Parenting In The Experience Economy: How Middle-Class Families Finesse A Changing Consumer Culture

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DATA

- UIC Chicago Area Study (February 2019-August 2019)
- Recruitment (100 interviews)
- Data Analysis
QUESTION

Does “experience parenting” signal a different style of parenting among the middle class? Does this style differ by race and sub-category?
FINDINGS

• Role of experiences, rise of “Experience Capital”

• Black and Latino parents (who were also more likely to be lower middle-class, recently experienced social mobility) engaged in and emphasized experience parenting more than white parents.

• For B/L parents, experiences are primarily epistemic and emotional exercises that create a system of knowledge about what is true, known and possible in the world. They differ from extra-curricular activities/concerted cultivation which aims to foster skills and talents (Lareau 2002).
IMPLICATIONS

• Experience capital undergirded by **racial inequality**; not neutral.

• Experiences are cultural products that provide resources for creating **strategies of action**; parents believed that “how they [children] approach life is shaped by…experiences for organizing and evaluating reality” (Swidler 1986).

• Differences among the middle-class: important to consider stories of **social mobility** as factor in parenting styles.

• Experience capital as **disruptive** of hegemonic norms.