

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

Yesenia Rosario Vargas
University of Illinois at Chicago
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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.