervention

Several environmental systems, including schools, families, and the immediate communities in which children reside, influence children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and support the acquisition of numerous developmental skills necessary for children's future success in school and in life (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Targeting the development environments (i.e., home and school) and the interplay between those environments is critical for the success of educational interventions. Attention to this interplay will strengthen educational and parenting practices and can maximize specialized interventions for children who need them.

The importance of fostering coordination between home and school is well supported by the literature. Children develop and learn within multiple contexts, and development is optimal when effective connections and continuities among these major systems are created (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). The positive influence of parent involvement in schooling on children's academic outcomes is well established (for an overview, see Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008; Fan & Chen, 2001), and numerous studies demonstrate parents are more likely to participate in their children's schooling when they have high-quality relationships with teachers (e.g., Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). Moreover, parental participation and cooperation in their child's educational affairs is related to several important behavioral outcomes: increased student achievement, stronger self-regulatory skills, fewer discipline problems, better study habits, more positive attitudes toward school, improved homework habits and work orientation, and higher educational aspirations (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Links between quality of home–school partnerships and positive academic outcomes also

have been demonstrated for English language learners (ELLs) (Panferov, 2010). Benefits to students persist after students' abilities and SES are taken into account.

Home–School Partnership in Rural Schools Parent involvement in schools has also been strongly correlated with positive student outcomes in rural settings (Bauch, 2001; Keith, Keith, Quirk, Cohen-Rosenthal, & Franzese, 1996). A longitudinal investigation of rural migrant families revealed that children whose families received an educational intervention designed to increase home–school partnerships demonstrated higher language scores relative to students in a control group (St. Clair, Jackson, & Zweiback, 2012). In a study of rural African American youth, maternal involvement in children's education was linked directly to children's academic competence (Brody, Stoneman, & Flor, 1995). Moreover, a study of students in rural Appalachia found that successful school efforts to involve parents were linked to higher rates of student college enrollment (King, 2012).

Unfortunately, high-quality relationships between home and school in rural settings and meaningful involvement of rural family members in educational decision-making are often more rhetoric than reality. Compared to non-rural settings, actual family involvement with their children's education is lacking in rural settings (Prater, Bermudez, & Owens, 1997). Rural parents have been found to talk with their children about school programs, attend school meetings, and interact with teachers *less frequently* relative to their counterparts in suburban and urban schools (Prater et al., 1997). Furthermore, when surveyed, only 54 % of rural parents reported being satisfied in their interactions with school staff (NCES, 2007).

Home–School Partnership and Rural Minority Families Rural minority families are one of the most underserved groups in the US; they not only have limited access to educational interventions, health, and mental health services (Probst, Moore, Glover, & Samuels, 2004) but also often lack access to the most basic resources such as reliable and safe food sources (Bauer, 2012). Family–school partnerships represent one especially promising avenue to promote the healthy and positive development of rural minority children. In contrast to expert-driven family intervention models, collaborative partnership interventions are *culturally sensitive* (responsive to values and interaction styles of families), *intentional* (focused on specific objectives), *developmentally responsive* (appropriate to children's needs across the developmental spectrum), and *strengths-based* (aimed at building on family and child competencies rather than remediating identified deficits). Intervention strategies that capitalize on the strengths associated with strong family commitments and aspirations for children's success serve to enhance trust and increase access to educationally important outcomes in family-centered and culturally relevant ways (Gutierrez & Garcia, 1989).

Despite its promise, barriers to family–school partnerships can be particularly pronounced for rural minority students. Rural minority families are less likely than their rural Caucasian counterparts to have strong home–school partnerships (Valdes, 1996). Smith, Stern, and Shatrova (2008) determined that, even though Hispanic parents care about their children's education and want to be involved, they often feel alienated by their rural community schools. Parents report feeling excluded,

intimidated, and demeaned by their children's teachers (Shim, 2013). Teachers of ethnic minority students in rural communities report similar concerns about home–school partnerships. For example, in a school where more than 25 % of the students identify as American Indian, teachers identified the lack of parent involvement as one of their schools' three most serious problems (Freeman & Fox, 2005).

There are multiple potential reasons for the disconnected relationships between rural minority families and school staff. Lack of mutual understanding can lead to conflict between parents and teachers (Epstein, 1995). For example, cultural differences in conflict resolution and level of formality in communication have been shown to inhibit partnerships between American Indian parents and Caucasian teachers (Mackety & Linder-Vanberschot, 2008). Perhaps due to decades of institutionalized racism, rural African American families report being hesitant to partner with Caucasian professionals (Murry, Heflinger, Suiter, & Brody, 2011) and are wary of sharing personal family information with educators that may result in their children being negatively labeled (Mukolo & Heflinger, 2011). Teachers, for their part, report feeling undereducated in multiculturalism, which impacts their ability to effectively partner with ethnic minority parents (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010). Both parents and teachers report that language barriers limit their ability to partner with one another (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000). School staffs' lack of familiarity with culturally and linguistically diverse families, as well as parents' lack of familiarity with US schools and in some cases their undocumented legal status, can impede effective parent–teacher partnerships (Waterman & Harry, 2008).

Despite the challenges to home–school partnerships for ethnic minority students, effective strategies are being identified and adopted by many rural communities (Waterman & Harry, 2008). One program designed to increase teacher cultural awareness proved effective in increasing teacher cultural knowledge and resulted in a reduction of home–school conflict for immigrant Latino students (Rothstein-Fisch, Trumbull, & Garcia, 2009); furthermore, initial qualitative reports from teachers indicate the program increases student school attendance, homework completion, and time on task (Trumbull, Diaz-Meza, Hasan, & Rothstein-Fisch, 2001). Families of ELL students often express confusion about school culture in the US (Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008), and efforts to educate parents about school practices, as well as adapting school practices to be more culturally responsive, can lead to increased home–school partnerships for ELL students' families (Waterman, 2006). Furthermore, efforts to communicate school information in a culturally responsive way through interpreters and translated written documents as well as offering English language classes to parents can increase partnership with the families of ELL students. Alternatively, adding staff that speak the home language of families can promote parent involvement in school activities and has been linked to increased literacy skills in elementary school students (Tang, Dearing, & Weiss, 2012).

Summary Educational interventions implemented with home–school partnerships as a foundation are mutually beneficial for schools, families, and ultimately the targeted children and youth. Multiple studies have shown positive benefits of such

partnerships for rural minority students and families. Given the influence of schools in rural communities, the facilitation of family–school partnerships is particularly important for ethnic minority children and families.

Review of Select Intervention Programs

To show how home–school partnerships can be facilitated via educational interventions in practice, three intervention programs are described below: *Getting Ready* (Sheridan, Marvin, Knoche, & Edwards, 2008), *Rural Language and Literacy Connections* (*Rural LLC*; Knoche & Raikes, 2007), and *Conjoint Behavioral Consultation* (*CBC*; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). This selection is not intended to be an exhaustive list but rather a sampling of partnership-based educational interventions that have been implemented successfully with ethnic minority families in rural communities.

The Getting Ready Intervention

The *Getting Ready* intervention was designed to provide an integrated, ecological approach to early intervention and school readiness programs that is research based, family centered, and collaborative in nature (Sheridan, et al. 2008). The intervention is constructed upon the foundational belief that optimal school readiness for children and their families occurs through the development of positive relationships within the multiple interacting ecological systems of the home (i.e., parent–child relationships) and between the home and other supportive environments (i.e., parent–professional partnerships). It focuses on changing children's developmental trajectories and narrowing the achievement gap by strengthening relationships between parents and children and between families and early childhood teachers. Through *Getting Ready*, families are empowered to participate actively in their children's education.

The intervention is a universal program appropriate for all children, but can be implemented with a targeted group of children, depending on program need. Rather than representing an "add-on" to current services, *Getting Ready* is integrated within established early childhood programs (such as Early Head Start/Head Start and publically funded preschool programs), thereby augmenting existing programming. Teachers in early childhood programs learn strategies for establishing and maintaining relationships with parents and supporting the parent–child relationship. The *Getting Ready* intervention integrates principles of *triadic intervention* (McCollum & Yates, 1994) as a means of supporting the parent–child relationship and *collaborative (conjoint) consultation models* (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008) in an effort to guide the parent–teacher partnership. Through teachers' intentional and strategic efforts, parents are supported in forming warm and sensitive interactions with their

child, supporting their child's emerging autonomy and self-regulation, and participating actively as partners in their child's learning in culturally comfortable and responsive ways. All of these features have been shown to positively influence academic readiness (deRuiter & van Ijzendoorn, 1993; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006). *Getting Ready* is also designed to strengthen parent–teacher partnerships through joint goal setting, planning, and implementation of learning strategies across home and school to facilitate continuity for children across settings. The Getting Ready strategies, in concert with the established early childhood programs, strengthen the ongoing interactions with families in support of child and family school readiness.

In most early childhood programs, teachers and families have multiple opportunities to interact, including home visits, child drop-off/pickup, parent–teacher conferences, and/or family events at school or in the community. It is during these interactions that the *Getting Ready* intervention takes place. Teachers share and discuss observations about children with their families and affirm parents' competence in supporting or advancing children's abilities. Furthermore, they discuss developmental expectations and appropriate targets by sharing developmental information and focusing parents' attention on their children's strengths. Teachers and parents also brainstorm collaboratively around problems or issues related to children's social, motor, cognitive, or communicative development and learning. Teachers ask parents for their reflections and ideas related to their children's recent learning needs and interests. When appropriate, teachers make suggestions for possible modifications to intervention plans. For example, teachers might suggest new learning opportunities (e.g., following directions during mealtime as well as at bedtime, practicing color names while at the grocery store) and may also interact with the child to serve as a model for the parent. Teachers also observe the naturally occurring parent–child interactions and provide feedback to draw the parent's attention to specific parental actions that resulted in positive responses from their children or provide suggestions when necessary. Teachers also support families in noting progress toward developmental targets and help determine necessary learning opportunities to support the child's ongoing development.

The *Getting Ready* intervention readily accommodates to the unique contexts of families in rural communities, including ethnic minority families. By design, *Getting Ready* includes teachers and families in regular collaboration to ensure that all family engagement activities are implemented in a culturally responsive manner and incorporate the strengths and priorities of families. The "curriculum of the home" (i.e., the relationships, practices, and patterns of life in the home that influence a child's development) is considered in all interactions (Redding, 1997). Thus, unique features of the child's homelife (including ethnic values and practices) that were previously unknown or underestimated by the teacher (e.g., role of extended family in promoting children's learning) are validated and utilized in instructional planning and goal setting.

Efficacy studies of the *Getting Ready* intervention indicate the intervention is effective. In these studies, classrooms were randomly assigned to receive either the *Getting Ready* intervention or no intervention. Parents who experienced the *Getting*

Ready intervention were significantly more warm and sensitive in interactions with their children and more supportive of their children's autonomy and offered more developmentally appropriate guidance, directives, and learning supports as compared to parents in the "business as usual" control group (Knoche et al., 2012). Additionally, preschool children involved in the *Getting Ready* intervention consistently showed significantly greater gains in social–emotional and behavioral functioning, including a reduction in observed overall activity level over time compared to children in comparison classrooms (Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Bovaird, & Kupzyk, 2010; Sheridan, Knoche, et al., 2014). Similarly, these children showed advances in language skills at rates better than children whose parents did not experience *Getting Ready* (Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011). Nearly 50 % of families involved in this study were of ethnic minority status, and all resided in rural communities.

Rural Language and Literacy Connections

Another universal early childhood intervention with promising evidence is *Rural Language and Literacy Connections* (*Rural LLC*). *Rural LLC* is an Early Reading First[1] program designed to create an intensive, literacy-based early learning program for rural, low-income preschool children. *Rural LLC* is grounded in a strong preschool curriculum and rich environmental supports in literacy and language, as well as literacy supports for supplemental home and childcare settings to enhance children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge The intervention focuses on early language and literacy skills because they are strongly correlated with later reading success (NELP, 2008).

The primary emphasis of *Rural LLC* is on center-based preschool settings, but a secondary emphasis on supplemental child care settings and homes was necessary and innovative given the particular milieu of children's everyday lives in the rural community being served. The intentional focus on these two levels (preschool and home/child care) maximizes language opportunities and provides an intensive experience designed to put children at risk for educational failure on successful reading trajectories. Research has shown evidence that the combination of high-quality language and literacy experiences (Barone, 2011; Hart & Risley, 1995) along with family involvement is advantageous to young children, including those who are dual language learners (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Jump, & Ortiz, 2010). Explicit and integrated literacy-based interactions between teachers and children, between parents and children, and between the home and school enhance children's learning opportunities across all settings children encounter daily (Pinto, Pessanha, & Aguiar, 2013; Tabors, Snow, & Dickinson, 2001). Preschool children's interactions

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[1] Early Reading First was part of the "Good Start, Grow Smart" initiative authorized under Title I, Part B, of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, Public Law 107–110. Early Reading First projects were funded for 3-year periods from 2002 through 2009.

with, and participation in their environment (e.g., home, school, and community), contribute to learning; therefore, ecologically focused interventions are needed to maximize children's literacy development (Gonzalez & Uhing, 2008).

Families who live in rural communities have unique needs that must be considered in the development, design, and execution of optimal early childhood services. In the agricultural community involved in *Rural LLC*, many parents were employed in meat packing plants that operated in three round-the-clock shifts. Parents often worked more than one job. Additionally, 10 % of families were migrant and left the community during the summer for agricultural jobs. As a result, families often required supplemental childcare and language and literacy services beyond the typical preschool day to provide equitable services for all children. Thus, integration across the multiple settings children encountered on a daily basis (home, school, child care) was particularly salient in this rural town.

Environmental enrichment was a focus of the *Rural LLC* intervention; the literacy environments in preschool classrooms, supplemental child care settings, and children's homes were enhanced through the provision of materials and information on literacy teaching strategies. As part of the *Rural LLC* intervention, preschool classroom teachers implemented scientifically based reading curricula, *Opening the World of Learning* (Schickedanz, Dickinson, & Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 2005). Teachers received ongoing, intensive professional development in curriculum implementation as well as in evidence-based practices for supporting children's language and literacy skills, including the skills of dual language learners. Child care providers and families were also trained and supported in implementing a dialogic reading curriculum, *Read Together, Talk Together*, to support children's skills (Pearson Early Learning, 2006). Additional activities were implemented to encourage linkages across home and school. These included family literacy events held twice a month, where families visited the school to engage in parent–child activities to support skill acquisition, and monthly "family connection" newsletters. Not all children in *Rural LLC* experienced the full ecological intervention (home and/or childcare enrichments in addition to classroom-based curriculum and enhancements); children either experienced the full intervention or classroom only.

Results of *Rural LLC* were positive for dual language learners who experienced the intervention (Knoche, Kupzyk, & Plata-Potter, 2011). For this group of 185 preschool children, 73.5 % experienced Spanish as a primary language at home; 26.5 % experienced English. The majority of parents (62.2 %) reported earning less than a high school diploma, and 64.8 % were born outside of the USA. Sixty-one percent of dual language learners participated in classroom-based activities alone; 39 % participated in the ecological programming across settings. These groups were not predetermined but identified post hoc based on actual experience. Demographic characteristics across groups were not statistically significantly different, and baseline scores were equivalent. After controlling for baseline scores, children who experienced the full ecological intervention had significantly higher alphabet knowledge skills at the end of preschool than children who experienced classroom-based programming alone. No differences between groups were identified on oral language, phonological awareness, or print awareness measures.

Additionally, children who experienced the ecological intervention had significantly higher rates of attendance during preschool than children who experienced classroom-based programming only. Notably, some gains persisted through kindergarten particularly for dual language learners. At the end of kindergarten, dual language learners who had participated in the full ecological intervention were less likely to be at risk on a measure of letter naming fluency, relative to same age peers.

The ecological, cross-setting focus of *Rural LLC* was well suited for preschool children in this rural, agricultural community, particularly ethnic minority children. While the intervention was not highly individualized, the breadth of services accommodated the needs of the diverse children and families who were involved in programming. The continuity of educational supports across settings supported children's literacy skill development during preschool and maintenance of skills through kindergarten, with particular benefits for dual language learners.

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

A third partnership-based educational intervention with empirical support in rural schools is Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (*CBC*; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008), a structured indirect, individualized intervention focused on reducing child behavior problems, increasing child academic and adaptive skills, *and* enhancing family–school partnerships to promote student functioning across systems. *CBC* is designed for students who need additional support beyond building-level and class-wide behavior management systems and usually targets 1 to 3 children in a classroom. It features data-based problem-solving and collaborative, consistent implementation of behavioral strategies across home and school settings. The *CBC* problem-solving model is conducted through collaborative interactions between parents and teachers. Although *CBC* has only recently been tested in rural communities, it holds promise as an effective intervention for rural students, families, and schools.

CBC promotes a partnership model that creates opportunities for parents and teachers to work together around a common interest (i.e., supporting student success) and to build upon and promote capabilities and strengths of family members and school personnel. During the *CBC* process, parents and teachers serve as joint consultees and attend meetings facilitated by a consultant. Under the guidance of the consultant, parents and teachers identify, define, analyze, and treat students' individual educational problems. The *CBC* process typically includes three to four meetings and lasts 8–12 weeks (see Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008 for a description of *CBC* stages and objectives).

CBC is an evidence-based intervention that fosters family–school partnerships and ameliorates student academic and behavioral problems (Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008). Randomized trials conducted in urban and suburban settings reveal that students who received *CBC* demonstrated greater increases in adaptive behaviors (e.g., social skills, leadership skills, and study skills) relative to the control group

(Sheridan et al., 2012) and parents who received *CBC* reported significant increases in the quality of the family–school relationship as compared to parents in a control condition (Power et al., 2012). Furthermore, teachers who received *CBC* reported significantly greater improvement in their relationships with parents than teachers in the control group (Sheridan et al., 2012).

An ongoing randomized controlled trial is specifically investigating the effects of *CBC* on behavioral and social–emotional outcomes of rural students who have or are at risk of developing behavioral disorders. Participants include kindergarten through third grade students attending rural Midwestern schools and their parents and teachers. Preliminary analyses of the data reveal the promising effects of *CBC* for students, parents, and teachers (Sheridan, Holmes, Witte, Coutts, & Dent, 2014). Teachers in the *CBC* group reported significantly fewer negative student behaviors and greater student adaptive skills relative to the control group. Furthermore, teachers and parents demonstrated greater levels of communication and expressed increased competence in problem-solving compared to the control group. These initial results suggest that the positive effects of *CBC* found in urban and suburban schools are consistent for students in rural schools.

CBC has the potential to address challenges to home–school partnerships in rural settings for ethnic minority families by providing access to effective instructional and behavioral supports, increasing meaningful interactions and communication between parents and teachers, and fostering shared responsibilities for parents and teachers who work as partners. *CBC* focuses on and enhances strengths of all parties and strengthens relationships through cooperative, goal-directed, solution-oriented services. Furthermore the partnership-building strategies used by *CBC* consultants may effectively address family–school partnership barriers unique to rural minority families such as the negative perceptions parents and teachers have of each other based on generational histories, cultural mistrust, and lack of communication.

Methodological Challenges and Solutions in Intervention Research

While other researchers have described methodological issues associated with conducting research with ethnic minority populations (e.g., APA, 2000; Padilla, 2004), there are additional considerations when engaging in intervention research with ethnic minority children and families in rural communities. Careful consideration must be given to (a) intervention development, (b) research design and measure selection, (c) recruitment of sites, (d) recruitment and retention of participants, and (e) intervention implementation and evaluation. Each stage of the intervention research paradigm can be challenged if the strengths, needs, and priorities of all interested stakeholders (e.g., researcher, community, school, family, and child) are not taken into account.

Intervention Development

High-quality educational interventions are developed through the careful consideration of strong theory. Intervention researchers are encouraged to carefully determine models of change and potential moderators and mediators of intervention effects based on theory and available empirical evidence. Ethnic group differences should be investigated when there is a theoretically driven rationale for expecting an intervention to operate differently across different ethnic groups within rural communities. In some instances, efficacy of the treatment might be affected by ethnicity or related characteristics (i.e., language), but this might not always be the case.

Research Design and Measure Selection

After the careful development of an educational intervention, researchers identify the appropriate research design for determining intervention effectiveness. Pilot studies can be conducted to gather formative data used to modify the intervention and assessment instruments. Small samples are often sufficient for pilot studies and can be well suited to provide evidence of promising educational interventions designed to promote the development of ethnic minority children in rural communities.

As part of pilot studies, measures to assess intervention effectiveness are selected. The availability of reliable and valid measures to assess outcomes in rural, ethnic minority families is limited. The psychometric properties of many measures have not been established for all populations and are often unavailable in multiple languages. If measures are not available in needed languages, the researcher may be required to translate/back-translate existing measures and ensure measurement equivalence. Selected instruments must also be sensitive to change in the key constructs that are hypothesized to be affected by the intervention. These measurement obstacles are a challenge for all researchers, including those who are evaluating educational interventions in rural areas.

Following completion of pilot investigations, intervention research generally progresses to randomized controlled trials (RCTs) wherein participants are randomly assigned to a condition wherein they receive the intervention (treatment) or do not receive the intervention (comparison/control). Randomization can be at the level of the child, classroom, school, or community. In any case, RCTs generally require a substantial sample size. A sufficient number of children, classrooms, or schools within a single rural community may be unavailable to meet the sample size requirements for drawing statistical conclusions. Thus, researchers must recruit participants across multiple rural communities. Appropriate sampling stratification is needed to account for community-level characteristics, which can be challenging and costly to accomplish.

Recruitment of Sites

While there are benefits to school districts for participating in intervention research partnerships (e.g., professional development for staff, access to student performance data, and supplementary services for children), there are also necessary concessions. For some school districts, the realities of participating in randomized studies are intimidating. Administrators are sometimes reluctant to have staff working in different conditions, with different sets of expectations and levels of support. Furthermore, administrators want all children to receive the benefit of additional services that will be offered as part of the active intervention, particularly when implementing interventions for students with specific needs.

To overcome these challenges, researchers must establish partnerships with participating schools. In the context of research partnerships, common needs, concerns, and priorities can be identified and subsequently addressed. Interventions must be designed for use by certain people in specific contexts (Fraser & Galinsky, 2010). Because each school has a unique context, consideration must be given to the fit between intervention and school before an intervention can be appropriately implemented. School district partners are valuable stakeholders who can provide important information on context that will inform intervention implementation. Creating partnerships between researchers and local agencies requires long-term commitment and effort, but by investing in strong partnerships, researchers will have a greater ability to conduct ethical, efficient research with rural minority communities.

Recruitment and Retention of Participants

Effective research participant engagement includes both recruitment into an intervention study and retention for the duration of the project (Yancey, Ortega, & Kumanyika, 2006). Reservations about confidentiality, fears of being judged, and distrust of outsiders are particularly salient in rural communities and may hinder participation in intervention research (Beloin & Peterson, 2000; Owens, Richerson, Murphy, Jageleweski, & Rossi, 2007).

Families may have concerns about confidentiality. Educational interventions are aimed at students experiencing a deficit or delay. Potential participants may fear that family members, friends, and colleagues will discover their children's need for intervention or other private information given the multiple relationships rural community members often have with each other (e.g., serve together on committees, attend the same church) (Larson & Corrigan, 2010; Sawyer, Gale, & Lambert, 2006). This concern about confidentiality held true in a qualitative study of African American families where participants expressed concerns about "putting our business in the street" and "airing dirty laundry" (Murry et al., 2011).

Additionally, for many rural families, there is stigma associated with identification of special needs. The cultural emphasis on self-reliance in rural communities

can discourage individuals from participating in intervention research aimed at alleviating a disability or mental health concern (Osborn, 2012). For rural parents of children with mental and behavioral health concerns, a related consideration is shame about themselves (e.g., being judged as a bad parent) or shame for their children (Dempster, Wildman, & Keating, 2012). Some researchers have suggested that rural ethnic minorities may be particularly prone to negative views of children's mental health services (Mukolo & Heflinger, 2011), thereby diminishing participation.

To help overcome these challenges, it is critical to make recruitment materials available in a consumer-friendly, accessible format in the family's language of choice. Having translated materials reviewed and potentially modified by a key stakeholder within the community helps ensure that information is clear and culturally appropriate. A personalized, signed letter is an effective tool for recruiting ethnic minority participants (Yancey et al., 2006) when in-person recruitment is not possible. Using participants to recruit other subjects for the study and relying on word of mouth have been documented as effective ways to recruit rural Latinos to participate in research studies (Domenech Rodriguez, Rodriguez, & Davis, 2006). It stands to reason that this strategy would be effective for recruiting participants of various ethnic backgrounds. Asking local participants to inform other members of their communities about the intervention research could normalize participation in the research, thereby reducing the stigma associated with it. After participants are recruited, random assignment can reduce selection bias and help ensure group equivalence. The appropriateness of a snowballing technique for recruitment into an intervention study, however, will depend on the nature of the educational intervention. For example, if a random sample of the school community is required, then such an approach might not be appropriate as it would yield a biased sample (e.g., only students with families in PTA might express interest in involvement). It is essential that the eligible participants meet the inclusion criteria for the intervention, and then randomization occurs to ensure equivalence.

Establishing partnerships between research institutions and rural communities may provide solutions to recruiting participants. For education researchers, these partnerships will commonly be established with school districts. Additional organizations can also be important. Given the isolation of rural communities, and paucity of services available for ethnic minority families, it may be impractical for researchers to develop partnerships in every community. However, researchers may be able to identify organizations such as university extension agencies, tribal centers, teacher professional development resources, businesses, and churches that serve clusters of rural communities. Forging partnerships with agencies that have existing relationships with communities can provide important points of entry for researchers and access to research participants. The partnerships might also provide access to key community members who can assist with recruitment and bridge the gap between potential participants and "outsiders" (researchers). Having a trustworthy recruiter from inside the community, even if not ethnically matched, is most effective (Yancey et al., 2006) in recruiting minority families.

Intervention Implementation and Evaluation

Once students have been identified for involvement, the implementation of the intervention and research/evaluation protocol is initiated. At this point, additional challenges often arise. Staffing of intervention projects in rural communities is a challenge. First, local intervention agents (e.g., coaches for teachers or mental health consultants in classrooms/schools) and qualified data collection staff must be identified. However, resources in rural communities and schools are limited, and specialized school staff who might be needed for intervention implementation, including school psychologists and special educators, tend to work across several districts, making them unavailable on a regular basis (McLeskey, Huebner, & Cummings, 1986). Similarly, bilingual educators and multicultural specialists are often in short supply in rural communities (Batt, 2008). Even when research associates in the rural community are available, they cannot avoid contact with research participants in community settings (Osborn, 2012). On the other hand, when staff reside outside the local community and are easily able to preserve privacy, they face difficulties associated with transportation and travel time.

Staff supervision is also a challenge. Performance must be monitored to ensure fidelity to the intervention model and data collection procedures; therefore, ongoing support and training are essential. Particularly when working in a highly individualized, partnership-based intervention, support is needed. Providing this via distance can be a challenge, and it is impractical for staff to drive several hundred miles for short support sessions.

Collecting data in rural areas is another challenge. Recent school consolidations have increased the distance from homes to schools for many rural families (Phillips, Harper, & Gamble, 2007) adding to the burden of collecting interview and observational data in home and school settings. Transportation is a challenge; rural families in poverty are less likely to have access to a reliable vehicle. Long distances between home and school and lack of transportation inhibit parents' involvement in school activities (Weiss & Correa, 1996). To engage in home–school partnership interventions, additional travel to schools is often needed which may reduce participants' level of participation, even if compensated.

Though many challenges are inherent in the implementation and evaluation of educational interventions in rural communities with ethnic minority children and families, there are strategies to overcome these obstacles. Generally, home–school partnership interventions are individualized and therefore allow for some flexibility in implementation that naturally takes into account differences in family strengths, needs, and priorities. For example, if transportation is a primary concern, the team can work out alternatives to support engagement of the parent in the problem-solving process or in their method for supporting children's skills. To promote participation, researchers must build in contingencies for travel, offer mileage reimbursement, or be willing to go to family homes for data collection. Importantly, distance technology is emerging as a promising solution to some of the challenges of conducting research in isolated, rural communities. Technology-aided educational interventions

and data collection methods may allow researchers to implement and evaluate interventions remotely (see Bratsch-Hines et al., Chap. 9). This technology would reduce travel costs and would allow intervention and research staff to be centrally located and serve multiple sites from a distance.

Conclusions

Rural communities provide a unique environmental context for implementing educational interventions for rural minority children and their families. In order to be effective, instructional, behavioral, and social–emotional interventions must take into account the needs, challenges, and strengths of rural children, youth, and families. Home–school partnership-based interventions are one feasible and promising approach for supporting the academic and social success of children and youth. Such interventions have been implemented in rural communities with ethnic minority children and families and have demonstrated initial efficacy; additional research on effectiveness is needed and must be the focus of future investigations.

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Chapter 14
Promoting Supportive Contexts for Minority Youth in Low-Resource Rural Communities: The SEALS Model, Directed Consultation, and the Scouting Report Approach

Thomas W. Farmer and Jill V. Hamm

Across the United States, there are persistent concerns about the educational adaptation and attainment of minority youth from low-resource backgrounds (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Milner, 2013). While efforts to address the educational experiences of minority youth living in poverty have centered on metropolitan areas, many rural schools are in poor districts that serve high concentrations of minority youth who experience a variety of challenges that adversely impact their academic achievement and educational outcomes (Roscigno & Crowley, 2001; Rural School and Community Trust, 2009). On this count, rural impoverished youth have been described as the forgotten children because relatively little research has focused on their unique needs and difficulties (Save the Children, 2002). Further, recent demographic research suggests the plight of rural minority youth appears to be progressively dire as current population trends show poverty levels decreasing in many rural areas, but increasing in rural school districts that contain high concentrations of students from racial and ethnic minorities (Lichter & Johnson, 2007). Over 80 % of poor rural black children lived in high-poverty counties, and two thirds of poor Hispanic children lived in counties with poverty rates exceeding 20 %.

Reflecting this issue, the Rural School and Community Trust (2009) has identified the Rural Trust 900 (RT 900) to delineate the 900 poorest rural school districts in the United States. As a group, the RT 900 have child poverty rates that exceed 37 % (which is higher than the rate for many urban areas) and serves over 1.3 million children.

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Many of these districts are in rural areas in the South and serve communities where racism and economic stratification result in the clustering of high concentrations of minority youth into schools with few resources to meet students' academic and behavioral needs (see also Duncan, 2001; Farmer, Dadisman, et al., 2006). To illustrate the importance of this issue, a study of adequate yearly progress (AYP) in rural schools found that approximately 30 % of rural low-income schools (predominantly in the South) did not achieve AYP; of those schools, substantial proportions did not meet requirements for low-income students (49 % of schools failing to make AYP) and African American students (37.5 % of schools failing to make AYP) (Farmer, Leung, et al., 2006).

There is clearly a need for research and intervention programs that focus on minority youth from rural schools within high-poverty communities. In this chapter, we discuss this need by summarizing research on the developmental and educational contexts experienced by minority youth in poor rural areas and the implications of these contexts for the delivery of interventions to promote students' educational achievement and attainment. Building upon this background, we present the Supporting Early Adolescent Learning and Social Success (SEALS) model, directed consultation, and the scouting report approach as a comprehensive framework to bridge the resources and needs of specific rural schools with evidence-based strategies that are adapted to the features of the local context. We provide a brief review of the use of the SEALS model and the directed consultation approach to support teachers in their efforts to enhance the school adjustment of early adolescents in rural low-resource schools, and we conclude with a discussion of research needs to promote the academic success of rural minority youth from backgrounds that may constrain their educational opportunities and outcomes.

The Educational and Developmental Context of Rural Minority Youth

The term "rural" has been defined and operationalized in many ways and refers to a broad and diverse range of communities, schools, and individuals (Arnold, Biscoe, Farmer, Robertson, & Shapley, 2007; Sherwood, 2000). Although over 30 % of public school districts and nearly 20 % of students in the United States are described as rural (Johnson & Strange, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011), there are considerable differences within this group in terms of cultural, economic, ethnic, geographic, geophysical, and social characteristics. The expansive heterogeneity of rural communities makes it untenable to establish "one-size-fits-all" educational policies and practices that are relevant for all rural districts or schools (Howley, 2004; Kannapel & DeYoung, 1999; Stephens, 1992). However, rural views of the purpose of education tend to differ from those of metropolitan communities, and there is a need to keep a focus on what is "rural" in research that is

conducted in rural communities (Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, & Dean, 2005; Howley, 2004). Therefore, while there are many differences among rural school districts, there are shared values, common experiences, and similar concerns that form a distinct rural perspective that must be considered in rural education research. Even with community-based schools that are closely tied to the values and needs of the local community, and a strong sense of commitment among residents to the community and its youth, low economic resources limit the capacity of schools to provide the kinds of educational and extracurricular resources necessary to support youths' successful school adjustment (Vernon-Feagans, Gallagher, & Kainz, 2010).

Further, during two decades of conducting exploratory, intervention development, and efficacy research studies in rural communities, we have found common issues and themes that impact the delivery, implementation, and effectiveness of professional development and intervention approaches with rural schools, particularly in low-resource districts with high concentrations of minority youth. Building from our experiences, we established the directed consultation and scouting report approach as a way to be responsive to the intervention needs of rural schools. Therefore, we briefly examine key issues and considerations that went into the development of directed consultation and the scouting report approach.

Factors that Constrain Rural Minority Youths' Educational Experiences, Achievement, and Outcomes

Low economic resources in rural communities constrain the educational opportunities and growth of students in multiple ways. Children who grow up in persistent poverty often lack important foundational skills when they enter school, are at increased risk for falling behind, and tend to sustain lower rates of academic achievement (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997). Also, low economic resources limit rural schools' capacity to provide students with adequate educational materials and access to important learning opportunities including tutoring, remedial and special education services, enrichment activities, advanced coursework, and extracurricular activities that are associated with educational success (Lee & McIntyre, 2000; Save the Children, 2002). Furthermore, residential segregation and constraints on community resources and social capital tend to limit rural minority students' exposure to activities and supports that promote productive school engagement and sustained academic achievement (Duncan, 2001; Rural School and Community Trust, 2009).

For example, in focus groups and surveys, parents and community stakeholders in impoverished rural areas report that racism, perceived lack of educational and career opportunities, and the lack of adequate career counseling and preparatory coursework all come together to constrain rural minority youths' academic engagement and their aspirations to complete high school and postsecondary training (Farmer, Dadisman, et al., 2006). Moreover, African American and Latino/Latina youth and youth from families experiencing economic hardship perceive more

barriers to their high school completion and their involvement in postsecondary education (Irvin, Byun, Meece, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2012). In this context, many low-resource rural schools have elevated levels of students who experience academic difficulties, perform poorly on standardized achievement tests, and are at risk for school failure, school dropout, and truncated educational attainment (Farmer, Hall, et al. 2011; Farmer, Irvin, et al., 2006; Farmer, Leung, et al., 2006; Irvin, 2012; Johnson & Strange, 2009; Save the Children, 2002).

The Heterogeneity of Strengths and Risks in Rural Minority Populations

In discussions of developmental and contextual risk, it is necessary to be careful not to view the impact of poverty as operating in the same manner for all minority youth growing up in impoverished areas. In conversations with parents, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders, we frequently hear the refrain that all of our children are talented in some way, but many do not have the resources or opportunities for their individual talents to take root, and even the students who do well in school are likely to experience constraints that keep them from doing as well as they could (Farmer, Dadisman, et al., 2006). A consistent message from principals in poor rural districts is that they need assistance across the board that includes supporting struggling students who are at risk for school failure and dropout, engaging and promoting opportunities for students who are interested in vocational careers, and providing enrichment opportunities and advanced coursework for students who aim to attend college.

The diversity of abilities and needs in poor rural communities has been demonstrated in person-oriented studies of students' competencies, school adjustment, and educational outcomes. Building from a holistic developmental synthesis perspective (e.g., Magnusson & Cairns, 1996) which posits that students' academic, behavioral, and social competencies tend to impact each other, person-oriented approaches identify distinct groups of students who share similar characteristics in key domains that are expected to be related to outcomes of interest. Youth characterized as high competence show high levels of teacher-rated competencies across the academic, behavioral, and social domains; youth characterized as average competence are in the normal or expected range for each of these domains; youth characterized as single risk have a significant problem in one domain but not the other; and youth characterized as multi-risk have significant difficulties across multiple domains (Farmer, Hall, et al., 2011).

These configurations have been differentially related to a range of youth outcomes. For example, youth in high-competence configurations tend to have high academic grades and standardized test scores, and youth in average competence configurations have better grades and general school adjustment than students in single- and multiple-risk configurations (Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Farmer, Irvin,

Sgammato, Dadisman, & Thompson, 2009). In contrast, youth in multiple-risk configurations have elevated rates of adjustment problems and poor outcomes including school failure, school dropout, teen parenthood, substance use, and involvement in crime (Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Estell et al. 2007; Farmer, Price, et al., 2004; Gest, Mahoney, & Cairns, 1999). Further, in an analysis of the community attachment and residential aspirations of a large and ethnically diverse sample of rural high school students, youth in high-competence configurations had a strong sense of community attachment and intended to stay in, or go to college and return to, their rural communities, whereas youth in multi-risk configurations indicated feelings of not belonging in their communities and desiring to move away even though they had relatively few skills or supports to leave (Petrin, Farmer, Meece, & Byun, 2011).

In research focusing specifically on minority youth in poor rural communities, studies of competence and risk suggest there is considerable heterogeneity in the school adjustment of this population. In an examination of risk in urban and rural African American adolescents, about 25 % of youth in each sample experienced a single risk, but youth in the urban sample (20 %) were more likely to be characterized by multiple risks as compared to youth in the rural sample (13 %) (Farmer, Price, et al., 2004). An important point of this work is that 60 % of rural minority youth were characterized as high or average competence (i.e., no significant academic, behavioral, or social risks). Affiliated investigations suggest that high and average competence youth have significantly higher levels of adjustment as compared to single- and multiple-risk youth. For example, as compared to single- and multiple-risk youth, rural minority youth with high competencies and low risks tend to have higher academic grades, significantly more parent-rated school and community strengths, more positive and productive social relationships, and fewer school discipline problems (Estell et al., 2007; Farmer et al., 2005; Farmer, Goforth, Leung, Clemmer, & Thompson, 2004; Farmer, Irvin et al., 2006).

Other research examining impoverished rural African American students' risk status in the middle school years and their end-of-year grades in the first year of high school has shown that regardless of risk, behavioral engagement (i.e., involvement in extracurricular activities) is associated with higher academic achievement in girls and lower aggression in boys at the end of ninth grade (Irvin, 2012). Further, this study suggests that psychological engagement (i.e., a sense of belonging and fitting in school) is linked to higher academic achievement in ninth grade for both girls and boys and to lower aggression for girls. Yet, as pointed out by parents, administrators, and community stakeholders, these communities have few resources to promote extracurricular opportunities to engage the varied talents and interests of students. Further, limited resources and the lack of adequate personnel reduce opportunities for the types of social, academic, and behavioral successes and student–adult relationships that are necessary to help sustain the productive school engagement of at-risk youth during their high school years (Farmer, Dadisman, et al., 2006).

Constraints on Teaching and Professional Development Supports in Rural Communities

Beyond the fact that rural schools in high-poverty communities tend to have a high concentration of children and adolescents who are at risk for educational difficulties, a lack of economic resources combined with geographic isolation make it difficult for schools in such communities to attract teachers with adequate credentials and to provide them with resources and training that is commensurate with the educational needs of their students (Dewees, 2000; National Education Association, 1998; Roscigno & Crowley, 2001). A critical concern for rural school districts nationwide is the recruitment and retention of teachers. Across the country, school administrators indicate they are having difficulty recruiting teachers to geographically remote communities and retaining them in these areas, particularly in communities that are experiencing significant economic decline and depopulation (Kuehl, 2006; Tompkins, 2006). Issues of low pay, lack of resources, and the challenges of teaching high concentrations of students with achievement difficulties impact the retention of high-quality experienced teachers in rural areas (Beeson & Strange, 2000; Lowe, 2006; Monk, 2007). Further, rural school districts have considerable difficulty attracting teachers in content areas of high demand (e.g., math, science, special education) (Berry, Petrin, Graville, & Farmer, 2011; Ludlow, 1998; Save the Children, 2002). Effective professional development and collegial teaming have been reported by rural teachers to be resources that enhance and support their professional efficacy as well as their desire to stay in their current role (Berry, 2012a). Well-designed professional development programs that provide meaningful training and supports for teachers may serve as important tools for promoting teacher retention in poor rural districts (Berry et al., 2011; Berry, 2012b).

Professional Development Needs Many rural schools experience difficulties in providing professional development opportunities because of issues related to geographical isolation (i.e., travel considerations, proximity, and access to training facilities), critical mass (i.e., the relative proportional cost of providing training to a small core of teachers), and limited personnel and financial resources (i.e., lack of funds to provide coverage for teachers, pay trainers to provide in-house professional development, or purchase training materials) (Save the Children, 2002; Seltzer & Himley, 1995). Further, many rural teachers lack opportunities to network and to work collaboratively with colleagues (Hillkirk, Chang, Oettinger, Saban, & Villet, 1998).

Supporting Diverse Learners With the increasing growth of diverse groups of learners, school districts throughout the nation are trying to identify new programmatic and instructional strategies to accommodate a broad range of learning needs in the classroom. While this issue spans both metropolitan and rural areas, it is particularly challenging for rural schools because of issues of critical mass, dynamic change in the population characteristics of whole communities, and the shortage of trained specialists in rural areas (Ludlow, 1998; Rural School and Community

Trust, 2009; Save the Children, 2002). For instance, between 1994 and 1997 in rural communities in Kansas, schools transitioned from having all students as fluent in English to having significant proportions of English language learners; few educators in these schools had coursework or other training in meeting the needs of English language learners (Murry & Herrera, 1998). In rural schools, many classrooms are composed of children with very diverse competencies and instructional needs, and teachers in these classrooms need professional development training and supports to help them address the broad range of academic, behavioral, and social abilities of their students.

The SEALS Model, Directed Consultation, and the Scouting Report Approach

To promote the adjustment and adaptation of early adolescents, our research team has established a universal intervention program (the SEALS model) that is designed to establish classroom contexts that support the adaptation and engagement of all students (Farmer et al., 2013). To promote teachers' use of the SEALS model, we established *directed consultation* as a professional development training framework. We are currently expanding the SEALS model to include a *scouting report approach*, which offers a systematic means to move beyond a universal approach to more tailored interventions that target distinct needs within a classroom for individual students.

The Supporting Early Adolescent Learning and Social Success (SEALS) Model

The SEALS model builds upon the basic research summarized above on rural students' school adjustment and upon pilot intervention development research conducted in low-resource rural schools with a high concentration of minority youth (e.g., Cadwallader et al., 2002; Farmer, Goforth, et al., 2006; Gut et al., 2004). More specifically, the SEALS model was established to create classroom and school contexts that simultaneously promote students' productive academic, behavioral, and social engagement. The conceptual foundations and components of the SEALS model have been previously described in detail (see Farmer et al., 2013). Here, a brief summary of key features of the SEALS program is provided.

Three critical aspects of the SEALS conceptual foundations should be considered. First, reflecting a *person-environment fit hypothesis* (Eccles, 1999), it is necessary to create contexts during the middle-level years (e.g., grades 6–8) that scaffold between the highly structured and supportive environments of elementary school and the self-directed and achievement-oriented ecology of high school.

This is accomplished by promoting classroom and school environments that are aligned with early adolescents' developmental needs (Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Eccles et al., 1993; Urdan, Midgley, & Wood, 1995). Second, based upon a *developmental science perspective*, which proposes that youth develop as an integrated whole (Magnusson & Cairns, 1996), the SEALS model is designed to be responsive to the bidirectional interplay between students' academic, behavioral, and social adjustment. Third, guided by an *ecological intervention* framework (Hobbs, 1982) which views adjustment difficulties as not resting in the individual or the environment but in the interactions between the two, the goal of the SEALS model is to simultaneously foster students' development of new competencies while promoting adaptive contexts that help to foster, support, and sustain their newly acquired skills.

Grounded in this theoretical framework, the SEALS model consists of three distinct intervention components created to collectively promote classroom environments that foster students' productive engagement and their adaptation to the increasing academic and social demands that emerge during the middle-level years. Although these components address distinct domains, they were designed to be used in a coordinated manner, and each component helps to guide and support the successful implementation of the other components. Reflecting a holistic model of adolescent development, these components operate as different subsystems within an integrated multifaceted program. The first component, *Social Dynamics Management*, is designed to enhance teachers' awareness of classroom social dynamics and to provide them with strategies to use this knowledge to foster natural social supports for academic engagement and positive classroom behavior (Farmer, 2000; Farmer, Lane, Lee, Hamm, & Lambert, 2012; Farmer, Lines, & Hamm, 2011; Hamm, Farmer, Dadisman, Gravelle, & Murray, 2011; Hamm, Hoffman, & Farmer, 2012). The second component, *Academic Engagement Enhancement*, involves providing teachers with an organizational framework, structured format, and series of approaches and strategies to promote all students' preparation for instructional tasks and sustained involvement in academic activities (Lee, 2006; Gut et al., 2004; Sutherland & Farmer, 2009). The third component, *Competence Enhancement Behavior Management* (Farmer, Goforth et al., 2006; Sutherland & Farmer, 2009), centers on proactive classroom management strategies that focus on using problems as an opportunity to teach students new skills, reinforcing appropriate classroom behaviors, and providing constructive consequences to reduce problem behavior.

Directed Consultation

Directed consultation was established as a professional development framework to train teachers in the use of the SEALS model. Although this framework was developed specifically for SEALS, directed consultation was created as a generic training model that can be used to provide professional development guidance and support for any contextual and process-oriented intervention program. Perhaps more important for the present discussion, this model evolved directly from work with rural

low-resource communities and was designed to be responsive to issues that constrain professional development in rural settings including the lack of a critical mass of students and teachers with shared needs and skills, the lack of specialists to address critical or high need issues, the lack of resources and materials, the lack of teachers from diverse personal and professional backgrounds and perspectives, and the constraints of geographical isolation. The directed consultation approach has been described in detail (see Farmer et al., 2013; Motoca et al., 2014). A brief summary of the conceptual foundations and components of directed consultation are provided here.

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework to guide the development of this training and delivery model, directed consultation was designed with the understanding that educational practice is influenced by factors that extend well beyond the classroom. During instruction, teachers are most likely to be directly focused on the proximal environment, which includes the needs and characteristics of individual students, student social networks, and the general school culture (Farmer, Reinke, & Brooks, 2014; Hamm et al., 2011; Hamm, Lambert, Agger, & Farmer, 2013). However, teachers' actions are also impacted by the parents of their students, the colleagues they interact or collaborate with during day-to-day activities, the school administration, community stakeholders, and local, state, and federal policies that guide school practices (Farmer, Dadisman et al. 2006; Hamm, Dadisman, Day, Agger, & Farmer, 2014).

Although there is currently a strong emphasis on evidence-based practices, it is necessary to recognize that ecological factors, including the characteristics of students, local perspectives about schooling, and school and community resources, converge to influence whether teachers will perceive that specific evidence-based strategies are relevant and potentially effective in their classrooms. To address this issue, directed consultation is based on the viewpoint that to facilitate the adoption of evidence-based practices in rural communities, it is necessary to (1) use training and support systems that are responsive to the context in which teachers are embedded; (2) provide reciprocal exchanges between professional development trainers, teachers, and other school professionals to ensure that evidence-based practices are linked to the strengths and beliefs of the professionals who will be using them; (3) foster the use of natural resources and insights of key stakeholders including teachers, administrators, and parents; and (4) focus on the whole child in context by blending academic, behavioral, and social strategies that are responsive to the culture and ecological characteristics of the community in which they are being used (Farmer et al., 2013; Hamm, Farmer, Lambert, & Gravelle, 2014; Motoca et al., 2014).

Based on these considerations, the development of directed consultation was guided by the overarching goal of integrating standardized interventions into the daily activities and culture of the school (Farmer et al., 2010; Hamm et al., 2010). There are four components of directed consultation that are designed to collectively achieve this goal. The first component, *pre-intervention observations and interviews*, involves conducting on-site observations and interviews with teachers and other key stakeholders to identify the strengths and professional development needs

of teachers, to assess the level of collaboration and support among teachers and other school professionals, and to identify key real-world issues experienced by teachers that can serve as anchors and examples for the training. The second component of directed consultation, *the summer institute*, involves a typical professional development workshop format that typically requires 1–2 days of face-to-face training along with additional online self-guided content to introduce the intervention aims and to provide core intervention training along with relationship-building activities among teachers and training staff. The third component, *online training modules*, involves a series of online activities that are independently completed by teachers in a sequence that is established in consultation with the teachers and that builds from the pre-intervention strengths and needs assessment as well as ongoing feedback from teachers about their training needs, successes, and concerns related to applying intervention concepts to issues they experience in the classroom. The final directed consultation component, *implementation team video conferences*, is conducted in conjunction with the completion of online modules. This component involves discussions between the intervention training staff and teachers about the application of specific strategies in the classroom and is designed to facilitate teachers serving as supports and consultants to each other.

The Scouting Report Approach

Although directed consultation is designed to be responsive to local needs and circumstances, it centers on the delivery of specific universal approaches that are aimed at addressing general aspects of instruction and classroom functioning. Therefore, while this approach facilitates tailoring universal strategies to the contexts in which they are used, it was not developed to guide in-depth interventions that are focused on an individual student or a specific problem in the classroom. However, during our experiences in developing directed consultation and the SEALS model, and in our subsequent efficacy trials of the use of these two frameworks, we have come to recognize that teachers often need support around a specific student or classroom management issue that goes well beyond tailoring a universal intervention. Specifically, teachers frequently request support to help them better understand a specific issue and guidance to help them identify and implement potential solutions to address the concern.

Evolving from our directed consultation activities, the *scouting report* approach has been developed as a potential framework for responding to the need to help teachers address specific problems that require intensive and individualized intervention approaches. The focus of the scouting report approach is to identify a problem in relation to the specific circumstances and resources that are available to address it, determine the primary points of leverage that are most likely to result in a successful outcome and the potential problems that could arise in addressing the concern, and establish a game plan that is solution oriented and can be implemented with available resources.

Accordingly, to help teachers effectively address the needs of struggling students or to recalibrate a classroom that is not functioning productively, the first step in the scouting report approach is to generate actionable information. Typical screening and diagnostic instruments generally do not serve this purpose. Instead, with the scouting report, the focus is on conducting classroom observations that build from current views of the problem as described by the teacher, the student, or other school personnel who are familiar with the concern. The goal at this step is to identify factors that may be contributing to the problem and to clarify aspects of the issue that the teacher is unaware of or may not be in a position to see. The second step in the scouting report process is to identify potential leverage points. The goal at this step is to consider potential malleable points of intervention that are most likely to change the situation and help to facilitate the desired outcome. The third step of this approach is to identify potential strategies to address the points of leverage and to consider the strengths and difficulties in implementing the strategies and their potential success. The fourth scouting report step is to meet with the teacher and other relevant school personnel and consider the various points of information obtained from prior steps and potential strategies to guide the development of an individualized, intensive intervention plan. The final step of the scouting report approach involves implementing the plan, collecting data to monitor its impact, and making modifications based on the data.

Preliminary Findings of the SEALS Model and Future Research Needs

Summary of Findings from Project REAL

Project REAL was designed to test the efficacy of the *directed consultation model* of the SEALS program with sixth-grade teachers and students in rural, low-resource schools. The study followed a cluster randomized controlled trial design, in which matched pairs of schools were recruited for participation and one of each pair was randomly assigned to receive the original SEALS program or not (control condition). A total of 18 matched pairs of schools in nine states in diverse regions across the United States participated in the study. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), seventy-five percent of the schools were in locale codes 42 (rural, distant) and 43 (rural, remote), with the remaining schools in codes 41 (rural, fringe), 32 (town, distant), and 33 (town remote). Schools were matched on locale code, grade configuration (grades 6–8 middle vs. grades k8/k12 schools) and demographic data.

All regular education sixth-grade teachers in intervention and control schools were invited to participate; 100 % (188 teachers) consented. All sixth-grade students in regular education classes were invited to participate; approximately 60 % (2453 students) returned parental consent to do so. A substantial proportion of the

sample (41 %) was classified as a member of an ethnic minority group: 26 % African American, 4 % Latino, or 6 % Native American. Students from ethnic minority groups were concentrated primarily in 14 of the 36 schools and in particular regions of the United States (i.e., all Native American students attended schools in the Northern Plains, all Latino students attended schools in the Southwest, and nearly all African American students attended schools in the Deep South or Southeast). All schools in the study served low-resource communities, but the schools serving high concentrations of minority students were particularly poor and were characterized by low levels of academic achievement: between 38 % and 99 % of the student body of these schools was eligible for free or reduced lunch, and rates of proficiency of the student body for math and reading ranged from 4 % to 64 %. A complete description of the Project REAL sample is reported in Hamm et al. (2014).

Reported here are findings that have included schools with students from ethnic minority groups; studies demonstrating the efficacy of the SEALS program reflect full and partial samples of schools and participants. In some cases, we have identified specific benefits for ethnic minority students, but on the whole, our results have indicated that the SEALS program helps teachers and students in schools, serving both ethnic minority and majority groups.

Clear evidence of the benefit of the SEALS program for the social, academic, and behavioral adjustment of ethnic minority youth comes from a study of four Project REAL schools in the Northern Plains attended by Native American and White students (Hamm et al., 2010). Prior to implementation of the SEALS program during sixth grade, fifth-grade students in intervention and control schools experienced comparable levels of adjustment. At the end of sixth grade, both Native American and White students in SEALS schools experienced higher grades, a more favorable valuation of school, and perceptions that their schools were less supportive of bullying and victimization, as compared to students in control schools. However, Native American students in SEALS schools also attained higher state-level standardized test scores and reported a more favorable sense of belonging, less emotional risk in classroom participation, and greater peer support for effort and achievement than did their peers in control schools. These findings are particularly striking given the significant achievement and dispositional gaps between Native American and White students evident in both intervention and control schools prior to implementation of the SEALS program. Most notably, Native American students in SEALS schools attained achievement levels similar to their White peers, whereas a 15-point achievement gap between Native American and White students persisted in the control schools.

Results of a study that included six Project REAL middle schools (four that served predominantly Latino student bodies and two that served predominantly White student bodies) centered on students' social adjustment in relation to improved teacher understanding of students' social dynamics (Hamm et al. 2011). Teachers who had completed the SEALS program were more knowledgeable about their students' peer group affiliations and were rated as more adept at managing student classroom social dynamics than were teachers in comparison schools. These greater teacher capacities improved students' adjustment during the middle school

transition year: Both Latino and White students whose teachers were more attuned to their peer group affiliations reported more favorable school belonging and perceptions that peers would intervene in bullying at the end of sixth grade, after accounting for starting levels of these dispositions.

Finally, results of two recent studies that involved the full sample of REAL schools and participants demonstrated the potential for the SEALS program to help teachers improve the peer cultures of schools serving both ethnic minority and ethnic majority students (Hamm, Farmer, Lambert, & Gravelle, 2014; Farmer, Hamm, Chen, & Irvin, 2014). Peer cultures reflect the norms, expectations, behaviors, and values that students collectively develop as they interact with one another in classrooms and schools (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). In these studies, we controlled for student ethnic minority status to account for potential differences in dependent variables where possible but were generally unable to pursue differential intervention effects for ethnic minority versus majority students due to the uneven nesting of minority students in schools.

In a study focused on peer cultures of effort and achievement, students' peer groups were characterized by more favorable norms for effort and achievement in schools in which teachers had completed the SEALS program, as compared to peer group norms in control schools. In addition, in SEALS schools, popularity was more favorably associated with effort and school valuing, whereas students in control schools experienced greater social costs for their effort and school valuing (Hamm et al., 2014). Results of a different study with the full sample indicated that peer cultures were less supportive of aggression in SEALS versus control schools (Farmer et al., 2014). Students who were identified by peers as more popular and more fully integrated into the social network system of the grade were less aggressive in SEALS compared to control schools. In addition, students in SEALS schools were more likely to report that they would intervene in instances in bullying, compared to their peers in control schools.

Taken together, the findings from Project REAL indicate that the directed consultation approach to the SEALS program helps teachers develop a greater capacity to help both ethnic minority and majority students in rural, low-resource schools experience more favorable academic, social, and behavioral adjustment. The program also shapes peer cultures that reduce the value of aggression and increase the value of academic effort and achievement, although benefits for specific groups of ethnic minority adolescents are difficult to isolate within the full efficacy trials design implemented in the landscape of rural American schools.

Future Research Needs

Although the genesis of the SEALS model and the directed consultation approach is rooted in research in low-resource rural communities with high concentrations of minority youth, much of the formal intervention development and efficacy research conducted with this model has occurred in rural areas that have relatively low

numbers of minority youth or in metropolitan areas that have different circumstances, resources, and needs from impoverished rural areas. There is a clear need to return to the original focus of this program of research and to conduct studies that center specifically on efforts to promote the academic success and productive educational outcomes of rural minority youth who are in low-resource schools. It is difficult to conduct efficacy trials in such settings because population demographics and a variety of implementation constraints affect the degree to which experimental–control studies can be effectively conducted. But such research is needed, and in some respects, the focus on efficacy trials may be less relevant than intervention development work that is aimed at being responsive to the perceived needs of local communities. On this score, there is clearly a strong need to conduct intervention development research with the scouting report approach as a potential framework for addressing the fact that low-resource rural communities which serve high concentrations of minority youth rarely have access to experts to address the diverse needs of this population. The scouting report approach, combined with directed consultation and universal intervention models, seems to be a promising way to address this need.

Currently, the scouting report approach is in the initial development phase. Our research team is just beginning to conduct formal intervention development trials aimed at creating a standard format for conducting and using this approach in tandem with the SEALS Model and the directed consultation framework. This work is being conducted primarily in metropolitan schools. However, the concept and need for the scouting report approach grew directly out of our experiences in working with rural schools. We expect this approach could be particularly beneficial for small rural school districts where limited resources and the lack of a critical mass of students constrain the possibility of having specialists with expertise in specific academic, behavioral, or social concerns.

With the scouting report approach, it would be possible to have specialists who are not in the district provide guidance to local teachers around specific problems that require intensive interventions and guidance. However, this approach requires direct observation and considerable time in the context to assess the concern and to identify potential solutions. One way to address this is to establish an observation framework that could be conducted by an assistant principal, a school counselor, or other school- or district-based professionals. Another possibility is the use of video cameras in classrooms to facilitate Internet-based observations and corresponding online-directed consultation between teachers and intervention specialists who are at remote sites. Or perhaps a combination of these two approaches would be effective.

In any event, the SEALS model, directed consultation, and the scouting report appear to show promise for helping low-resource rural school districts navigate some of the constraints that make it difficult for them to meet the educational needs of minority youth. But this potential goes beyond this particular program or the delivery of services during the early adolescent school years. The general framework of establishing universal interventions that are responsive to rural contexts, utilizing off-site intervention specialists to provide directed consultation to local teams of teachers, and developing the scouting report approach to guide intensive

and individualized intervention approaches has the potential to help address a broad range of educational needs for all developmental levels ranging from preschool to college. There is clearly a need for a comprehensive program of research that builds from these initial efforts and focuses explicitly on the educational support needs of low-resource rural schools and the minority students they serve.

Conclusion

A significant proportion of minority youth live in low-resource rural communities and experience a variety of challenges that may limit their educational outcomes and attainment. To address issues that constrain the educational opportunities and achievement of rural minority students, there is a need for comprehensive approaches that are responsive to unique local factors as well as the general complexity of providing effective educational services for students with diverse needs in low-resource schools. There is not a "one-size-fits-all" solution that addresses the instructional and related service needs of rural minority youth. Issues of low critical mass, geographical isolation, limited financial resources, difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers with specialist skills, lack of professional development opportunities for teachers, and distinct local constraints (e.g., stratification of community resources, limited social capital, and perceived cultural differences) may all converge to inhibit the ability of schools to promote students' learning and achievement. While addressing this confluence of issues is beyond any single program, the SEALS model and the concept of directed consultation is designed to bridge evidence-based perspectives with the necessity to tailor professional development and educational interventions to specific resources and constraints of rural schools and communities. The SEALS intervention specialist framework shows promise for supporting rural minority youth, and additional research is needed to clarify its potential as a core component of systematic efforts to enhance education in low-resource rural communities.

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Chapter 15
Future Prospects for Studying Ethnic and Racial Minority Youths and Families in Diverse Rural and Nonrural Contexts

Rebecca M. B. White, Elizabeth Burleson, and George P. Knight

Today psychologists, family scientists, and developmentalists recognize that child socialization takes place within a particular group and bounded community (Fuller & García Coll, 2010). The bounded group–community, by virtue of its demands and affordances, defines the very competencies that matter (both for the families and the developing youths). As Fuller and García Coll (2010) pointed out, it was little more than a generation ago that scholars believed that the goal of child socialization was to raise children that could successfully fit into *society* at large. This scholarly advance—from focusing on the socialization of children into *a society* to recognizing the role of the *bounded group–community*—did not happen overnight. Rather, it reflected longer-term trends in the field that have ultimately produced more accurate knowledge about families and development broadly and about families and development among ethnic and racial minority groups (hereafter referred to as minority groups) specifically. We view the present collection of chapters as representing a critical continuation of this scholarly process. The contributors to this volume have attempted to work ahead of earlier scholarly limits by advancing further into understudied elements of our broader population. In this way, the volume makes an important contribution by advancing beyond the study of minority youths and

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families in largely urban contexts, to theorizing, studying, and intervening among minority youths and families living within a different set of *bounded groups–communities*, namely, rural contexts. Our goal is to comment on how to capitalize on the strengths of this scholarship, address its challenges, and continue to advance meaningful work on minority youths and families in diverse contexts.

The authors of this volume are united in their commitment to advancing relevant scholarly narratives—combining theory, empiricism, and applied work—that can contribute to a more accurate understanding of families and development among minority group members living in rural contexts. Notably, while advancing these narratives, two-thirds of the contributions referenced bioecological theoretical perspectives. What is evident across these contributions, however, is that *a single* scholarly narrative of rural minority youths and families does not exist. Instead, there are multiple, dynamic, and evolving scholarly narratives, likely reflecting the multiple, dynamic, and evolving bounded groups–communities under examination. An overall strength of the volume is that these narratives reflect, in a relatively sophisticated way, the considerable heterogeneity among and between diverse ethno-cultural minority groups. By in large, however, the narratives were less sophisticated with regard to the considerable heterogeneity among and between diverse rural contexts (for exceptions, see Chaps. 2, 7, and 14).

In light of these overall strengths and challenges, and to advance the next generation of meaningful scholarship on rural minority youths and families, scholars will need to integrate sophisticated theorizing about ethno-cultural diversity with increasingly sophisticated theorizing about contextual diversity. Combined, these two sources of heterogeneity place heavy demands on theorists, researchers, and interventionists, for scholars must simultaneously theorize about both sources to advance relevant scholarship. To work toward the integration of ethno-cultural theorizing and contextual theorizing, we first analyze the volume within a bioecological theoretical perspective, concluding that the theory offers a framework that could be used to facilitate higher levels of synthesis and meaning-making from diverse scholarship on rural minority youths and families. Second, drawing upon the strengths of the current volume, we provide an overview of *culturally informed theorizing*, which we have previously argued can support sophisticated research designs (Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009) and hypothesis testing (White, Knight, & Roosa, 2015) that reflects within- and between-group ethno-cultural diversity. Finally, and reflecting challenges encountered in the current volume, we offer an expansion to culturally informed theorizing by presenting a new conceptual tool, namely, *contextually informed theorizing*, which we argue can help advance a more sophisticated view of contexts generally and rural contexts specifically.

Briefly, it is critical to recognize that there are substantial and well-documented methodological issues surrounding research with minority and economically disadvantaged populations that are critical to address in scholarship on minority youths and families in rural contexts. These methodological issues include sampling, recruitment, and retention, ethical issues, and measurement and translation issues (Knight, Roosa, Calderón-Tena, & Gonzales, 2009; Knight, Roosa & Umaña-Taylor, 2009; White, Umaña-Taylor, Knight, & Zeiders, 2011). We do not reiterate

these issues in this chapter, however, partly because others have already reviewed them and partly because we feel there are other substantive contributions to be made. Still, we contend that the methodological issues and recommendations that we have documented (Knight, Roosa & Umaña-Taylor, 2009), along with the further application of those issues in rural contexts that are developed by Raffaelli and colleagues (Chap. 6) and Knoche and Witte (Chap. 13), are essential to advancing high-quality work with minority youths and families in rural contexts.

Bioecological Theory: A General Framework

A theory is a general framework of interconnected ideas that can be used to describe or explain empirical observations of phenomena and generate insights leading to the discovery of new phenomena and connections (Doherty, Boss, LaRossa, Schumm, & Steinmetz, 1993; Smith & Hamon, 2012; White & Klein, 2008). Scholarly advancement can be facilitated by access to a framework that allows scholars to treat particular observations as examples of general principles or processes related to families and development (White & Klein, 2008). Within the context of a shared framework and language surrounding general principles and processes, scholars could make connections and meanings across diverse (minority) groups and (rural) contexts that would more efficiently advance the knowledge base. Consequently, we situate the current contributions within the most advanced form of bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), allowing us to highlight the existing knowledge base and identify areas for future advancement.

Three Phases of the Development of Bioecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner's theorizing can be broken down into three phases (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Across all three phases (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), he emphasized the importance of the phenomenological perspective, such that the subjective experiences of the environment were considered as crucial as the objective characteristics for understanding development. In *Phase 1* (1973–1979), based on the notion of *ecology* and reflecting the mutual adjustment between the developing person and his/her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1975), Bronfenbrenner developed a comprehensive theoretical definition of *environmental contexts* as an arrangement of more and less proximal settings. In *Phase 2* (1980–1993), he more directly addressed the role of the *person* in the course of development. He also started to introduce the notion of *time* (i.e., the *chronosystem*; Bronfenbrenner, 1984), which had only been indirectly addressed in his earlier writings. In *Phase 3* (1993–2006), he advanced a set of comprehensive propositions that, together, stipulated that *proximal processes*, which vary systematically as a joint function of the *person* and *environmental contexts* across *time,*

produce development (Bronfenbrenner, 1999, 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006). He defined more specific aspects of *person* characteristics and established three distinct levels of *time*. This work culminated in the process–person–context–time (PPCT) model as the appropriate design for studying human development within mature (Phase 3) bioecological perspectives (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Individual aspects of the PPCT model (i.e., proximal processes; demand, resource, and force person characteristics; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem contexts; and microtime, mesotime, and macrotime) are further delineated in Table 15.1.

To facilitate a discussion about the three phases of bioecological theory and the ways in which the theory can be differentially invoked (both in this volume and elsewhere), we focus on a broad research question: How does poverty impact rural minority youths and families in the USA? The relevance of this example is highlighted by the observation that all but one (Chap. 12) of the contributions to the current volume reference poverty as a salient factor affecting rural minority youths and families in the USA. Reflecting Bronfenbrenner's early emphasis on environmental contexts, a *Phase 1* approach to this research question would primarily focus on the impact of environmental poverty on a developmental outcome. For example, this could include examining the impact of family poverty (microsystem), local community poverty (microsystem), and the intersection of the two (mesosystem) on youth outcomes. This approach was later criticized by Bronfenbrenner as reflecting a focus on "context without development" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 795). Reflecting the evolution of bioecological perspectives toward addressing the role of person characteristics in development, a *Phase 2* approach to this research question would continue to focus on poverty at multiple levels of the nested ecological system, but would also incorporate important person characteristics (e.g., temperament). The combined influence of environmental contexts and person characteristics would better reflect the underlying assumption of an *ecological* perspective, namely, that of *mutual adjustment* between an organism and its environment. Reflecting the PPCT model, a comprehensive *Phase 3* approach to this research question would seek to study and understand the combined influence of proximal processes (e.g., related to poverty), person characteristics, contexts, and time on developmental outcomes.

For an in-depth look at *Phase 3* and the PPCT model, we expand upon recent empirical work. White, Roosa, and Zeiders (2012) examined the longitudinal (*time*) implications of family economic hardship (a phenomenological operationalization of poverty in the family *microsystem*) on adolescent development via changes (*mesotime*) in warmth within the parent–child relationship (*proximal process*). The authors also examined whether the impact of family economic hardship and warmth on adolescent development varied across diverse levels of neighborhood poverty rates. In this way, they recognized a second critical *microsystem* and, consequently, the *mesosystem*. The authors incorporated *person characteristics* in multiple ways, first by examining the equivalence of the hypothesized associations across child sex and second by examining the implications of the *contexts* and *proximal processes* for later developmental outcomes, net of the developing child's earlier levels of

Table 15.1 Complete delineation of the components of the process, person, context, time (PPCT) model

PPCT component	Subcomponent	Theoretical definitions
Proximal processes	n/a	A "progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 797)
Person characteristics	Demand	Act as an immediate stimulus, by inviting or discouraging reactions from persons, objects, and symbols in the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006)
	Resource	Those that are not immediately discernable, but include variation in mental, emotional, social resources, and past experiences needed to effectively engage in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Tudge et al., 2009)
	Force	Also called disposition characteristics, they include person characteristics that "set proximal processes in motion" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 810) and/or sustain their operation, such as temperament, motivation, and persistence. Conversely, they interfere with or prevent proximal processes from occurring (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 810)
Contexts	Microsystem	"A pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of beliefs" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 814)
	Mesosystem	"Comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 817)
	Exosystem	"Encompasses the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 818)
	Macrosystem	"Consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 25)
Times	Microtime	"Refers to continuity versus discontinuity in ongoing episodes of proximal processes" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796)
	Mesotime	"The periodicity of these episodes across broader time intervals" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796)
	Macrotime	"Focuses on the changing expectations and events in the larger society, both within and across generations, as they affect and are affected by, processes and outcomes of human development over the lifecourse" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796)

those outcomes. Some suggestions can be made for incorporating other important aspects of the PPCT model. For example, *macrotime* could be included in the hypothesized model had the authors been able to test the model using data collected before versus during the *Great Recession. Exosystem* and/or *macrosystem* factors could be included, respectively, by examining (a) the prevalence, in the parents' social networks, of warm parent–child relationships, and/or (b) the equivalence of the model for Mexican-origin youths and families living in amenity-rich vs. chronically poor rural America (Chap. 2).

A Bioecologically Based Analysis of the Volume

Overwhelmingly, when the authors of this volume directly cited Bronfenbrenner or bioecological perspectives, regardless of the year of that citation, they were relying upon the Phase 1 concept of *environmental contexts*. That is to say, authors generally invoked bioecological theory to address the role of more or less proximal settings on development (Chaps. 4, 9, 10, and 12–14). One direct reference to bioecological theory invoked it in its most mature form and explicitly addressed most aspects of the model, including proximal processes, person characteristics, context, and time (Chap. 2). This heavy reliance on Bronfenbrenner's early definitions of the *environmental context* vs. his later and more comprehensive *PPCT model* is consistent with a review of contemporary scholarly writings (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). Our own careful analysis of this volume, however, shows that authors *were* actually theorizing particular observations of general principles or processes related to the most mature and comprehensive form of bioecological theory and the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Applying the standard of having at least three PPCT concepts including *proximal processes* (Tudge et al., 2009), we have concluded that every contribution in the volume can be discussed within the overarching framework offered by bioecological theory and the PPCT model. A comprehensive shared framework and language surrounding general principles and processes facilitates connections and meaning-making across diverse (minority) groups and (rural) contexts that will more efficiently advance the knowledge base.

PPCT Models of Rural Minority Youths and Families

Proximal processes (Table 15.1) are the engines of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Conger and her colleagues (Chap. 2) addressed directly the importance of proximal processes to the understanding of minority youths' development in rural contexts; the remaining authors referenced particular examples of this general theoretical principle without necessarily linking their examples to the *proximal processes'* theoretical construct. There were a range of proximal processes considered across the chapters. Examples included racial and ethnic socialization

(Chap. 3), social or daily interactions (Chaps. 4, 5, 10, 12, and 14), religious involvement (Chaps. 8 and 11), couple warmth and hostility (Chap. 8), reciprocal relationships and parenting processes (Chaps. 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12), and patterns of life in the home (Chap. 13). Consistent with the PPCT model, the authors generally advanced these specific examples of proximal processes as factors that are causal with regard to family and developmental outcomes.

Person characteristics have the capacity to influence the power and direction of proximal processes across time. In this volume, we identified reference to several *demand characteristics* (Table 15.1) that authors suggested were critical to understanding rural minority youths and families in the USA, including age (Chaps. 2, 4, 12, and 14), race (Chaps. 2–9 and 11–14), ethnicity (Chaps. 2–7 and 9–14), and phenotype (Chaps. 2–4, 7, 8, and 12). Several *resource characteristics* (Table 15.1) were also highlighted, including experiences (e.g., general, specific to coping with discrimination, specific to culture- and gender-based social expectations; Chaps. 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10–12), skills (Chaps. 2, 11, 13, and 14), self-concept (Chap. 2), ethnic identity (Chaps. 2 and 4), competencies (e.g., early math/reading skills, cultural skills, social skills; Chaps. 3, 4, 9, and 14), knowledge and ways of knowing (e.g., cultural beliefs; Chaps. 3, 4, 9–11), schooling (Chaps. 5, 8, and 12–14), access to social capital (Chaps. 2 and 3), social position variables (e.g., migrant farmworker, undocumented status; Chaps. 3, 6, 10, and 12), and personal access to education (Chaps. 5 and 9). In terms of *force characteristics* (Table 15.1), motivation, temperament, and sociocognitive tendencies were seen as critical to understanding development among rural minority populations (Chaps. 4 and 10).

Environmental contexts include the arrangement of four more and less proximal settings. In the current volume, several *microsystems* (Table 15.1) were highlighted as important for advancing theory, research, and applications for rural minority youths and families in the USA. These included immediate family environments (Chaps. 2–10 and 12), home environments (Chaps. 8, 9, and 13), neighborhood environments (Chaps. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, and 12), school environments (Chaps. 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, and 13), and peer group environments (Chaps. 4–6, 8, 10, and 12). Highlighted *mesosystems* (Table 15.1) included home–school partnerships (Chap. 13) and connections (Chaps. 4 and 12) and teacher–parent relationship characteristics (Chaps. 13 and 14). The authors of this volume focused less attention on the *exosystem* (Table 15.1), but did reference, for example, the ways that limited institutional (school/community) resources (e.g., public transportation and employment opportunities) along with geographic proximity to metropolitan areas can shape family life and, in turn, development (e.g., Chaps. 4–7 and 10). The *macrosystem* (Table 15.1) can be thought of as the "societal blueprint for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader social context" (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 228). Across most of the volume's chapters, authors referenced critical macrosystemic factors, including resource-poor countries of origin (Chaps. 2 and 3); US federal immigration policies (Chap. 3); the ethno-cultural blueprints of rural America (Chaps. 4–6, 9–14); shared cultural narratives around racism, segregation, and discrimination (Chaps. 4, 8, 9, 12, and 14); social policies influencing reception (Chaps. 4, 5, 8, and 12); national/global economies (Chaps. 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 14); and tribal nations (Chaps. 7 and 11).

Finally, *time* also includes more and less proximal components. *Microtime* (Table 15.1) involves specific activities or interactions (Tudge et al., 2009). For example, Cutrona and colleagues (Chap. 8) used observational measures to describe videotaped marital interactions. *Mesotime* (Table 15.1) involves how often proximal processes (recurring forms of interaction) occur over more extended durations. For example, Markstrom and Moilanen (Chap. 7) included mesotime components in their study of developmental outcomes among rural American Indian adolescents by examining the "intensity of involvement in community-based activities" across the year (p. 118). Similarly, Bratsch-Hines et al. (Chap. 9) highlighted childcare instability—changes from week to week, month to month, or year to year—as a factor affecting development among rural minority youths. Most contributions in this volume, however, referenced the importance of *macrotime* (Table 15.1). These included a focus on historical diversity in the experience of being a minority group member in the USA, the educational system, politics, and economies (Chaps. 2, 3, 9, and 12), the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments (Chap. 3), and historic trauma (Chap. 7).

Overall, the collective contributions of the current volume demonstrate that a focus on proximal processes, person characteristics, environmental contexts, and time is critical to advancing accurate and comprehensive scientific understandings of rural minority youths and families in the USA. Viewing each of the volume's contributions through the lens of bioecological theory and the PPCT model highlights opportunities for synergies across currently compartmentalized works that can help to describe or explain empirical observations of theoretical phenomena and generate insights leading to the discovery of new phenomena and connections. In this way, we view the PPCT model as central to helping scholars explain, predict, and understand the experiences of rural minority youths and families.

Culturally and Contextually Informed Theorizing in PPCT Models

Though the PPCT model provides a shared framework that can facilitate meaning-making across diverse (minority) groups and (rural) contexts to more efficiently advance the knowledge base, it provides scholars with very few specific tools to inform *which* particular observations to select as examples of the general PPCT principles and processes when specifically studying rural minority youths and families. In this circumstance, the selection of culturally and contextually salient proximal processes, person characteristics, contextual variables, and time elements for a target population and target context depends upon high-quality theorizing, including both inductive reasoning (theorizing that relies on empirical findings) and deductive reasoning (theorizing that relies on culturally and contextually informed theory and concepts). Using induction and deduction to theorize about the ways that variables related to minority group and contextual heterogeneity might intersect with existing theory and knowledge will help scholars (a) ensure

that the processes being examined are theoretically relevant and salient (Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009) to rural minority children and families and (b) develop research questions and hypotheses that are culturally and contextually informed (White et al., 2015).

Culturally Informed Theorizing

Overview

Our analysis of the chapters reveals that, to guide the selection of proximal processes, person characteristics, and time factors that are salient to the lives of rural minority youths and families, the authors rely on a diverse set of tools that can be broadly characterized as *culturally informed theorizing* (Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009; White et al., 2015). Broadly, culturally informed theorizing is the process of developing ideas about the ways in which variables related to minority group membership (which we previously labeled as "ethnic correlates") might intersect with existing knowledge and/or theoretical models of human behavior (White et al., 2015). Although ethnic correlates describe the cultural differences *between* two minority groups, they are also descriptive of the cultural differences *among* individuals within a minority group because of substantial within-group heterogeneity. To engage in the process of culturally informed theorizing about rural minority youths and families, scholars must acquire knowledge and understanding about the ethnic correlates that describe differences between one minority group and another or among individuals within a single minority group. Scholars then must consider the implications of those correlates for two aspects of the extant literature: the existing body of empirical knowledge and theory.

Culturally informed theorizing should be applied to all aspects of the research effort, from identification of research questions and hypotheses to study design, sampling, measurement, and operationalization (White et al., 2015). For example, it may not be appropriate to operationalize socioeconomic status in some groups in the same way it has been operationalized in mainstream, mostly European American and urban groups, because of some key differences between groups in ethnic correlates. If culture is defined as a set of behaviors, attitudes, self-definitions, expectancies, and values that assist individuals in navigating their bounded groups–communities, then there are likely to be many culturally related phenomena that are as important in meeting daily needs as years of education and dollars earned per year. For example, child care for most mainstream Americans is either purchased from a responsible person/business or provided by parents, in which case the family accepts the lower income associated with having one parent stay at home to provide care. Similarly, retirement is purchased through social security and investment in other retirement plans. In both cases the needs are addressed, at least partially, by earning an income. Ethnic correlates of very traditional Mexican American family members (e.g., household structure, endorsement of familism

values; Knight et al., 2010), however, may result in adaptive cultural (García Coll et al., 1996) ways of addressing family needs that are not based on earned income. Childcare needs may be met by having grandparents or extended family members living with the nuclear family provide care (Chyu, Pebley, & Lara-Cinisomo, 2005). Similarly, rather than planning for later life via earlier income-based investments and financial earnings, traditional Mexican Americans may plan on living with their adult children. In this way, family needs that tend to be addressed via income-based resources among European American families may be addressed by non-income-based resources in more traditional Mexican American families. As this discussion highlights, the operationalization of economic resources based on mainstream European American adaptations to family demands (e.g., earned income) may not apply as directly to all other groups, and it may be better to rely on more psychological indicators of economic resources (e.g., perception of need or reports of economic hardships; Roosa, Deng, Nair, & Burrell, 2005).

Applications

The products of culturally informed theorizing are evident in prior work and this volume. One exemplar of high-quality culturally informed theorizing can be found in García Coll et al.'s Integrative Model (1996), a conceptual tool that was broadly used in this volume (Chaps. 3–5, 9, 10, and 12). García Coll et al. took what was known about development from mainstream theories, including organizational (Cicchetti & Schneider-Rosen, 1986; Sroufe, 1979), transactional (Sameroff & Fiese, 1990), life span (Lerner, 1989), and bioecological (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983) theories, and identified variables related to being a child of color that should be included in tests of these theories and/or incorporated into hypothesized developmental models. In the current volume Stein and García Coll (Chap. 3) used culturally informed theorizing to consider the more specific case of Latino youths in rural contexts. That is, they developed ideas about the ways in which variables (e.g., migrant farmworker status) related to being a *rural US Latino* group member specifically (vs. a child of color generally) might influence development. Whereas Stein and García Coll (Chap. 3) used culturally informed theorizing to advance a version of the Integrative Model that was specific to rural US Latinos, Conger and colleagues (Chap. 2) used it to develop a new conceptual tool, the Racial Ethnic Minority Youth in Context Model. Similar to García Coll et al. (1996), these authors have taken what is known about families and development from mainstream theories, including bioecological (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), family stress (Conger, Schofield, & Neppl, 2012), family systems (Cox & Paley, 1997), stage–environment fit (Eccles et al., 1993), and transactional (Sameroff, 1998) theories, and identified a set of particular observations to select as examples of general principles and processes from those theories when studying rural minority youths and families (e.g., Table 2.1).

Though García Coll et al.'s (1996) and Conger et al.'s (Chap. 2) use of culturally informed theorizing resulted in new and broad-based conceptual models (e.g., Fig. 2.1), that is not necessarily the universal outcome of the process. Indeed, in some cases, culturally informed theorizing will result in the conclusion that an existing theoretical model should explain the outcome of interest among the target groups in

a manner consistent with work conducted on other (often mainstream) groups (White et al., 2015). In still other cases, scholars who engage in such theorizing will conclude that variables related to group membership have meaningful implications for putative theoretical associations among psychological constructs. In this case, a modified hypothesis must be developed to better predict and explain relations between psychological constructs in the target group. For example, White and colleagues have used culturally informed theorizing to propose a cultural modification to Conger's family stress model (Conger, Conger, and Martin, 2010). They have hypothesized that parents' cultural value orientations may alter the relation between environmental stressors (taking place in the family and neighborhood microsystems) and disruptions to parenting proximal processes (White et al., 2012). In this case, information on parents' endorsement of cultural values (a person characteristic when the dependent variable is a parenting behavior) leads to more accurate predictions concerning the impact of environmental stressors on parenting.

Similarly, in the current volume many authors advanced culturally informed hypotheses about the relations between proximal processes, person characteristics, time, and youth/family development. Cunningham et al. (Chap. 4) used culturally informed theorizing to consider the implications of racial experiences (*proximal processes*) from day to day across time (*mesotime*) for African American adolescent development. Markstrom and Moilanen (Chap. 7) used culturally informed theorizing to highlight the potential roles that diverse forms of social support (*proximal processes*) may have for reducing American Indian adolescents' substance use. Cutrona et al. (Chap. 8) used it to justify the need to examine the implications of racial discrimination and religious involvement (*proximal processes*) on relationship quality and stability of nonurban African American couples. Bratsch-Hines et al. (Chap. 9) used it to highlight the implications of constructs like early cultural socialization (*proximal process*) for early academic success among African Americans and Latinos. Carlo et al. (Chap. 10) used it to hypothesize that familism beliefs (person characteristics) would mediate the association between receiving community characteristics (context) and Latino youth development. Murry et al. (Chap. 12) used it to critically evaluate whether preventive intervention programs including rural African American youths were informed by the extant body of inductive and deductive knowledge on African American youth development. Overall, and reflecting broader trends in the high-quality literature on minority youths generally, the contributors were using culturally informed theorizing to identify *which* particular observations to select as examples of general theoretical principles, including the proximal processes, person characteristics, and time components of the PPCT model.

Contextually Informed Theorizing

In analyzing this volume within a bioecological and PPCT framework, we noted a stark contrast between authors' treatments of the process, person, and time components and the context component of the model. Our overall impression was that

there is a rather standardized approach to the rural construct, as if there was *a rural context* that served as a generic backdrop to the rich array of culturally informed process, person, and time characteristics that influence minority youths and families. The most notable exception was Conger et al.'s chapter (Chap. 2), in which the authors directly confronted the plurality of rural contexts in the USA, providing an initial framework for theorizing about rural diversity (drawing largely from the work of Hamilton, Hamilton, Duncan, & Colocousis, 2008). More often, if diversity in rural contexts was recognized, contributors briefly noted the potential for rural heterogeneity, but did not advance theorizing, research designs, or hypotheses related to families and development that directly recognized that potential. We see this as a challenge that must be addressed to advance to the next generation of meaningful scholarship on rural minority youths and families in the USA.

We wondered why scholars were generally not engaging in theorizing about contexts at levels that rivaled, in sophistication, their theorizing about other aspects of the PPCT model. Was it that the scholarly tool boxes—like culturally informed theorizing (White et al., 2015) or the Integrative Model (García Coll et al., 1996)—overlooked this important aspect of bioecological development? The short answer is that the tools did not overlook this variability. White et al. (2015) briefly highlighted regional and neighborhood variability as examples of important contexts to consider in culturally informed theorizing. García Coll et al. (1996) delved deeply into both school and neighborhood contextual heterogeneity. They recognized important aspects of contextual diversity by actively stating that children of color—even the ones living in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods and/or attending low-quality schools—are not all experiencing the same neighborhood and school contexts. Still, none of White et al.'s (2015) didactic examples of culturally informed theorizing were specific to theorizing contextual diversity, and it is quite possible, in our view, that García Coll et al.'s (1996) sophisticated theorizing about contextual diversity is less obvious to scholars who rely primarily on the authors' path diagram (p. 1896). For this reason, we concluded that it would likely prove useful to develop a conceptual tool that can specifically support scholars to engage in the process of theorizing contexts.

Overview

Parallel to our earlier writings on culturally informed theorizing (Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009; White et al., 2015), we define *contextually informed theorizing* as the process of developing ideas about the ways in which contextual heterogeneity might intersect with existing knowledge and/or theoretical models of families and development. As we did for culturally informed theorizing, we suggest there are numerous degrees of potential *intersection*. At one end of the continuum, a scholar may conclude that an existing theoretical model or hypothesis should explain human behavior in the target context in a manner consistent with the work on other (often more mainstream and urban) contexts. At the opposite end of this continuum, a scholar may conclude that an entirely new theoretical model must be developed to accurately explain behavior in a target context or contexts. Between these two extremes, and likely more often, a scholar may conclude that contextual

correlates—variables that describe differences between and among diverse contexts—have meaningful implications for an existing theory, model, or hypothesis. In consequence, accurate prediction and explanation will necessitate attention to within or between setting diversity in contextual correlates.

We propose three domains that must be considered when thinking about contextual heterogeneity: structural variables, process variables, and systemic heterogeneity. Structural variables reflect the stratification of demographic, environmental, and institutional resources within and across contexts. Process variables represent heterogeneity in the nature, quality, and quantity of social interactions taking place within and across contexts. Systemic heterogeneity reflects diversity in the proximity of the context to a target developing person. We offer these categorizations as a heuristic to guide contextually informed theorizing; we do not claim that the three domains are orthogonal or somehow unrelated. For example, many setting-level social processes (e.g., a lack of social control mechanisms) have structural markers (e.g., socioeconomic disadvantage) which have been employed as proxies for processes in prior research. In this discussion we merely aim to provide tools to assist scholars as they engage in contextually informed theorizing.

In practice, contextually informed theorizing should also apply to all aspects of the research, including to the operational definitions of key constructs. For example, traditional indicators of the degree of socioeconomic disadvantage in a setting—like college (or high school) completion rates, poverty rates, public assistance rates, and single-parent household rates (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997)—may not all be equally valid indicators of socioeconomic resources across diverse (rural) contexts. In some rural contexts (albeit not all) there is considerable informal education and nonmonetary means of meeting daily needs that may undermine the utility of some of the common indicators. For example, in family farming contexts (as opposed to big agribusiness), farming practices are passed down through generations (i.e., as informal education), and bartering with other community members may provide resources for which those in more urban communities must pay. On the other hand, prior research—especially research on the study of neighborhood contexts of European and African American populations—suggests that high rates of poverty, public assistance, and single-parent households and high concentrations of African Americans co-occur in socioeconomically disadvantaged contexts (Sampson et al., 1997). This pattern, however, may not hold in rural contexts, especially those containing large or rapidly growing proportions of minority and/or immigrant groups with demonstrably low rates of single-parent households (Lopez & Velasco, 2011) and/or enrollment in public assistance programs (Cristancho, Garces, Peters, & Mueller, 2008). Consequently, the utility of traditional contextual measures of socioeconomic status may need to be reevaluated for some rural contexts. As this example demonstrates, it is likely that scholars will need to rely upon the combined contributions of culturally and contextually informed theorizing to address directly the inherent interplay between key ethnic correlates (e.g., differences among and between groups on family structure, documentation status) and contextual correlates (e.g., socioeconomic disadvantage) in producing family and youth development.

Structural Variables

Structural variables are central components of contextually informed theorizing. Contexts vary on key structural characteristics (Tseng & Seidman, 2007), including their distributions of demographic, environmental, and institutional resources. Such distributions represent significant sources of heterogeneity both between and within rural contexts. Addressing variability in demographic resources requires attention to the collective characteristics of individuals inhabiting or participating in a given context. In this way, basic demographic distributions, including socio-economic status; age; ethnic, racial, and immigrant concentrations; and changes in these population characteristics over time, represent important structural variables that may be salient to characterizing contexts of development for minority youths and families. Additionally, the environmental resources of a context can represent important structural variables for describing heterogeneity within and between contexts. These can include, for example, the availability and quality of physical environmental resources (e.g., air, water, temperature; Harlan, Brazel, Prashad, Stefanov, & Larsen, 2006) and built environmental resources (e.g., the presence of parks, open space, grocery stores, fast-food establishments, mini-marts; Papas et al., 2007). Finally, variability of institutional resources (e.g., the prevalence of community organizations, social service organizations, employment, and cultural institutions) will likely prove important to theorizing the diverse structures of contexts influencing minority youths and families. Notably, and reflecting an important distinction between structural and process variables, the presence of institutional resources does not necessarily determine that individuals inhabiting or participating in the context are interacting with, or accessing, them.

Structural heterogeneity in rural contexts may, to some degree, intersect with existing theoretical understandings to influence rural minority families and youths. Conger et al.'s (Chap. 2) discussion of the four rural setting types (i.e., amenity rich, declining resource dependent, chronically poor, and amenity/decline) reflects Hamilton et al.'s (2008) ability to theorize structural diversity among rural contexts. Indeed, the authors' rural setting types specifically reflect diversity in (a) overall population change, (b) age 25–34 population change, (c) employment rates, and (d) poverty rates (Hamilton et al., 2008). Though this rural typology represents an important step, scholars studying rural minority youths and families will likely need to expand upon it to identify the most salient aspects of rural structural heterogeneity for their specific target populations. Such an expansion would rely upon the combined contributions of culturally and contextually informed theorizing to address directly the inherent interplay between ethnic correlates and contextual correlates (e.g., structural variables) in producing family and youth development. By way of example, many contributors (Chaps. 2–6, 10, 13, and 14) referenced variation in co-ethnic group concentrations (e.g., the percent of the population in a given rural context that is of Vietnamese origin) as an important contextual correlate that likely influences minority (e.g., Vietnamese origin) youths' well-being. Co-ethnic concentration levels, however, were not included in Hamilton et al.'s rural typology.

Process Variables

Process variables are also central components of contextually informed theorizing. Indeed, many empirical tests of the impact of structural variables on youths and families directly recognize underlying assumptions about hypothesized differences in the quality and quantity of social processes taking place in settings characterized by differences in demographic (White, Zeiders, Knight, Roosa, & Tein, 2014), environmental (Boehmer, Lovegreen, Haire-Joshu, & Brownson, 2006; Klinenberg, 2003), and institutional (Klinenberg, 2003; Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon, 2014; White et al., 2014) resources. The social processes that take place in diverse settings represent significant sources of heterogeneity both between and within rural contexts. These process variables can be thought of as an extension of proximal processes, in that they can occur at the level of the individual interacting with "persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 797). However, we, like Tseng and Seidman (2007), argue that processes and interactions relevant to families and to development can also occur at higher levels of the nested ecological system. For example, they can include family-level interactions (e.g., mealtime gatherings), group-level interactions (e.g., between community members and the local police force), neighborhood-level interactions (e.g., collective efficacy), institutional-level interactions (e.g., partnerships between social service organizations and cultural institutions; Yoshikawa, 2011), and so on. Typically, the social processes taking place in settings are considered as mechanisms underlying the causal links between structural variables and youth/family development (Tseng & Seidman, 2007).

Heterogeneity in social processes may, to some degree, intersect with existing theoretical understandings of families and development to influence outcomes. Continuing with the example from this volume regarding ethnic concentration, social integration (with the co-ethnic group), sense of belongingness, mainstream cultural isolation, and minority group isolation (Chaps. 2, 5, 6, and 10) were the social process mechanisms theorized to explain ethnic concentration effects on families and development. Many of these social processes occur at the lower levels of the nested ecological system. In the future, and again considering the inherent interplay between ethnic correlates and contextual correlates (in this case, process variables), scholars may wish to consider some mesosystemic (e.g., the nature, frequency, and quality of interactions taking place between diverse peer groups with which a developing child has sustained interactions), exosystemic (e.g., the nature, frequency, and quality of interactions taking place between the US-residing family and the family members remaining in their countries of origin), and macrosystemic (e.g., the nature, frequency, and quality of interactions taking place between minority groups in the USA) social processes that are particularly salient to rural minority youths and families. Similarly, while the prevalence of institutional resources may accurately reflect their distributions within and across rural areas, attention to issues of access (e.g., the degree of availability of services available in a target language) will facilitate a more accurate knowledge base concerning the nature, frequency, and quality of interactions taking place in such settings.

Systemic Heterogeneity

Finally, consideration of systemic heterogeneity is central to high-quality contextually informed theorizing. Drawing directly from the bioecological model, attention to systemic heterogeneity encourages scholars to consider *where* in the nested ecological system a relevant contextual variable (be it a structure or process variable) belongs. Scholars must determine, with consideration of developmental theory, whether the context or contexts being theorized represent macrosystems, exosystems, mesosystems, or microsystems to the developing person. Developmentally, contexts that are more distal at one stage may be quite proximal at another. By way of example, infants may experience neighborhoods as exosystems more so than microsystems (because infants generally do not experience sustained, face-to-face interactions with neighborhood elements). During childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, however, neighborhoods can be experienced as microsystems (in which face-to-face interactions with numerous neighborhood elements occur). Similarly, scholars must use the developmental lens to consider the specific associations being theorized. For example, when theorizing the relation between a parent's workplace characteristic and parenting, the workplace represents a microsystem for the parent. When theorizing the relation between that same characteristic and a youth outcome, the parents' workplace more likely represents an exosystemic setting, in that it influences the structures and processes of youth microsystems, but does not generally *contain* the developing youth. In this way, a single setting can be characterized at multiple levels of the nested ecological system, reliant upon the focal developing person.

Systemic heterogeneity represents a significant source of theoretical and conceptual diversity that may facilitate explanation and knowledge generation salient to a more advanced understanding of rural minority youths and families. By way of example, numerous contributions referenced the potential costs or benefits to individual and family development associated with diversity in rural ethnic concentration levels (e.g., Chaps. 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, and 14). Ethnic concentration has been variably called (in this volume and elsewhere) segregation, voluntary segregation, and ethnic composition. Careful analysis of the contributions vis-à-vis systemic heterogeneity showed that authors were talking about ethnic concentration at diverse levels of the nested ecological system, including at the microsystemic (e.g., neighborhoods, schools; Chaps. 3, 4, 10, and 14), exosystemic (e.g., larger community contexts, counties; Chaps. 3, 6, 10, and 13), or macrosystemic (e.g., entire rural locales, regions; Chaps. 5, 6, and 10) levels. Synthesizing their discussion is difficult without an active conversation regarding systemic heterogeneity. For example, the costs or benefits of high local (e.g., microsystem) ethnic concentration may depend upon regional (e.g., exosystem) differences in ethnic concentration (Frank & Bjornstrom, 2011). Better explanation and insight generation could be gained from explicit recognition that ethnic concentration occurs at diverse levels of the nested ecological system and from actively addressing where, along the continuum of nested ecological systems, diversity in ethnic concentration is being theorized, measured, and empirically tested.

Conclusions

This volume demonstrates that outcomes of rural minority youths and families in the USA are the function of the combined input of proximal processes, person characteristics, environmental contexts, and time, consistent with mature, comprehensive bioecological perspectives (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). We are hopeful that our analysis of the chapters will help scholars studying rural minority youths and families to advance their work. It is our view that a reliance on the most mature form of bioecological theory and the PPCT model, in combination with high-quality culturally and contextually informed theorizing, could facilitate synergies across works and, consequently, foster scientific progress. By viewing the collective contributions within a general framework of interconnected ideas, scholars can better explain, compare, and contrast multiple empirical observations of psychological phenomena and generate insights based on such observations. In this way, scholarship devoted to studying rural minority youths and families specifically can advance beyond the numerous and evolving scholarly narratives to more holistic understandings of families and development.

Additionally, the volume demonstrates that scholars are relatively sophisticated in their ability to employ high-quality culturally informed theorizing to select observations of processes, person characteristics, and time elements that are salient to rural minority youth and family development. This sophistication represents a critical advance, not just in the realm of rural minority youths and families but in the broader developmental, family, and psychological literatures. Consequently, we urge scholars not to lose sight of this important tool as they advance to the next generation of their work. Continued advancements are necessary, especially as it relates to the interplay of ethnic and contextual correlates.

Finally, the volume demonstrates that the next major challenge facing scholars studying rural minority youths and families is to develop an ability to engage in contextually informed theorizing that rivals, in quality and sophistication, their engagement in culturally informed theorizing. As research relying on culturally informed theorizing has produced a better understanding of development generally (Fuller & García Coll, 2010), we anticipate that rural research relying on contextually informed theorizing can advance knowledge on development in rural contexts specifically and on contextual influences on development generally. Ultimately, it will be critical for scholars to theorize about the interplay between ethnic correlates and contextual correlates, a narrative for which this volume serves as a springboard. The best work is likely to come from those scholars who can successfully combine culturally and contextually informed theorizing to identify the specific proximal processes, person characteristics, aspects of contexts, and time that may facilitate matches or mismatches between the developing youth/family and the specific rural context under consideration. By way of example, addressing the interplay of ethnic and contextual correlates might suggest that the relatively cooperative orientation associated with the Mexican American culture (an ethnic correlate reflecting a key source of cultural variability; Knight & Carlo, 2012) may

make traditional Mexican American families especially effective at bartering when they live in rural communities with high concentrations of family farms (a contextual correlate reflecting a key source of rural variability). Similarly, it is possible that some immigrant parents (an ethnic correlate reflecting a key source of demographic diversity) view even lower-resourced US rural areas (a contextual correlate) as positive living contexts relative to areas they inhabited in their countries of origin due to the dual frame of reference afforded by the contrast of these life experiences. Their US-born children (living in the same rural context), however, may feel deprived relative to their mainstream (and urban) counterparts (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1996). Ultimately, an ability to integrate culturally and contextually informed theorizing to select the particular observations of PPCT theoretical constructs most salient to target groups and contexts should produce the richest scholarly advances. We hope that the heuristic tools offered here, in combination with discussions engendered across the volume, will facilitate continued progress in this critical area of scholarship.

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