

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PUERTO RICAN SINGLE MOTHERS RAISING
CHILDREN IN A VIOLENT COMMUNITY

by
MIRIAN ZAVALA, M.S.N., R.N.

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Nursing Science in partial fulfillment of the
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Nursing Science, The City University of
New York

2012

Copyright © Mirian Zavala 2012

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Nursing satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Nursing Science

Keville Frederickson

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Keville Frederickson

Date

Executive Officer

Martha Whetsell_____

Ignasi Clemente_____

Norma Martinez-Rogers_____

Steve Baumann_____
Supervision Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

The Live Experience of Puerto Rican Single Mothers Raising Children in a Violent Community

by

Mirian Zavala, M.S.N., R.N.

Advisor: Professor Keville Frederickson

The prevalence of single mothers in the United States continues to increase. Adding to the pressures of single mothering is raising their children in a violent community. In the Bronx, where this study was conducted, Hispanics now represent more than 51% of the population up from 48.4% in 2000. In 2004, nation-wide, 26.6% of the Hispanics of Puerto Rican descent lived in single parent households. The lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers was examined using qualitative research based on van Manen's method. Each of the five participants were interviewed and told their story about living as a Puerto Rican single mother raising their children in a violent community. The six themes that emerged were: protection, family and friends, portending doom, belief in God, carrying extra loads, and turning points. The transformed essence that emerged was that Puerto Rican single mothers raised their children in a violent community by: protecting and monitoring their children's whereabouts through portending doom. They cope with bad situations by relying on family and friends, believing in God, carrying extra loads, and creating turning points. The nursing model, the RAM, was integrated into the essence statement, which stated that these women were able to adapt to a life of needing to protect their children, and the use of family and/or trusted neighbors in order to raise their children in a violent community by making positive choices at turning points. By portending doom rather than denying the events of the environment, they were able to protect

themselves and their children. The belief in God, as a philosophical approach to their reality, provided a link between the Puerto Rican single mothers who were raising their children in a violent community and the concept of adaptation.

Acknowledgements

My belief in God gives me strength.

To Nicole and Michelle, my wonderful daughters, thank you. I could not have earned my doctoral degree without your love and support.

To Hipolito and Virginia, my parents, I am me because of you even though you are not here.

To Dr. Keville Frederickson, who has been to me an angel without wings.

To Dr. Martha Whetsell, thank you for your support and dedication.

To Dr. Norma Martinez-Rogers, thank you for your time and support.

To Dr. Ignasi Clement and Dr. Steve Baumann, thank you for your time, insightful comments and support.

Table of Contents

Acceptance Page.....iii

Abstract.....iv

Acknowledgments.....vi

CHAPTER I: AIM OF THE STUDY.....1

Phenomenon of Interest.....2

Justification for Studying the Phenomenon of Choice.....3

Phenomenon Discussed Within the Context of Nursing.....4

Justification for Using Qualitative Research.....6

Biases and Assumptions Related to the Study.....8

Summary.....9

CHAPTER II: EVOLUTION OF THE STUDY.....10

Historical Context.....10

Family/Parental, Community Context11

Cultural Context13

Conceptual/Theoretical Context.....13

Experiential Context.....14

Summary of Chapter.....17

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....18

Phenomenology.....18

Philosophy of Phenomenology.....19

Edmund Husserl.....20

Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology.....20

Summary of the Chapter	21
CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY-APPLIED	23
van Manen’s Method of Phenomenological Research	23
Research Activities	24
Turning to the Phenomenology of Interest with Commitment	24
Investigating Experience as We Live It Rather Than as We Conceptualize it	25
Uncovering and Reflecting on the Essential Themes	25
Describe the Lived Experiences through the Application of language and Thoughtfulness of the Phenomenology	26
Awareness of the Relationship between the Research and Vocation, and between Theory and Life	27
Balance the Research Context by Considering the Parts of the Whole of the Lived Experiences	27
Bracketing	27
Protection of Human Subjects	28
Setting	29
Hispanics in the Bronx	30
Hispanics and Violence	31
Sample Selection	32
Data Collection	33
Data Storage	34
Data Analysis	35
Reliability, Validity, Rigorous	35

Summary of the Chapter	36
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS of Inquiry.....	37
Study Sample.....	37
Study Findings.....	38
The Participants’ Experiences.....	38
Thematic Analysis.....	42
Creation of Categories.....	42
Themes Common to All the Puerto Rican Single Mothers.....	43
Themes Common with Category Descriptors.....	43
Table of Themes Common with Category Descriptors.....	43
Determining Essential Themes.....	46
Essential Themes and Support.....	47
Essential Theme I:	47
Essential Theme II:	49
Essential Theme III:	50
Essential Theme IV:	51
Essential Theme V:	52
Essential Theme VI.....	54
Essence.....	55
Summary of Chapter	56
CHAPTER VI: REFLECTION ON THE FINDINGS.....	57
Synthesis of Data and Literature.....	57
Essential Theme 1.....	57

Essential Theme 2.....	58
Essential Theme 3.....	60
Essential Theme 4.....	62
Essential Theme 5.....	63
Essential Theme 6.....	64
Reflections Using a Nursing Model Perspective.....	65
Limitations of the Study.....	67
Discussion.....	67
Implications for Nursing Practice.....	68
Implications for Future Research.....	69
Summary and Conclusion.....	70
Appendix A: Informed Consent Form.....	71
Appendix B: Informed Consent Procedures.....	73
Appendix C: Participant Survey Questionnaire.....	76
Appendix D: List of Group Service for Participants.....	77
Appendix E: Themes Identified from Initial Analysis of Data.....	78
References.....	81

CHAPTER I

Aim of the Study

Empirical research has placed attention on traditions, as well as the influences that society has on the role of motherhood. Carol Stacks' "*All our Kin*" (1974) stated that the experience of motherhood changed her life forever. Motherhood brings excitement and anxiety (Stacks, 1974). The stressors of raising a child have been documented by psychology, sociology, religion and other disciplines (Bank, Forgatch, Patterson, & Fetrow, 1993; Jackson, Brooks-Gunn, Huang, & Glassman, 2000; Simon, Beaman, Conger, & Chow, 1993). The role of mothering a child is complex, and it is made more complex when mothers must parent as single mothers.

The prevalence of single mothers in the United States continues to increase (Usdansky, 2003). Adding to the pressures of single mothering is raising them in a violent community. The presence of violence in communities is at an all-time high. Although violence in communities seems to date back to the Declaration of Independence in this country, it was not until 1980 that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) labeled community violence as a public health problem (CDC, 2009). It is after such recognition by the CDC that numerous empirical studies examined and documented the deleterious effects of community violence (Ceballo, Dahl, Aretakis & Ramirez, 2001; Hurt, Malmud, Brodsky, & Giannetta, 2001; Krenichyn, Saegert & Evans, 2001; Richters & Martinez, 1993).

Cultural differences among single mothers also contribute to their experiences. The need to understand experiences from the perspective of a culture has been emphasized in the literature (Miranda, Bilot, Peluso, Berman, & van Meek, 2006). The Hispanic population across the United States has grown dramatically from 35.6 million in 2000 to 44.3 million in 2006 (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2008). In 2004, nationwide, 26.6% of the Hispanics of Puerto Rican descent lived in single-parent households (American Community Survey-Hispanic, 2007). The greatest growth has been in urban areas. In the Bronx, where this study was conducted, Hispanics now represent more than 51% of the population up from 48.4% in 2000 (Bronx Data Center: Lehman College, 2010). Research that investigates the phenomena of single mothering has utilized primarily quantitative approaches; however, qualitative research that explores the experiences of single mothers is rare.

The aim of this study was to uncover the lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) raising their children in a violent community. This qualitative study utilized a descriptive phenomenological approach according to Merleau-Ponty and van Manen (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenon of Interest

The phenomenon of interest for this study was the lived experience of PRSM raising children in a violent community. For the purpose of this study, the term single mother was defined as a mother who has the daily responsibility of raising a child or children. The definitions of mothering entail the forceful and interpersonal activities that are versatile and sacrificing (Wollett & Phoenix, 1991). In 1998, there were 11.9 million single parents living in the United States (Noble, Eby, Lockwood & Allen, 2004).

Approximately 28.6% of all Hispanic families in 2007 were Puerto Rican female householders without husbands (Current Population Survey, 2009). Jones, Forehand, O'Connell, Armistad & Brody (2005) stated that single mothers reported that their children displayed more behavioral problems, as compared to the children of married couples. Therefore, single mothers experienced more role strain than the two-parent households. According to Bank et al., (1993),

psychological problems are double among children from households of single mothers.

However, the literature has not examined how PRSM raise their children in a violent community.

Thus, it is pivotal to study the phenomenon of interest, the lived experience of PRSM raising their children in a violent community.

Justification for Study of the Phenomenon of Choice

This study was conducted to illuminate the meaning of motherhood for PRSM within an environment of violence that further increases the challenges of raising a child. In the limited review of the literature where violence is examined, there seems to exist an ambivalence, which adds to the ambiguity of the definition of mothering (Deleire & Kalil, 2002; Wollett & Phoenix, 1991). At times, the term seems to refer to raising a child or children in a two-parent family, while others refer to raising children in a single-parent family. Regardless of the above, what is clear is that the term single mother is more than just giving birth to a child; it is being the guardian, the protector and nurturer. Furman & Buhrmester (1992) state that the relationship with a mother is significant because it has an effect on the acquisition of the socialization process, which has been linked to positive psychosocial outcomes.

Parent-child interactions may be disturbed when the environmental factors of community violence impacts the functioning of the family (Lynch & Cicchetti, 2002). In a study conducted by Johnson, Solomon, Shields, McDonald, McKenzie, & Gielen (2009), they reported that some urban communities experienced violence on a daily basis and that mothers are champions in protecting their children from the violence in these communities. Bowlby (1988) has suggested that one way to help children is by helping their parents. Parents who have received assistance are more likely to experience less stress, which then allows them to focus their energies in the management of their children's behavior (Moore, Probst, Tompkins, Cuffe, & Martin, 2007).

Little is known of the protective factors insulating single mothers and their children, and not all risk factors are precursors in those communities (Lynch & Cicchetti, 2002; Richters & Martinez, 1993). There is a pressing need to identify factors of the exposure to community violence and its effects (Stockdale, Wells, Lingqui, Thomas, Zhang, & Sherbourne, 2007). Studies also indicate that single-parent status may be viewed with stereotypical attitudes in the context of family roles of not being effective parents (Noble, Eby, Lockwood, & Allen, 2004).

The term Hispanic represents a classification term used in the United States, which refers to those who are Argentinean, Cuban, Chicano, Colombian, Puerto Rican, Guatemalan, Dominican, Costa Rican, Nicaraguan, Salvadorian, Central, South American, and the Caribbean, all of whom speak Spanish, regardless of race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). There were not any studies found that explored the lived experience of PRSM in violent communities. This study will be important because it addresses the Puerto Rican community; therefore, it is critical to describe as it refers to the cultural and situational context. It is a pressing challenge for science and nursing in this decade to understand how PRSM raise their children in a violent community in order to develop appropriate interventions.

Phenomenon Discussed within the Context of Nursing

Mothering is viewed by nursing as an interdependent relationship between a mother and child, or mother and children (Broom, 1994). Practices of mothering are seen as “natural, universal and unchanging” (Glenn, Chang & Forcey, 1994, p. 4). The role of a mother is more significant than her status in a marriage or career (Rogers & White, 1998). Mothering has more meaning in minority women due to their cultural beliefs of their extended families (Segura & Pierce, 1993). In this context, it is not the phenomenon of giving birth that it is important but the role of raising children, which is important. What is pivotal in this study was to explore the

phenomenon of mothering in a violent community. The specific contextual focus was on Puerto Rican single mothers and violent communities.

There is a paucity in the literature that examines how single mothers raise their children in a violent community. There are even fewer studies of minority single mothers raising children in a violent community (Jones, Forehand, O'Connell, Armistad, & Brody, 2005). An example of this finding is noted by Jones et al., (2005) where he reported that African-American single mothers, who used co-parents and friends to monitor their children in a community, where they perceived to have high rates of violence and moving away is not an option. The study was conducted by investigating 277 African-American mothers with 7 to 15-year-old children from rural and urban areas. Forehand, Miller, Dutra, & Chance (1997) reported that parental monitoring may be relevant in communities with safety issues.

Little research has been completed on raising children in a violent community. The research that exists has focused primarily on determining the accuracy of parents' awareness compared to the amount of violence that their children report. The findings indicate that parents greatly underestimate the frequency of violence that their children are exposed to (Ceballo et al., 2001). Other parenting research focuses on parenting behaviors and/or parenting style as a mediator of the effects of a child's exposure to violence (Ceballo et al., 2001). As nurses work closely with school personnel to identify children who are in need of help, they provide an important service to society because its goal is to help clients live a productive life in their own communities. Today, nurses are not only the bridge linking clients to other healthcare personnel, but they also provide their clients with resources to reach and encourage them to take their first steps to a new life.

Justification for Using Qualitative Research

Quantitative research has not solved the phenomenon of single mothers raising their children in violent communities. Crime rates in communities have decreased due to the baby boomers population aging out (American Psychological Association [APA], 1996). However, the violence in the communities remains alarmingly high, as well as its sequelae (Ceballo et al., 2001; Hurt, et al., 2001; Krenichyn, Saegert, & Evans, 2001). The consequences of being raised in as well as living in violent communities remain over a life time (Ceballo et al., 2001; Gorman-Smith, Henry, & Tolan, 2004; Hurt et al., 2001; Krenichyn et al., 2001), utilized a quantitative methodology, providing little insight into actual experiences that parents and their children report. The Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) kept their children busy with activities outside the community, going to the Bronx Zoo and other tourist-like monuments. In addition, some of the PRSM selected which children their children played with and were told not to play with the other children in the community.

Phenomenology is a particular method in conducting science, describing the lived experience of individual in that living the phenomena and not looking for causal correlation nor statistical data applicable to the populations being studied (Husserl, 1962). Qualitative research is important in examining the lived experience of PRSM raising their children in a violent community because violence continues in the community.

It is known that phenomenology is the “science of examples” (Munhall, 2007). Examples of lived experience are needed in order to increase the understanding of PRSM raising their children in a violent community. People must return to “the things-in-themselves” to understand and obtain knowledge (Husserl, 1962). Descriptive phenomenology is an appropriate

method for exploring the PRSM experience raising their children in a violent community, as in-depth interviews provide narratives that will tell their story.

Phenomenology is the description of how the person has experienced the phenomenon, not how it functions; it is describing the essences of the lived experience as they live them (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). According to Husserl (1962), the researcher could come to being fairly accurate to understanding the lived experience by utilizing both intuiting and rigorous examination of the lived experience of the individual. The qualitative method of phenomenology was chosen for this study to explore the meaning of PRSM raising their children in a violent community. Descriptive phenomenology is an appropriate method for exploring this phenomenon because this phenomenon has not been previously described in nursing or other disciplines within the context of a qualitative research study. Phenomenology is the study of lived experience of people and their life-world, providing a method for nursing researchers to conduct qualitative studies. This lends itself to facilitating the researcher to obtain an innate sense of the lived experience.

The literature review conducted suggests there is a paucity of research studies addressing single mothers whose children are exposed to community violence and less on Hispanic mothers' experiences. Moreover, there are no published accounts of how Puerto Rican single mothers experience raising their children in violent communities. The findings obtained from this study will enhance the understanding of the lived experience in order for nursing to design appropriate interventions addressing the needs of this population (van Manen, 1990). Understanding the experience of PRSM whose children are exposed to community violence will support the need for a foundation to design interventions for practice. Therefore, the research question is: What is the lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers raising children in a violent community?

Biases and Assumptions Related to the Study

I have had experiences living in violent communities though I did not know it at the time that my community was violent. I recalled visiting relatives that lived closer to the infamous area of Fort Apache in the Bronx. My family and friends, at the time, acknowledged that area as being a bad area. Interesting to note, in Spanish “malo” was used to describe a community with violence as opposed to “violencia.” Malo means bad, not good, and signified that those violent areas in a community must be avoided.

In general, Puerto Ricans migrating to the United States selected communities to live in based on proximity to family and friends and affordability. Everyone was basically in the same income group with different variations of being poor and disadvantaged. The first family member arriving in New York City assisted other arriving family members by providing a place to live and, more importantly, helping them to find jobs. I grew up listening to my parents and family members sharing their experiences of arriving in New York City, living with a family member and being able to find a job with family members or friends. A sense of pride was on their faces, particularly on the men as they each described having a job and working hard to provide for their families with the basic needs of food and shelter during the few social events. Living in those communities meant the community residents were aware that being careful with their pocket books and taking out too much money at one time was a risky behavior that may have led to being robbed. During the bus ride to and from school, violent situations were ameliorated by sitting or standing in the front; the back of the bus was avoided in order to be safe from violence. My father and my mother, as many others, did not venture out at night, and I would hear them say it was not safe to be out at night. All of these safety precautions may have led to feelings of anxiety. However, no one spoke of their feelings to living in communities

where safety was a major concern. Behaviors were verbalized, but there was not any mention of trying to understand what was going on around them.

Being a single mother is a challenge, which is compounded more by living in a violent community. My bias is that all mothers, regardless of ethnicity or race, will protect and provide for their children; however, those with more resources may be able to shield their child from the sequelae of living in violent communities when moving away is not an option.

Summary

Mothering is considered a critical and one of the most challenging roles for a woman during her life time. Mothering is an array of happiness, pain, anxiety, joy sacrifice, and self-fulfillment. The definitions of mothering vary in accordance to which a phenomenon is described; yet, something that does not change it is that mothering is universal. For this study, what is vital to explore is the mothering experience in a violent community. This study hopes to examine the concept empirically while analyzing the experiences, and, second, examining the concept theoretically.

Chapter II

Evolution of the Study

Historical Context

Across the United States, the 1960's experienced an increase in single-parent families due to divorce, family abandonment, and non-marital families (Uzdansky, 2003). In 1970, there were 234,000 single-parent families (women never married with children under 18 years), and the numbers increased to 902,000 by 1979, representing a near quadrupling of the phenomenon (Rawlings, 1980). However, the literature cited single mothers as not effective parents with their children at risk for negative consequences (Deleire & Kalil, 2002). Not all families headed by single mothers are alike (Deleire & Kalil, 2002). The 20th century conveyed an ambivalent opinion of divorce and experienced a decrease in the discussion of non-marital children in their literature (Uzdansky, 2003).

Family is an important cultural value to the Hispanic population (Hispanic and Latino: National Healthy Marriage Resource Center; Steidel & Contreras, 2003). As of July 2007, the Hispanic population comprises about fifteen percent of the total U.S. population with an estimated 45.4 million individuals reporting Hispanic ethnicity (Hispanic and Latino: National Healthy Marriage Resource Center). Sixty-six percent of Hispanic children live with their married parents compared to nearly 77% of all U.S. children who live with their married parents. The Hispanic parents usually have more children than other racial and ethnic groups (Hispanic and Latino: National Healthy Marriage Resource Center). Marriage in the Hispanic population is seen as extending beyond the married couple, influenced by the cultural belief of familism/colectivismo (Luna, de Ardon, Lim, Cromwell, Philip, & Russell, 1996). Being a good parent to children and involving extended family members or close friends as trusted sources of

support are common beliefs and practices upheld by the Hispanics (Luna, de Ardon et al., 1996). The divorce rates among Hispanics were 6% in the men and 11% of the women compared to the rest of the population with 9% in men and 11% of the women in 2000 (Graefe & Lichter, 2002).

Family, Parental and Community Context

Bronfenbrenner (1977) stated that the interactions between individuals and their environment significantly impact development. According to Maccoby (1992) family is the most significant milieu for the development of a child. The children's patterns of behavior will be prescribed by their family, and it will manifest in adulthood (APA, 1996). Over the years, there has been increasing importance placed on the roles of motherhood and the family on a child's adaptation to their environment whether it is to school, friendships, or behaviors in general.

Richters & Martinez (1993) suggest that parental interventions of monitoring and supervising their children are effective strategies. One effective strategy is that family social support has the ability to decrease a child's anxiety, resulting from exposure to community violence (Hill and Madhere, 1996). When parents have more distress, their children tend to exhibit a decrease in the ability to cope and display more symptoms. Thus, parents should be cognizant that children are influenced by their reactions to community violence (Linares, Heeren, Bronfman, Zuckerman, Augustyn, & Tronick, 2001).

According to research (Luna et al., 1996), the role of mothering provides a primary influence on early child rearing within the family. Likewise, mothers are instrumental in providing the early coping mechanisms that influence the child's ability to thwart violence. Thus, the role of the mother is to protect their children from community violence (Johnson et al., 2009), which may be achieved by conveying certain values, skills, and attitudes. Although this

has been demonstrated, there is very little research on the effects of mothering on children's adaptation to living in violent communities. Therefore, the literature used to support this role of mothering, focusing more on the role of parenting. Few empirical studies have been conducted to examine the role of the family on their children's exposure to community violence (Ceballo et al., 2001; Gorman-Smith, Henry, & Tolan, 2004; Krenichyn et al., 2001) let alone qualitative studies. The purpose of this study was to illuminate the role of mothering in PRSM in a violent community, using literature on parenting to provide the context.

Community violence can be defined as exposure to acts of muggings, burglary, use of weapons, gun shots, and presence of gangs, drugs, committed by individuals who are not intimately related to the victim (NCCEV, 2006). According to Schwab-Stone, Ayers, Kaprow, Voyce, Barone, Shriver, & Weissberg (1995), community violence also includes the witnessing of violence and observing someone being shot within the past year. Studies examined the impact of violence in the community and children's exposure to community violence (Ceballo et al., 2001; Krenichyn et al., 2001; Linares, Hereen, Bronfman, Zuckerman, Augustyn, & Tronick, 2001; Lynch & Cicchetti, 2002; Osofsky, 1995). Other studies examined parents' underestimating the amount of their children's exposure to community violence (Krenichyn et al., 2001; Linares et al., 2001; Osofsky, 1995). Perhaps, then, if parents underestimate the amount of their children's exposure to community violence, it is less likely that they will implement interventions or strategies to decrease the effects of community violence. Therefore, to help the children, we must help the parents (Bowlby, 1988).

Cultural Context

Puerto Ricans share common characteristics with other Hispanic groups, such as the Spanish language and the ancestry of Spain. Guarnaccia, Pincay, Alegria, ShROUT, Louis-Fernandez & Canino (2007) documented diversity among the Hispanic groups based on their relationships with their countries of origin and immigration. The distinction is that Puerto Ricans born on the island are United States citizens. Many Puerto Ricans living on the mainland are bilingual, compared to Mexican-Americans, or tend to only speak in English in the northeast section of the U.S. with successive generations (Guarnaccia et al., 2007; Torres-Matrullo, 1975). However, the predominant language for the Puerto Rican population arriving from the island is Spanish. This is a challenge for them when trying to access social services and healthcare in the United States. Poor Puerto Rican mothers were less likely to access “traditional health services” (Bassuk, Perloff, & Garcia, 1998). The Puerto Rican family values and gender roles are rooted in their Hispanic culture, which may contrast with the host culture particularly when accessing healthcare (Rivera-Batiz & Santiago, 1994).

Conceptual/Theoretical Context

The findings from the use of a qualitative method for this study provide data that has shed more light on the concepts of mothering within the context of culture. From the perspective of social science, the role of mothering has been viewed as a dynamic social interdependence between mother and child (Bank, Foratch, Patterson, & Fetrow, 1993; Deleire & Kalil, 2002). From a psychological perspective, it is agreed that motherhood is an exclusive, child-centered, and emotionally-involved state (Bank et al. 1993; Deleire & Kalil, 2002). What needed to be investigated, however, was the lived-experience of living in a violent community and how these activities are culturally structured to give theoretical meaning to PRSM. Central to the concept

of mothering, this research aimed to discover what PRSM had experienced and what it had been like for them to raise their child as a single parent in a violent community. Another aim was to understand their experiences from the perspective of culture and phenomenology.

Experiential Context

Much of my story is very personal. The names I refer to are fictitious to protect the privacy of those around me. Gloria was a stay-at-home wife and mother. On a daily basis, she would repeat to her children safety behaviors to implement if, on the happenstance, she would be late in meeting them at school. As a young girl about eleven years of age, I heard my mother and a neighbor, Carmen, discussing her younger brother's incarceration. He was the child of Carmen's father's second marriage. The father was a merchant-marine, which meant he was out at sea for most of the year. Papo (nickname) was about 17 years of age, and he belonged to a neighborhood gang. At the time, it was the norm to be part of a gang in order to 'survive' and not to "get jumped," and/or was seen as a status symbol through difference lenses and perspectives. The choice was to join one of the gangs available. The choice of not joining was not a realistic goal in communities in the throngs of violence, drug use, and poverty.

In one of the poorest sections of the Bronx near the infamous Fort Apache area, Vicky was pressured to join a gang. They were going to jump her. The rescue plan developed by her parents was to send her to live with her aunt and uncle out of the United States where the gang could not reach her. Unfortunately, she was stained with one of the value systems of the poorest neighborhoods in the Bronx and Harlem in Manhattan. She succumbed to the negative value system of (alcohol abuse, drug use, gangs) by eventually dying before she turned 25 years of age and leaving behind two young sons and two young daughters.

A positive experience of children facing community violence was the involvement of caring parents, the Rodriguez family. The parents would keep their three sons and one daughter busy with church involvement, sports, and the parents' attention to them. Their daughter is now a college graduate, their two oldest sons are in college, and the youngest is in high school.

The stories that I shared are about families consisting of a father and a mother and their children living in violent communities. I could imagine how much more challenging it is to raise children as single mothers living in violent communities. As a result, my passion is about what these PRSM's experiences living in a violent community, how they see the community, care for their children and the obstacles and supports they perceive. Conducting this research from an "emic" perspective will illuminate the phenomenon of interest. It will give an understanding from an insider's perspective in increasing the knowledge of cultural factors not previously considered in quantitative studies (Bryman, 1988).

In addition to my earlier experiences, as both a nursing student and nursing faculty, many of my students and colleagues are single mothers. As single mothers, they talked about their trials and tribulations of raising their children. They also talked about their communities and the environments that they and their children lived in. Probably, some of the most difficult stories to hear were those from these single mothers living who had stories about trying to raise their children in neighborhoods where there were constant threats, such as robberies, muggings, knifings, and shootings.

Another of my experiences of working on a community-based research project also instilled more interest in this phenomenon. This project implemented a program that taught and supported staff in an after school program for third and fourth grade children in rough neighborhoods. They were taught how to deal with the world using skills, such as refusal (drugs

and alcohol), and communication with peers and parents, and third- and fourth-grade children. I observed the children becoming offensive in response to another child accidentally bumping into one another, responding to an offending look perceived as a sign of impending aggression, sitting in their seat because that child took something of theirs, hearing that one child invites another child to leave the after-school yard to buy potato chips without informing the staff, and skipping school to go to a “house party”. All of these situations have escalated. As I thought about it, I felt stressed, imagine the children’s responses. Not only did I observe these behaviors in the after-school programs where I assisted in teaching social skills, I observed these behaviors in the violent communities that I lived in.

My personal experiences also influenced my realization of how environmental influences affect children. Through my work with the Life Skills project, I realized the importance of giving children the tools and social skills to avoid and prevent drug and alcohol abuse, and to join gangs. The possibility of assisting children to positively adapt to their violent communities encouraged me to pursue this research study. Bowlby proposes in that in order to help the children, parents must receive help too (Bowlby, 1988; Bretherton, 1992). The children’s responses to this program were positive. One particular child stated that he would like more training. He also said that it helped him to understand how to make a decision that did not involve retaliation when another child “cut” in front of him while they were lining up. Although this particular program did not address parenting in a violent community, I realized that the parents needed additional support to adapt to living in a community with high crime and violence because, for many, moving out was not an option. The work in the community, as well as my experiences near my home, helped me to identify this need for the study; however, it may also have generated some of my biases.

Summary of Chapter

The historical context includes that the sixtieth decade in the United States, experiencing a tremendous increase of single-parent families from divorce, family abandonment and non-marital families. The literature cites single mothers as not being effective parents, putting their children at risk for negative consequences; however, few empirical studies have been conducted to examine the role of the family on their children's exposure to community violence (Ceballo, 2001; Gorman-Smith, Henry, & Tolan, 2004; Krenichyn et al., 2001) in addition to qualitative studies. My experiential context presented in this chapter includes my experiences living in violent communities, my observations of the children's responses to living in violent communities (e.g., responding very defensively while simultaneously giving the impression of offensive behaviors). Gloria would daily repeat safety behaviors to her children to implement if on the happenstance she would be late in meeting them at school.

Family is an important cultural value for Hispanics (Hispanic and Latino: National Healthy Marriage Resource Center; Steidel & Contreras, 2003). What happens when the families are not available or are stressed themselves? Being a good parent to children and involving extended family members or close friends as trusted sources of support are common beliefs and practices upheld by the Hispanic population (Luna et al., 1996).

Chapter III

The Methodology

Phenomenology

Phenomenology can be challenging to describe and to understand. Phenomenological vocabulary includes concepts and terms that must be described here to aid with the dialogue. The essence is the most essential meaning of an experience in a particular context (Kleiman, 2004). The essence of lived experience is presented to human consciousness as objects of immediate pre-reflective consciousness, as a result of having attached meaning in the process of recalling the experience (Drew, 2004; Kleiman, 2004). Phenomenology describes precisely the conscious act (intentionality), the relation of the primary structure of the conscious act (intentionality), and the objective entity (Husserl, 1962), the structure of experiences as brought to the consciousness (Dreyhus & Spinoza, 1999). Intentionality is the relation between the thing people are thinking and how they think about it, bringing it to consciousness. Husserl (1962) introduces the concept of reduction, an innovative way of looking at the world, which is a new science called phenomenology. Reduction involves using a subject's perspective as a way to outline the conditions of the experience through bracketing, the withholding of prior knowledge of the phenomenon. It assumes naïve openness to describing the phenomena being study, and it seeks objective knowledge through reduction (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). It is putting into abeyance the natural attitude to better understand the phenomena (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The natural attitude, one's experience in the life world, is the structure by one's prior learning, assumptions, and preconceptions that contribute to the meaning of the experience (Munhall, 2007) results when two people have shared perception of reality in the natural attitude (Drew, 2004). Understanding

can be affected by people's own subjectivities in their life-worlds with their natural attitude when they interact with another individual because:

The world is knowable only through the subjectivity of being in the world. Objectivity, as a quest for reliability and validity, depends on the recognition of this relationship between mind and body, subject and object, and the knowledge that this or any knowing comes about through consciousness. (Munhall, 2007, p. 161)

Max van Manen (1990) describes phenomenology as the difference between research method and research methodology. For van Manen, methodology constitutes the philosophical basis and assumptions underlying the approach to the study of the phenomenon of interest. A method is the technique used to perform the research and grasp its philosophical underpinning. Edmund Husserl (1962) developed the phenomenological method to make possible a descriptive account of human experiences. This chapter discusses phenomenology as developed by Edmund Husserl (1962), expanded by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), and the specific method used according to van Manen (van Manen, 1990).

Philosophy of Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach changed the focus of philosophy and science from objects in nature, utilizing the quantitative analytic approach to consciousness itself that embraces the qualitative aspect of the human experience. Phenomenological research queries how humans experience the world (van Manen, 1990). The phenomenological approach searches to illuminate what it means to be human as the phenomenon is brought to consciousness (Munhall, 2007; Polifroni & Welch, 1999).

Edmund Husserl

Edmund Husserl, considered the father of phenomenology, developed it as a science of human consciousness (Munhall, 2007). Husserl's (1962) concept of the life world is the individual's direct experience. According to Husserl (1962), phenomenology's goal is to describe precisely the conscious act (intentionality), the relation of the primary structure of the conscious act (intentionality), and the objective entity. He explained intentionality as the relation between the thing you are thinking and how you think about it, bringing it to consciousness. The Husserlian phenomenological approach is the complete description of the phenomenon as experienced by the individual. Merleau-Ponty (1962) expanded on Husserl's work by recommending that to illuminate the phenomenon, one must return to the things themselves.

Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1964) work provided the philosophical framework for this research study. The goal of phenomenological studies is to understand the meaning of the phenomenon by interpreting human experience. Merleau-Ponty (1962) views humans as experiencing the world through the body. The goal of this study was to understand the lived experience of PRSM raising their children in a violent community. The philosophy of Merleau-Ponty is a perfect fit for nursing research, given that he views humans as experiencing the world through the body, which is the most appropriate philosophical underpinning for this nursing qualitative research study (Thomas, 2005). The body lives prior to opinions and ideas, conveying the quality of objects and giving meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Thomas, 2005). When the relationship between the body and the world is perturbed, the individual's existence is impacted (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Phenomenological research facilitates nursing to view the participants' life-world as their lived experience is illuminated (Thomas, 2005). The goal is to understand their lived experience by placing the natural attitude into abeyance in order to better

understand the phenomenon. Phenomenological research will give a direct, full description of the phenomenon and not provide causal explanations (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). This requires placing into abeyance people's preconceived knowledge in order to better understand the phenomenon. Phenomenological research is needed to get a full description of the phenomenon (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

All meaning comes from perception because perception is learned as a natural attitude through the years from ancestors and culture according to Husserl (1962). This perceived world is the "true real being" given to immediate experience previous to reflective thought and "each body with its own structure selects ways to adapt" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. XVI). For this study, this researcher was trying to determine how nursing may support PRSM to assist them and their children to adapt to their exposure to community violence.

Summary of the Chapter

Husserl (1962) developed the philosophy of phenomenology, which was expanded upon by Merleau-Ponty (1962). The aim of this study is to understand the lived experience of PRSM raising their children in a violent community. This requires placing into abeyance our preconceive knowledge in order to better understand the phenomenon. Phenomenological research is needed to get a full description of the phenomenon (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The method to be used in this study is the phenomenology as described by Max van Manen, which is discussed in Chapter IV. Phenomenology is the study of lived experience of people and their life world (van Manen, 1990). It examines the phenomenon as the actually experience (Munhall & Chenail, 2008). Phenomenological research is a scientific approach to systematically understand the meanings embedded in lived experience. Phenomenology explicates themes systematically while it is being true to the essence of the lived experience (van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology

was selected for this study to illuminate the lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) raising their children in a violent community.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY APPLIED

Maurice Merleau Ponty's work discusses the lived experience, embodiment, and primacy of perception (1964). He stipulates that consciousness is a state, in which an individual interacts with the world and permits an interpretation of the individual's experience. His second concept, the embodiment, is a state of how the consciousness is aware of being-in-the world. Merleau-Ponty explains that through the consciousness and embodiment, the individual experiences the world (1964). Through his primacy of perception, he defined it as, "the experience of perception is our presence at the moment when the things, truth, values are constituted for us" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.25).

The chapter discusses the methodology of Max van Manen as applied to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. His phenomenological approach to this research of Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) raising children in a violent community is discussed.

Van Manen's Method of Phenomenological Research

This study was guided by the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty (1962) and the research methodology of van Manen (1990). Van Manen's research method was derived from Merleau-Ponty's (1962) work. The purpose of using van Manen's phenomenological method to collect and analyze the data is to reveal the meaning of the lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers raising their children in a violent community.

To conduct a phenomenological research according to van Manen, the researcher must implement a methodical structure of: identifying the lived experience, investigating the experience as the participants live it, reflecting on essential themes, describing the phenomenon,

maintaining a strong and oriented relation, and balancing the research context (van Manen, 1990). The goal of obtaining the data was achieved by applying van Manen's method to the phenomenon of interest.

Research Activities

The research method used for this study followed the six research activities as outlined by van Manen (1990). Van Manen's six research activities are as follows:

1. Turning to a phenomenon, which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. Reflecting on the essential themes, which characterize the phenomenon;
4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; and
6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (van Manen, 1990, pp. 30-31).

Turning to the Phenomenon of Interest with Commitment

Turning to the phenomenon of interest with commitment is the first step in conducting phenomenological research (van Manen, 1990). This involves the identification of the phenomenon of interest. For me, this evolved from my work in the Bronx After-School Program of Life Skills. I taught life skills to the after-school staff at several public schools in violent communities, and how to teach 3rd and 4th graders the skills to survive and to reduce the incidence of risk behaviors. In addition, I trained the after-school staff to teach life skills to parents. The participating parents verbalized wanting more opportunities to learn and to reinforce the life skills training program to their children. I also observed how stressed the parents were living in this violent community when they came to pick up their children. This, in

turn, became my phenomenon. As a result, this study was designed to illuminate the meaning of their experiences by recording their lived experience. I examined the nature of the lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers raising children in a violent community. I became immersed in the phenomenon by reading about it, spending more time with the children in the program and reflecting on exactly what was the problem I wanted to understand.

Investigating Experience as We Live It rather than as We Conceptualize It.

The second step, according to van Manen (1990), is investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it. To do this, I interviewed single mothers to investigate their experiences as they lived them. I selected participants based on the criteria of being Puerto Ricans, single mothers, raising children and living in a violent community. I listened to their stories in face to face, in-depth interviews. This was done according to van Manen recommendations (1990), which states that one should listen without bias and be present to hear the lived experience. As I progressed, I was able to explore the Puerto Rican single mothers' (PRSM) lived experience from their perspectives by listening to their stories and finding the strength of their experiences (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Through the narratives, each participant shared her experiences of being a PRSM raising children in a violent community.

Uncovering and Reflecting on the Essential Themes

The third step involves uncovering and reflecting on the essential themes. Max van Manen (1990) posits that the "meaning of lived experience is usually hidden or veiled" (p. 27). I sought to uncover the hidden meaning of the PRSM experience parenting in a violent community by first listening to the audio-taped interviews. I, then, read the transcribed interviews, as I listened to the audio-tapes to provide the input from both auditory and visual senses to capture the full meaning and descriptions of their lived experience. In addition, the notations from my

journal which included my feelings, were also examined for themes and threads. In reading and re-reading the transcripts, the aim was to reflect on the narratives and try to uncover the themes and essence of their stories. It should be noted that, in an attempt to bracket, my assumptions and biases were noted in Chapter One and that my experiences might have contributed to a skewed interpretation of the findings as written in Chapter 2. I also kept a journal, in which I wrote my reactions that occurred during or after the interviews.

Describe the Lived Experiences through the Application of Language and Thoughtfulness of the Phenomenon

The fourth step describes the lived experience through the application of language and thoughtfulness of the phenomenon. The purpose is to describe the experiences in a textual expression, which is the object of the research process according to van Manen (1990). I accomplished this by highlighting selected words or statements that seemed to represent the phenomenon. Group of phrases were placed in categories, after selecting words or phrases that best represented the participants' experiences and notes were made in the margins. These words and phrases were synthesized as textual statements, and they were listed as categories. The categories, in multiple statements, captured the experiences of Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM).

After reviewing the statements in the categories, themes emerged that seem to have commonalities. I asked each participant to review their transcripts. This allowed the participants to change or augment the themes, and every participant concurred with me.

In general, the experts arrived at a consensus. A few examples of disagreements included renaming the original theme of anticipation, but as we discussed the concept, the final agreement

for the theme was “portending doom” and adding the theme of “turning points” to reflect events, in which the participants totally revised their situations.

Awareness of the Relationship between the Research and Vocation, and between Theory and Life

The fifth step is the awareness of the relationship between the research and vocation, and between theory and life (van Manen, 1990). After putting the lived experience of the phenomenon into textual expression, I considered the themes as described by the participants and the literature. While implementing this fifth step of the research, I went back to my original question and to the aim of my study. This assisted me in further considering the themes, and revising or refining them.

Balance the Research Context by Considering the Parts and the Whole of the Lived Experiences

The sixth research activity is to balance the research context by considering the parts and the whole of the lived experience. “At several points it is necessary to look back at the total, at the contextual givens and how each of the parts needs to contribute to the total” (van Manen, 1990, pp. 33-34). I frequently appraised the text to look for the significance of the parts of the lived experiences and considered how it related to the whole textual structure. In addition, I periodically reviewed the transcripts to determine if it revealed the phenomenon of interest. I identified the themes written into thematic statements that resulted in the essences that emerged.

Bracketing

Bracketing puts the natural attitude in abeyance to facilitate things to emerge as they appear. The natural attitude is acquired from our experiences (van Manen, 1990). Bracketing sets aside the researcher’s assumptions and biases from the participant’s actual experience. This

process will negate what the participant may think the researcher wants to hear. I bracketed my preconceived biases and assumption by identifying them and keeping a journal about my thoughts, ideas, and experiences after each interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One example of bracketing my assumptions was the courage Delia displayed when she left her common-law husband, the father of her two children while pregnant with their third child. Another example of courage was when Carmen displayed that she left her husband even though her oldest child was a little over 4 years of age and her youngest was almost one year old, being a stay-at-home spouse and mother. Another example of bracketing my assumptions was questioning the length of time it took a woman to leave an abusive spouse. I wondered why it took so long for an abused woman to leave. I think some women may have felt shame when they are asked why they did not leave sooner.

Protection of Human Subjects

The approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained on December 14, 2010, from the Graduate Center, City University New York (CUNY). The purpose of the study and research question was clarified to each participant. The time commitment, open-ended questions, and their storytelling were also explained to them. Confidentiality is a concern and was maintained, as cited in the Informed Consent form, that all the information obtained will be kept confidential. Also, the audio-taped interviews were stored in a locked cabinet to which I and my doctoral colleagues had access (see Informed Consent Appendix A).

The consent process facilitates a verbal explanation to address all concerns and reminding the participants of the right to withdraw at any time. The reminders occurred before signing the informed consent form, before the interview, and at the completion of the interview (see Process Consent in Appendix B).

I conducted face-to-face interviews at the location of choice of the participants to facilitate privacy and to make them feel comfortable in sharing their lived experiences with me. Privacy was maintained in their homes or private spaces of their choices that had soft music playing in the background.

I was cognizant that strong emotions may be experienced by the participants, which could be emotionally distressing. To address this issue, a list of a resource was given for support through mental health counseling (see appendix C). I clearly explained my role as the researcher (deMarrais & Tisdale, 2002), and not as a potential therapist. Data were stored in a locked cabinet and maintained on an encrypted drive at the University of Pittsburgh, as a mode to protect the participants' privacy and confidentiality.

Setting

A phenomenological study inquires about the deeper, true meaning, and understanding the essence of a phenomenon. For this study, the phenomenon of interest was the lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers raising children in a violent community. The approach to understanding this phenomenon was to interview participants in their homes or a private place of their choice. The purpose of the interviews was to understand how the participants perceived their experiences of raising children in a violent community. In each setting, there was music in the background, which provided additional privacy. The music was similar to drawing the curtain around a patient's bed to provide the patient privacy. Each participant verbalized their lived experience as narratives.

Hispanics in the Bronx

Each of the participants lived in sections of the Bronx. To understand their experience, the environmental context is necessary. Therefore, their context was living in the Bronx, specifically, the South Bronx.

As an overview, the Bronx County of New York City in 2000 is home to 193,651 non-Hispanic whites and to 644,705 Hispanics. As of 2011, 53.5% of the Bronx consists of residents of Hispanic origin (Bronx Data Center: Lehman College, 2010). The number of Hispanics of Puerto Rican origin was 319,240; 133,087 from the Dominican Republic; 21,408 from Central American; 20,782 from South America; and 8,233 of Cuban origin (Bronx Data Center: Lehman College, 2008).

Hispanics in the Bronx are not among the “well off.” The median income for Hispanic households in the Bronx in 2000 was \$22,387. In 2000, there were 221,133 Hispanic children under the age of 18 living in the Bronx County. The income of Hispanic family comprising of father, mother and children was 23.2% below the poverty level; the income of Hispanic family comprising of father and children was 33.1% below the poverty level; the income of Hispanic family comprising of the mother and children was 60.1% below the poverty level. In general, the Hispanic population was twice as likely to be living below the poverty level as their Caucasian counterparts in the Bronx. In addition, they are twice as likely to be undereducated with the percentage of Hispanics over the age of 25 in 2000 without a high school diploma compared non-Hispanic whites (Bronx Data Center: Lehman College, 2008). Hispanic mothers and their children are also at a disadvantage in the Bronx where 60% of Hispanic mothers and their children are living below the poverty level while the rate of black mothers and children living below the poverty level was 46%; and non-Hispanic white mothers and their children

living below the poverty level was 32% in 2000 (Bronx Data Center: Lehman College, 2008). As a result, Hispanic mothers and their children living in the Bronx are at a disadvantage with respect to their income, education, and life below the poverty level. The Hispanic population living in the Bronx are already at a disadvantage, but living below the poverty level also dictates where they can live. This lack of choices often places Hispanic mothers and their children in violent communities.

Hispanics and Violence

The Hispanic homicide victimization rate for youths ages 15-24 in 1995 was 34.1 per 100,000 which is approximately 14 times higher than the rate of white non-Hispanic counterparts of 5.4 per 100,000 (Healthy People, 2010). Community violence is higher among poor, non-white population “living in densely populated urban areas” (National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2007). Hills & Jones (1997) compared two elementary schools, one in a neighborhood with a low level of violence and the other in a neighborhood with a high level of violence. From those two samples, 75% of the children reported being exposed to physical assaults, stabbing, homicides, and gang violence. However, 32% of the children from the high violence community reported witnessing homicides, as compare to only 9% of the children in the low violence neighborhood who witnessed homicides. Exposure to community violence has a positive correlation to emotional distress for the children (Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Richters & Martinez 1993). Risk factors for higher exposure to community violence are minority status, unemployment, poverty, and community status (Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Swab-Stone et al., 1995). Numerous Hispanic families inhabit marginalized neighborhoods, in particularly the new Hispanic immigrants (Attar, Guerra, & Tolan, 1994; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

The Correctional Association of New York (2007) identified the following neighborhoods as disproportionately having the highest rates of their youths in detention: “University Heights, East Harlem, St. George, Harlem, Soundview, South Jamaica, South Bronx, East New York, Morris Heights, Bedford Stuyvesant, Far Rockaway, Bushwick, Queens Village/FLRL PK/Hollis, Brownsville, Washington Heights, and Tremont.” All of those neighborhoods also experienced overcrowding, poverty and under-performing schools (Correctional Association of New York, 2007). The Correctional Association of New York (2007) defines youth as juveniles under the age of 16. In addition, homicide is the second leading cause of death among Hispanic youths between the ages of 10-24 years old (CDC, 2009). Hispanic youths who are not necessarily offenders are subjected to either direct exposure as victims or as observers through witnessing things like randomly flying bullets.

Sample Selection

The data collection process was the use of the snowball method. For this method, the first participant is selected who then recommends others whom they know who would meet the criteria. This process continues with each participant who is selected, recommending the subsequent participants. The snowball method is a linear, non-probability sampling technique that is used to recruit potential participants for studies where potential participants who share similar circumstances are hard to locate (Kaiser & Hays, 2006; O’Byrne & Holmes, 2008). I selected a modified snowball recruiting technique since the sensitive nature of living in a violent community and of being a single parent created the potential for mistrust of an unfamiliar person requesting an interview. The first referrals came from the neighborhood beauty salon. Using the snowball technique, the initial referral came from someone at the beauty salon. This sample is also referred to as a purposeful sample in that the researcher chooses the participants and the

sites for this study because they purposefully inform the understanding of the phenomenon. Potential participants were screened for the following inclusion criteria: single parents providing the mothering role to a child or children; able to speak English, and who live in a violent community. Based on the sample, all were biological mothers of the children and all lived in the South Bronx. The informed consent was explained to the participants during before each face to face interview (see Appendix A). The participants were informed that: their participation was voluntary; their identities were protected and confidential; their story would be tape recorded; the taping could be discontinued at any time without penalty; and, on completion of data analysis, the tapes would be destroyed. The duration of each interview was between 25 to 45 minutes. To protect confidentiality in the dissertation document, each participant was assigned a pseudonym, and any identifying details were modified to protect their identities. I am the only one able to connect the data to specific participants.

Data Collection

Potential participants contacted the researcher through her email address or cell telephone. The location and time were selected by the participants, and each interview was unstructured to facilitate speaking freely. Interviews were audio-taped by two of the same brand tape recorders. One tape recorder served as a back-up in the event there was equipment failure. Each participant was asked to verbalize their experiences of raising children in a violent community. The participants were asked, "Please share with me what it is like to raise your child/children in this neighborhood?" Non-leading questions were posed to the participants while they were encouraged to share their experiences until they were not able to say anything else on the topic.

Recruitment continued until saturation occurred, which was four participants. However, to verify saturation with a seemingly small sample, an additional participant was interviewed and in fact, saturation had been reached. Therefore, the ultimate sample was a total of five participants who were interviewed and included in data analysis. Saturation was obtained when I no longer heard any new or unique concepts or topics.

The interviews were labeled and dated upon completion of each interview. The audio-taped interviews were submitted for transcriptions to the Qualitative Data Analysis Program University Center for Social and Urban Research. I then contacted the participants, requesting that they review their transcripts. At the same time, I listened to the participants' interviews to obtain meaningful descriptions. All five participants were also asked to read through the themes and essences to determine if the themes and essences reflected their experiences as single Puerto Rican mother raising a child in a violent neighborhood. All the participants agreed and were very enthusiastic that the themes were "right on" for them.

Data Storage

The only person who had access to the taped interviews with identification of the first name was me. To maintain confidentiality for participants, interviews were sent to the transcription service and identified only by a number. When they were returned to me, I provided the pseudonym. The taped interviews were sent to the transcription service using an encrypted internet access website. At the completion of data analysis, the tapes were destroyed. At no time did anyone else have access to the tapes, as they were kept in a locked file. The participants were given this information.

Data Analysis

Van Manen's method of data analysis was applied to this research. The transcripts were read and phrases identified. These phrases were synthesized into categories. From here, categories were reviewed, and the themes were identified. These themes were reviewed and validated by the participants. In the final step, the themes were reviewed, collapsed, and synthesized to identify the essential themes. These themes were supported by the raw data obtained (Kleiman, 2004). The result of these themes was a textual statement that described the lived experience that were recalled (van Manen, 1990), and they served as the essential themes. The essential themes were distilled into a brief paragraph, the essence.

This process of data analysis was supported by sharing the themes with two experts who are doctorally-prepared nurses, in qualitative methods. They reviewed the transcripts, as well as the themes, essential themes and the essence for agreement. This including the review by the participants for validation and the doctorally-prepared nurses to review the process, addresses the qualitative research process of reliability, validity, and rigor.

Reliability, Validity and Rigor

The reliability in qualitative research is not a concern if the study's results are replicable in different situations, its trustworthiness (Roberts, Priest, & Taylor, 2006). This reliability process was attained when I conducted the interviews until data saturation was achieved, and recorded how decisions were made such as agreeing on the emerging themes. In addition, reliability and validity were adhered to by returning to the participants to confirm the emerging themes and by ascertaining that the information obtained was accurate and true to their experiences. According to van Manen (1990), determining validity was confirmed by having the participants review the themes that emerged. To confirm the emerged themes, the transcriptions

were given to two experienced qualitative researchers, who are doctorally-prepared nurses. Validity and rigor continued by having a second experienced qualitative doctorally prepared researcher review the descriptions and steps of the data analysis.

To ensure rigor, Burns (1989) recommends the maintenance of qualitative research standards, such as “descriptive vividness, methodological congruence, analytical preciseness, theoretical connectedness, and heuristic relevance”. Descriptive vividness was maintained by using the participants’ language when retelling their experiences and immersing myself with their tape-recorded interviews and their transcripts. Methodological congruence was maintained by understanding the research methodology and having the guidance of my dissertation committee chair. Analytical preciseness was maintained as I recorded the decision-making process of describing the themes that emerged. According to Burns (1989), theoretical connectedness “requires that the theoretical schema developed from the study be clearly expressed, logically consistent, reflective of the data and compatible with the knowledge of nursing”. Finally, heuristic relevance was realized by ensuring that the findings are relevant with the nursing theory and nursing knowledge (Burns, 1989).

Summary of Chapter

This chapter includes the description and application of van Manen’s methodology. The rationale for utilizing a qualitative phenomenological approach was discussed in illuminating the lived experience of the PRSM raising children in a violent community. The research process (e.g., the protection of human subjects, sample, setting access, interviewing techniques, data collection with its storage procedures and feasibility) were discussed. The assurance of maintaining rigor and validity were stated.

Chapter V

FINDINGS OF INQUIRY

This chapter discusses the findings as illuminated by using Max van Manen's (1990) method for conducting phenomenological research. Van Manen's six research activities are not necessarily used in a linear fashion, but they may be used simultaneously as the phenomenon unfolds, and concepts, themes, and essences examined. The initial open-ended question asked of all of the participants was: "Please share with me what it is like to raise your child/children in this neighborhood?" All of the participants were assigned a number for the interview and a pseudonym for this dissertation to maintain privacy.

Study Sample

The sample consisted of five Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) in this study. The participants shared with me their lived experience of raising children in a violent community. The five participants still live in the Bronx while three of them were able to move out of the violent communities into better neighborhoods in the Bronx. The age range was between 24 and 58. The average number of children each had was between 1 and 3. At the time, the children of the mothers who were living in the violent neighborhoods were of school age. Three of the participants are middle-aged ladies: Anna has one daughter, and Carmen has two sons. Brenda is in her forties with one daughter. Evelyn is in her 30's and has one son. The youngest participant, Delia, is in her mid-20 and she is still raising her three children in a violent community. Delia's children range in ages from 2 years old to 6 years old. Brenda is also still living in a violent community with her child. Four of the participants are employed, and the other participant does not work. The participants were employed in companies that provide services, and one participants had to work at least two jobs.

Study Findings

The use of van Manen's methodology of phenomenological research produced narratives, which revealed findings by implementing his six research activities. The six research activities can be implemented simultaneously or interchanged as the phenomenon unfolds. The implementation of the first activity was accomplished by identifying the phenomenon of interest (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen's method was used to ask an initial question of each of the participants which was: "Please share with me what it is like to raise your child/children in this neighborhood?" A pseudonym was assigned to all of the participants to protect their privacy.

The Participants' Experiences

From the narratives, I described each participant and provided an overall summary of these experiences. To provide confidentiality, I gave each participant a pseudonym and changed any really specific details that might reveal their identities.

Anna is a divorced single mother of one child. Anna invited me into her home on a quiet, cool evening. We sat down by the dining table. Anna said, "...it would be so many times that I had to take a taxi because I didn't feel like walking because everywhere you go, to the left, to the right, you see drug addicts; you see there were gangs, people fighting, and that was the only way to protect my daughter. I didn't like walking through that neighborhood because it was scary." She also stated, "I was afraid that my daughter would see me getting mugged because, a lot of times, I would come home from work, and I would pick her up from the after-school program. I would see strangers hanging in the lobby, and I would tell her, 'Let's wait' because I was afraid of getting in the elevator because I don't know if one of those guys would follow me, and, living in fear, it's not a way to live, especially when you have a child...." "...you could see gangs arguing. And I'm like, oh my God, something is about to happen. And my daughter

asked me what is going on Mommy. And I would tell her, oh no, no, they're just having a disagreement. And the truth is it wasn't; it really was going to have a throw down." After the audio-taped interview, Anna mentioned that she had a neighbor living with his wife on the first floor. He always "looked out" for her and her daughter when they happened to be in the lobby. Anna explained that he made sure she and her daughter entered safely into the elevator, as he did with other neighbors in the building. She said she later became aware that the neighbor killed his wife and left the body in the Van Cortlandt Park area, which was published in the newspaper. Anna had a look of puzzlement as she told that story.

Brenda is a divorced single mother of one child, and we met at home. Brenda selected a neighbor to babysit her daughter while she worked. After several months, Brenda became aware that the babysitter would "hang around" on the street with her daughter and she found it unacceptable and not good for her. She worried if her daughter was safe and Brenda stated that "I was able to find across the street a really good afterschool program where I felt my daughter was safe. But, in the beginning, I didn't feel safe having my daughter with anyone". "I know somebody got shot. In the back, here, a young kid was, was just well, they were arguing in the back. And I remember looking outside of the window, and I saw a kid, about maybe 15, 16 who got shot. And that really scared me." She spoke of how difficult it was, and still is, being a single mother and trying to also be a "father" to her daughter. She is still living in the violent community with her daughter, who is now attending a community college.

Carmen and I met in her home with soft music playing in the background, which provided privacy. She has two sons who are four years apart, whom she raised as a single mother. She sometimes had to work two jobs to be able to support herself and her two sons. During one particular year of Carmen having to work two jobs, she was only able to see her sons

for one hour. She was grateful that she had a reliable babysitter who was willing to keep her sons in the babysitter's home. Carmen said, "...I would rush home from my first job, take them home, spend about one hour or so with them, and get them ready and take them back to the babysitter because then I wouldn't get home until 4 o'clock in the morning. And this was all a matter of survival, so I saw my children very little for about one year." She added, "...Yeah, there was a constant fear you know,...And stress and fear in that neighborhood, fear about the kids being safe, fear about me being safe. I was actually mugged twice in the neighborhood, one coming home with the kids for the babysitter. I had one child on each hand while we were walking through the side walk going to the building, and all of a sudden we hear these little pitter-patter steps coming up from behind us, somebody running. And before I knew it, one guy on each side of me, broke my hands from my kids, pushed the kids over, grabbed my purse, and there goes my whole paycheck. You know, and then the kids are all scared because they're little but they kind of figured out because, in the neighborhood, kids talk, parents talk, so the kids hear things....The little one started crying now I have to find a way of calming them down so they can get to sleep."

When her oldest son started high school, he asked Carmen if he could live with his father because the high school was closer and it was located in a better neighborhood. Carmen was concerned that her younger son will experience another 'loss' by her oldest son living with the father. As she told me that her oldest son is a successful businessman, she smiled. Carmen's youngest son has been employed in blue collar jobs, and she is happy to know that her youngest son is okay as he currently lives with her. Her former spouse tried to obtain full custody of their children using the rationale of the children being raised in a violent community.

Delia is separated from the father of her three children whom she never married. They lived together as husband and wife in his parent's house until prior to the birth of their third child. Delia and her common-law husband purchased the house from his parents. Delia and her children are still living in a violent community. She tries to protect her children from the outside. She stated, "The community has a lot to do with it because children can only do and see what they experience inside and outside the home. Inside, I can do the best I can, but once my child steps out the door, I don't know what's going on." Delia spoke of how her 10-year-old cousin who was shot in the heart, as she rode her bicycle. The family was enjoying a barbecue in the park located in the violent community where Delia, her children, and her family live. Delia enrolled her 6-year-old daughter in extra curriculum activities, such as ballet classes and baseball, for her son in order for her children to be in positive environments.

Evelyn and I met in a private space of her choosing with soft music playing in the background. She is divorced with one child. One of Evelyn's stories that she shared was, "..., but because, as single mom, and, at the time, I was, I really didn't have a college degree or anything, so my work and how much work I could do was limited. And not only that, even if I could do two jobs, who was gonna take care of my son?" Evelyn stated, "There's one particular incident that I remember in particular that really affected us there. Right across the street from where we lived, there had been like (pause) I want to say like a drive-by shootout. And we came, we were coming home, the shootout had already happened. And then everybody was talking about it. And that's when I really felt an immense like intense fear, fear for myself and as well as for him. And then I explained to him that's why you can't go outside sometimes. And I had to talk to him about it, and he was very young."

Thematic Analysis

I first listened to each of the interviews to gain a sense of the participant, as well as to “hear” their stories. Then, the interview was sent to and transcribed by the Qualitative Data Analysis Program University Center for Social and Urban Research at the University of Pittsburgh. Once the transcripts were returned, I asked each participant to review their transcripts for accuracy and clarity. No substantive changes were recommended and data reduction was completed according to van Manen’s (1990) method of data analysis. Continuing with van Manen’s method, I read each transcript as I listened to the audio-taped interview. In the next phase, I identified common phrases by highlighting statements in the transcript as well as making notes in the margins followed by placing the phrases into categories. After reviewing the statements in the categories, themes emerged that seem to have commonalities. Themes were examined, reexamined, omitted, expanded, and, finally, named. The themes were sent to the participants who were asked to change or augment the themes and comment on whether the themes represented their experience. I also collaborated with two doctorally-prepared qualitative research experts, asking them to verify the categories, themes, essential themes, and the essence. This collaboration ensured the content had validity and rigor, and it minimized my biases.

Creation of Categories

After the initial reading and coding of the transcripts, there were 63 phrases (see Appendix D). Those phrases were derived using the notes on the side of the transcripts, as well as those phrases and words that were highlighted in the transcript. These categories represented grouping of the phrases from the transcripts. The themes with category descriptors are presented below.

Themes Common to All the Puerto Rican Single Mothers

From the categories, I created themes. The categories were reviewed, re-coded, and collapsed into nine themes, which were: protection, safety, afraid/fearing/scared, belief in God/religion, uncertainty, family/neighbor support/reliance, violent events, coping, and stress/feelings. These themes represented the overall themes common to all of the participants.

Themes with Category Descriptors

Themes with Category Descriptors
<p><u>I. Protection</u> Protecting my child from the outside The need to overprotect the child/children in order to keep them safe Protecting her child's innocence by not telling the child the complete truth for the need to get away from an emerging gang fight in the playground. I did not feel comfortable letting him be a normal child that goes out to play. Neighbor and participant bought ADT alarm systems to prevent break-ins of our apartments. Took son everywhere to the laundry room to throw out the garbage because of fear and anticipation something will happen. Six or seven year old son would check the locks to protect his mother. PRSM's junior high school-age child wants to find the five attackers because of his duty to defend his mother and younger sibling, "calling into question his manhood." Son would get angry by giving dirty looks when the guys on the street made catcalls to mother. Son was seven years old. I felt I had to get son out of the neighborhood because I did not want my son to get violent but could not move out.</p>
<p><u>II. Safety</u> How do I keep my child safe? After I was mugged, did not feel safe because the attacker had all of her personal information. Unable buy a new lock due to the time of the mugging. Trying to keep the child safe at home. The difficulty of monitoring the child/children while at work in order the keep them safe Moving will provide positive situations for the child/children to experience and to feel safe. Private schools were safer than public schools, which had a lot of fight. Son played mostly with the children of her two neighbors who were girls. He did not have friends except for the children of the two neighbors.</p>
<p><u>III. Afraid/Fearing/Scared</u> Lives in fear of mugging. Pretending to not be afraid for the children. Calming the child after the child and the mother were mugged even though the mother was nervous and scared. Afraid to use the elevator with strangers because of the fear of being mugged or killed</p>

<p>I fear for my son's future, his college and feared for his life living in the violent neighborhood. My guard was up all the time. I took my son everywhere.</p> <p>I took my son to the hospital even if his stomach hurts. I think it had to do with fears.</p> <p>Punished son for saying, I'm going home to watch my flat screen TV" because she was afraid of being robbed.</p> <p>Explained to son of not saying to others what possessions they have because there were break-ins in the building, and she did not want to have her things robbed.</p> <p>Fearing the unadjusted, divorced child may turn to the violent community for ways to deal with life.</p>
<p><u>IV. Belief in God/Religion</u></p> <p>Thanking God for the periodic positive situation, such as being able to send the child to private school, having family available or trusted friend to monitor the child/children while the PRSM worked, and having people you recognize in the elevator with you.</p> <p>Telling the child not to lose faith in living in a violent community because working hard and a good family, and what you now have is a gift from God.</p>
<p><u>V. Uncertainty</u></p> <p>I don't know what will happen to my children once they go outside (to school, to play)</p> <p>How do I keep my child safe?</p> <p>Having financial issues that create uncertainty/not knowing.</p> <p>The biggest concern was who will take care of the child/children while the PRSM worked?</p>
<p><u>VI. Family/Neighbor Support/Reliance</u></p> <p>Reliance on family support, significant others, trusted neighbor.</p> <p>Self-reliance and resilience working two jobs, being available for the child/children, as much as possible.</p> <p>PRSM reinforcing the concept of the reliance on family members to their child/children and not on school or community friends.</p> <p>I depended on two female neighbors because I met them in the daycare.</p> <p>I was able to give those two neighbors 'confianza.'</p> <p>Former spouse utilizing the violent community as a reason to gain custody even though PRSM kept the children safe.</p> <p>The biological fathers were not available as needed for the child/children of three PRSMs.</p> <p>In the Hispanic culture, boys are taught to be the man of the house when their fathers are absent.</p>
<p><u>VII. Violent Events</u></p> <p>Observing atrocities</p> <p>Violent events with child/children present</p>
<p><u>VIII. Coping</u></p> <p>Minimizing violence as a way to shield the child/children.</p> <p>Prioritize dangers of who cares for the child vs. moving from the neighborhood, and my child vs. my safety.</p> <p>Avoidance behaviors</p> <p>Providing positive extra-curricular activities to prevent the child/children from engaging in the community violent activities.</p> <p>PRSM reinforcing the concept of the reliance on family members to their child/children and not on school or community friends.</p> <p>Having to periodically utilize much needed money on taxis in order for the PRSM to feel safe at night after getting off the train to their homes.</p>

Surrounding the child/children with positivism.
 Moving will provide positive situations for the child/children to experience and to feel safe.
 Sacrificing to pay for private school in order to keep the child safe.

IX. Stress/Feelings

Always on edge and constant stress.

I never relaxed.

Even when nothing was happening, I still felt tense, that something will happen.

I felt I had to be alert, afraid of being robbed.

I was anxious living with the son in the violent neighborhood.

The tension of raising her son in that neighborhood and of something happening to him.

The divorce was not easy.

Maintaining a job while being a single mother was difficult, particularly when the child/children was/were sick.

The rent goes up; the building is falling apart; nothing is changing; and there is more violence.

The nine themes that emerged from the 63 categories represented the themes that were common to the Puerto Rican single mothers raising their children in a violent community. The theme of protection represented their expression of having to protect their children from the outside. They talked about living in fear of muggings, shootings and robberies, which expressed their concern for safety. The theme of afraid/fearing/scared was represented by talk of pretending to not be afraid for their child's sake. The PRSM drew strength to raise their children while living in a violent community from their belief in God/religion. Thanking God for the periodic situations such as being able to send the child to private school, having family available or trusted friend to monitor the child/children while the PRSM worked, and having people you recognize in the elevator with you. Telling the child not to lose faith in living in a violent community because working hard and a good family, what you now have is a gift from God. Uncertainty was verbalized because the Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) were concerned about their children's safety and not knowing if their children were safe. Family/neighbor support/reliance allowed the PRSM to be able to work, work extra hours or work two jobs because of the support they received. Violent events were difficult for the PRSM to explain

away or minimize to the children. Coping assisted them as a way to shield their children by minimizing the danger. They coped by implementing avoidance behaviors, such as not getting into the elevator with strangers. The PRSM provided extra-curricular activities to prevent the child/children from engaging in the community violent activities. The PRSM verbalized feeling stressed and always feeling on edge, having to be alert.

According to van Manen (1990), I then, reflected on the nine themes by rereading the transcripts and reviewing the categories. The themes, as previously stated, were shared with each of the participants for their validation, and their responses indicated agreement with the themes. Then, I clustered the themes with similar characteristics. After consulting with my two qualitative doctorally-prepared researchers, I collapsed some themes into others to avoid redundancy. The synthesized themes were identified as the six essential themes.

Determining Essential Themes

Once the nine common theses were validated, I, again, immersed myself and reflected on the tape recordings and the transcripts of the interviews. While I carefully identified and extrapolated the essential themes I brought the thoughts to textual context. In evaluating whether or not the themes were appropriate, I questioned myself whether the phenomenon would lose its meaning without the inclusion of the themes. Pablo Picasso's lithographs of *The Metamorphosis of the Bull* started with the image of a powerful, strong bull (Sadala & Adorno, 2001). He dissected, distilled, and pulled off the layers to end with a sketch. Anyone looking at the sketch is able to identify it as a bull because Picasso captured its essence. In addition, Merleau-Ponty posits that when considering a concrete experience, the individual should modify his/her thoughts until what remains is the essence of the phenomenon of interest (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Essential Themes and Support

Once the essential themes were identified, support for each essential theme was needed from the stories told by the single mothers. Excerpts from Puerto Rican single mothers' (PRSM) interviews provide support for the six essential themes, which strengthens the rigor of this study. The six essential themes unfolded into a textual description. Essentially, this textual description facilitates the final reflection, that of creating the essence of the phenomenon. The six essential themes are protecting/monitoring, relying on family/neighbor/friend, portending doom, believing in God, carrying extra loads, and turning points.

Essential Theme 1: Protection and Monitoring

The theme of protection and monitoring was best described by Evelyn when she said:

“I keep my guard was up all the time, and I took my son everywhere.” Delia said, “I protect my children from the outside because I don't know what will happen to my children once they go outside” was collapsed into the need to overprotect because I don't know what will happen to them when they are outside.”

The phrase stated by Evelyn, “My guard was up all the time. I took my son everywhere.” Took son everywhere to the laundry room to throw out the garbage because of fear and anticipation something will happen” are redundant statements with the need to overprotect; thus, they were omitted.

Anna talked about protecting her child's innocence by not telling the child the complete truth for the need to get away from an emerging gang fight in the playground and minimizing violence as a way to shield the child/children were collapsed into protecting her child's

innocence by not telling the child the complete truth when violence is about to erupt or is in progress.

Delia spoke about the need to overprotect because I don't know what will happen to them when they are outside. She added, "The difficulty of monitoring the child/children while at work in order to keep them safe."

Anna

Protecting her child's innocence by not telling the child the complete truth the violence. Minimizing violence as a way to shield the child/children.

The themes in Essential Theme 1 are the following: descriptors of "the need to overprotect my child because I don't know what will happen to her when she is outside and how do I keep my child safe" are major concerns.

Delia

I try to protect my children from the outside. I want the best for them. I want them to see that working, going to school, you know, I try to keep them in extra-curriculum activities, because the street for them? There's nothing for them out there." So I try to do my best as a single mom, to give them the best that I have to offer. That way, they won't have to look for it in the street.

Carmen

Well, the neighborhood came into play where the kids could not go outside whenever they wanted to, because of the, you know, the drug deal in the neighborhood, and the gang activities in the neighborhood, so they could only go out when I could take them out. Whether it was to the park or like some of the

mothers would gather in front of the building with their kids, so when they gathered I would try to come out with my kids, so that's how they made their neighborhood friends.

Essential Theme 2: Relying on Family, Neighbors, and Friends

Three of the five participants relied on their family members to assist them in raising the children, such as taking the children to school while the single mothers went to work. Two participants did not have family members living nearby. Carmen had to rely on a trusted neighbor while she worked two jobs.

Anna said, "I was grateful for being able to rely on family support, significant others, trusted neighbors."

Carmen's former spouse utilized the violent community as a reason to gain custody even though PRSM kept the children safe. Delia and Evelyn reinforced the concept of the reliance on family members to their child/children and not on school or community friends. Carmen was very grateful for the help that came from a baby-sitter who she saw as a friend.

Carmen

Sometimes I would have to work two jobs. I got lucky at one point and found a very good babysitter, who was willing to help out, and she took them in the morning.

Anna

And thank God that I had my parents. When my father retired he was able to pick-up my daughter from school, so I could work extra hours.

Evelyn

My family was there for me at times, but after my son was about I think two or three when my parents relocated to Puerto Rico, so then I was here There were two women that lived in the same building as me who also were single moms, so we used to help each other. One of them had a vehicle, so that's how I did my grocery shopping. Well, we say *confianza*. But, with them, I had already known them from the daycare, so they were the ones who helped me to get used to the building and stuff like that.

Brenda

She has cousins who come from where my sister lives, a block away. So, like I am trying to say, even though outside is not that great, but she has always been surrounded by positive stuff, and family, most important, family.

Essential Theme 3: Portending Doom

All of the participants shared the feeling of trying to avoid the lurking danger that could be unleashed at any moment. The PRSMs implemented avoidance behaviors because of living in fear, stress, on edge of anticipating being mugged or killed.

Evelyn

My neighbor and I bought ADT alarm systems to prevent break-ins of our apartments. I never relaxed. I took my son to the hospital even if his stomach hurts. I think it had to do with fears. I punished my son for saying, I'm going home to watch my flat screen TV because I was afraid of being robbed. I explained to my son of not saying to others

what possessions they have because there were break-ins in the building and I did not want to have my things robbed. I just never, never relaxed. I was always tense. I was always very tense and on edge, always waiting for the next thing to happen Even if nothing was happening I still remember feeling that tense feeling of that something could happen, and that something was gonna happen, and that I needed to be on alert. Even when nothing was happening, I still felt tense, that something will happen. I felt I had to be alert, afraid of being robbed.

Anna

And there were many time when I would come in the building and I would see strangers hanging in the lobby, and you know what, how it is there, you have to wait till those strangers to go, because I was afraid to go inside elevator, I was afraid of getting mugged or killed.

Essential Theme 4: Believing in God

All of the participants verbalized that relying on and believing in God gave them the strength to continue with the day-to-day living.

Anna

Thank God for situation such as being able to send my child to private school, having family available to pick up my daughter while the I worked and having people you recognize in the elevator with you. I told her not to lose faith in living in a violent community because working hard and a good family, what you now

have is a gift from God.I'm just thankful, and I prayed, and I, if I were to see any woman who's struggling with children or a child living in that kind of environment, not to lose hope, not to lose faith, but continue to pray, that sooner or later, with prayers and faith, that you will move on. I thought that I wasn't able to do it but I did it. And I thank God because of my parents and my family. I always told my daughter not to lose faith.

Evelyn

I gravitated a lot towards my faith.... So, I used to take him to church.

We became involved with the church in our neighborhood and stuff and that was one of things that I think helped me, also to get through it.

Essential Theme 5: Carrying Extra Loads

Four of the participants verbalized having to perform the role of the father besides fulfilling their role as mothers. They had to be the only person concern with finances, working extra hours or two jobs in addition to nurturing the children. They talked about issues, such as having financial issues that create uncertainty/not knowing, trying to be a father to the children, having the rent goes up, the building is falling apart, nothing is changing, and there is more violence and about how in the Hispanic culture, boys are taught to be the man of the house when the father is absent.

Brenda

She looks at me as her role model, not only as a mother but as a father, too.” So it puts a strain on me because I have to do two jobs. I have to raise her the best that I could and give her all the love that I can, as a parent, as a mother and a father. So it's been really hard.

Carmen

Keeping a job was hard because now you're single female with two children and what, when the kids get sick or something happens, you've gotta leave your job and run home and find out what's going on.... Now, you can't keep a job because you have to be out because... their father doesn't respond to any of these things, you are the one and only person that can be depended on for those issues.

Carmen shared a contrasting thought of her younger son carrying extra loads. Carmen's younger son, at the time he was in junior high school, felt his manhood was violated when she was mugged.

Carmen

When I got home I was nervous. I was scared. The younger one said, "What's going on?" and I said, Well this just happened to me." And now he is frustrated because he's a little bit older; he's not a little kid; he's like in junior high school or something, no. Now, he feels like his man- hood has been violated because he did not - he was not there to protect his mother, so now he wants to jump out into the street and start going crazy around the street looking for these five kids.

Evelyn

He had a routine at night that he would check the locks. He would check the door, the windows, to make sure they were all locked....So, in Hispanic cultures, they teach the boys that they're the man of the house, so he was told by several family members.

Essential Theme 6: Turning Points

These single mothers turned their life around from being in an unhappy or unsafe marriages to being a single mothers but happy. They verbalized that their status as a single mother was hard. Evelyn stated that her role as a single mother was worsened by living in a violent community.

Evelyn

Evelyn said that her divorce was very hard, from realizing she had to leave, court battles, very limited finances and little emotional support; yet, she knew it had to be done.

I felt I had to get my son out of the neighborhood because I did not want my son to get violent but could not move out. And when the opportunity presented itself, I went back to school, and I was able to, thankfully, now I'm out of that neighborhood. And my son is now going to be 13, so he is able, he feels safe now....And I feel comfortable . I'm pretty okay with it, and what I noticed is that, because of these experiences that we had in the past, it has taught both of us to be a little - even though we're now in a good neighborhood. It has taught us a lot of street smarts.

Carmen

The divorce was not easy; the kids were little. They did not understand their father was not very friendly to the idea of me moving on.” The turning point for her oldest son was when he moved in to his father home because it was closer to the high school he was attending. The high school was located in a better

neighborhood. The older one has gone through college, put himself in a lot of debt...loans to get through five years plus his Master's...now his last promotion two weeks ago in that same place, down in Wall Street. He is his boss's boss now.

Brenda

I have to raise her the best that I could and give her all the love that I can, as a parent, as a mother and a father. So, it's been really hard.

Delia

"I cannot afford to move because cannot afford to pay the rent. It is financially hard. And yeah, I would move out of there. That's my goal.

Essence

The meaning of phenomenological description is in the interpretation of transforming the lived experience into a textual expression of its essence (van Manen, 1990). A textual interpretation statement from the interviews was formulated from essential themes as a synopsis of the lived experience. Linguistic transformations were done in a creative attempt to capture the integrated essential essence of the experience of the PRSM raising children in a violent community.

The essential themes were reviewed and the linguistic transformation resulted in the following essence: Puerto Rican single mothers raise their children in a violent community by: protecting and monitoring their children's whereabouts through portending doom. They cope with a bad situation by relying on family and friends, believing in God, carrying extra loads and creating turning points. The incorporated essential essence conveys the essential nature of the experience of the PRSM raising children in a violent community.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter includes the descriptions of the study, setting, sample, and the five study participants and the research findings. Initial common themes were identified and six essential themes emerged. Support for the essential themes was made available through examples and excerpts from the participants' narratives. Data analysis was accomplished by implementing van Manen's six research activities.

Chapter VI

Reflections on the Findings

This chapter discusses the findings of the experience of Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) raising their children in a violent community. Knowing their experiences, this information will assist nursing to provide the appropriate care addressing the issue that matters most to them: adapting to living in a violent community.

As nurses encounter single mothers living in communities that are dangerous, administering care may pose a challenge. For this study, the Roy Adaptation Model (RAM) was used since it views the individual as an adaptive system functioning towards a goal. The goal of nurses in using the RAM is to assist clients to support and maintain client adaptation (Roy, 2009).

Synthesis of Data and Literature

The literature and synthesis of data as it relates to each of the essential themes is presented in this chapter. A literature review of nursing, and healthcare did not provide necessary information. The illumination of this phenomenon was provided from other disciplines from the perspective of the children living in violent communities. Thus, the paucity of studies in the literature review demonstrated the need for this qualitative study.

Essential Theme 1: Protection and Monitoring

According to Osofosky (1995), the most important resource protecting children from the negative effects of exposure to violence is a strong relationship with a positive adult, such as a parent. However, when parents are a witness to or are victims of violence, they may have difficulty fulfilling their role as a protecting. This current study maintained that the Puerto Rican

single mothers need support in being able to protect their children from the violence in their community. Evelyn reported that being a single mother was compounded by raising her son in a violent community, from which she needed to protect her son from the violence. She said that those types of communities provided housing she could afford to pay. She added that she would take her son everywhere with her because she wanted to protect him. Evelyn would take her son to the laundry room, to purchase groceries, and to take out the garbage. The participants reported always thinking how they can keep their children protected from the violent community. The PRSM would take their children out of the community for activities, such as the Bronx Zoo. They did not permit their children to play with the community children in order to protect their children from violence. Carmen's son pondered why the young children were allowed to play outside without their mothers. Osofosky (1995) continues that it is crucial to know that a parent's ability to be a source of an unwavering strong parent may be compromised. Also, the parents did not know the amount of violence their children were exposed to in their community (Osofosky, 1995). This study showed that the Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) were trying to protect their children from knowing the existence of violence in their community, denying it, or minimizing the severity of the potential or actual violence.

Essential Theme 2: Relying on Family, Neighbors, and Friends

“Parenting and family characteristics may influence the degree to which distal stressors are likely to be experienced as proximal stressors by children” (Proctor, 2006). Parents may reduce violence by raising their children in a loving home and free from fear (Child Protection Center of Zagreb, 2011). The Proctor study (2006) and the Child Protection Center of Zagreb (2011) are supportive of the findings of this current study in that when the PRSM were able to rely on family or trusted friends/neighbors, they were able to work. Anna and Delia were able to

rely on their families to care for their children while they worked. They felt comfortable that their children were taken to school and picked-up from school. Carmen relied on a trusted friend/neighbor to care for her sons while she had to work two jobs. Anna was able to work and work extra hours because she was able to depend on her retired father to take and pick-up her daughter from school. The role of the family as a social support has been shown in several studies that children raised in violent communities with strong social support reported less stress than those without social support. Other studies demonstrated that the social support was effective in communities with lower level of community violence. According to Cammack, Lambert, & Ialongo (2011), and Luthar & Goldstein (2004), social support was not sufficient to counteract the effects of exposure to high levels of community violence. However, this current study refutes Cammack, Lambert, & Ialongo (2011), and Luthar & Goldstein (2004) because the PRSM, and their children did not succumb to their violent communities. Anna and Carmen's children are functioning adults. Brenda's daughter is attending a community college while they both live in their violent community. Evelyn's son feels safer in their new non-violent neighborhood. Delia is still raising her three young children in a violent community with the help from her family. Delia is active in her community group working against community violence. That community group was formulated after her niece was shot while riding her bicycle in the community park. Using family members allows the single mothers to verbalize their concerns and to develop resolutions (Hall, 2004). Evelyn verbalized that her two neighbors helped her adjust to living in the building as a single mother. Evelyn and her trusted neighbors (also single mothers) with whom she had 'confianza' allowed their children to play together but not with the other community children. These single mothers planned how they would shop for Christmas gifts, who would stay to monitor the children, and who would go and buy the gifts.

In this current study, the participants reported the availability and dependability of those supportive individuals who helped the PRSM raise their children in a violent community. Relying on family, and trusted neighbors or friends made the PRSM feel calm and not worry because they knew their children would be safe. All of the participants reinforced the concept of reliance on family and not with the school or community friends. For Carmen, her trusted neighbor and friend provided care for Carmen's two children from the moment the children were dismissed from school to the following morning while Carmen worked two jobs. That situation lasted for about one year. Carmen felt sad that she was not able to spend as much time with her children. However, Carmen provided quality time with her children. Carmen's former husband attempted to use the violent community as a rationale for gaining custody of their two children. Carmen's former husband was not available to their children to help them or provide physical or social support that they needed.

Essential Theme 3: Portending Doom

Since the 1970's, the Bronx has been afflicted with arson and crime that seems endemic to almost the whole borough. The highest rate of youths being detained come from the city's poorest communities (The Corrections Association of New York, 2007). According to New York City Police Department, the Bronx had the highest crime rate in 2010 (New York City Police Department.Gov, 2011). These statistics certainly support the PRSM's themes of portending doom. When one lives in a neighborhood where gang fights, muggings and overt drug transactions on the street corner are visible, portending doom is a rational experience. These occurrences are not unusual for them. Two of the participants continue to live in their original violent communities. They live with the feeling of portending doom, which serves as a catalyst for protecting their children from the violent community. They are afraid to use the

elevators with strangers because of feeling that at any moment they may be mugged, assaulted or worse, killed for no apparent reason.

Portend has been defined by the dictionary as “to indicate in advance” such as used by the American College of Physicians (2011) in their statement of “early clinical suspicion and treatment may portend better outcomes.” This is an example of portend not having an ominous meaning. The dictionary also defines it as “an omen, to give warning of, predict or foreshadow.” In sentences, portend has been use as: “...black clouds that portend a storm;” “...leading indicators that portend a recession;” or “The street incident may portend a general uprising.” (Merriam Dictionary, 2009). The literature does not address portending doom in violent communities. To find literature on this concept, one needs to go outside the healthcare data bases to obtain information. To anticipate is to foresee and expect; however, portend has an ominous side to it, as in expecting to be mugged, being assaulted.

While Evelyn’s son was in the hallway of the building, he stated, “I can’t wait to watch television on my flat screen T.V.” Delia punished her son because she was afraid that his revelation about their possession of a flat screen TV might elicit her apartment being robbed. She explained to her son that the little she worked so hard to attain will be taken by robbers. She continued telling her son that no one should know what possessions they have. Delia stated that several apartments in the building she lived were robbed. One of Carmen’s children was having difficulties adjusting to having divorced parents. She was concerned that her child may rely on the violent community as a means to dealing with life challenges.

Examples explaining portending doom are used in articles about war. A News America Media (2009) article described the justification for the amount of money spent on weapons development cited in: “Does High Sea Drama Portend Economic Doom for the U.S.? Garbarino,

Dubrow, Kostelny, & Pardo (1992) found that the number of murders witnessed by adolescents in an urban city in Chicago was equivalent to those witnessed by adolescents in a refugee camp in Mozambique. Furthermore, they described urban communities that are poor and racially separated as “nothing short of war zones” (Garbarino et al., 1992, p. 581).

Essential Theme 4: Believing in God

All of the PRSM were thankful to God for their periodic positive experiences, such as having family and trusted neighbor/friends to help monitor their children while they worked. Ana was thankful that she was able to send her child to private school in the violent community. Delia has three children, and they are currently living in a violent community. She is thankful that her six year old child is able to attend private school in their community. Anna taught her child not to lose faith in living in a violent community because working hard and having a good family were gifts from God. The PRSM verbalized getting strength to continue with their day-to-day living in their violent communities because of their belief in God.

Delia stated she and her neighbors went to Church and/or prayed to God for strength. An example of God giving strength is depicted in “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Holy Bible, 1983, Isaiah 41:10).

The Puerto Rican single mothers (PRSM) stated that their beliefs in God helped them deal with living in their violent community as single mothers. The famous biblical story of Abram believing God that he will have a son as an heir is an example of believing: “Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Holy Bible, 1983, Genesis 15:6, p. 14). Jesus responded to the Centurion who asked him to heal his servant was, “Go! It will be done just as you believe it would” (Holy Bible, 1983, Matthew 8:13, p. 1043) is an example of

believing. A popular story depicted in the Bible was turned into a hymn; the story of Nebuchadnezzar sending three Israelites to burn in a furnace. Shadrach, Messhach and Abednego refused to acknowledge the king's gods. They believed that God would protect them, and even if God did not protect them, they refused to worship the king's god:

O' Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods.... (Holy Bible, 1983 Daniel 3:17, p. 950).

Essential Theme 5: Carrying Extra Loads

These women who had the additional roles of father, protector, and almost exclusively the major provider were carrying extra roles. In the military force, physically carrying extra loads leads to exhaustion, fatigue. The women, at times were exhausted from working extra hours and/or a second job, and were fatigued from trying to emotionally support their children from not only the divorce, but also living in a violent community.

The PRSM verbalized having to be not just the mothers as the nurturers but also the fathers and the protectors. Carmen stated that when she divorced, she had to take on the role of the father for her two young sons. She added that her former spouse was not available as often as their children needed him. What the absence of her ex-husband meant was that she also had to take on an extra job, manage the home, as well as the two boys.

Evelyn stated that being a single mother was very difficult made worst by living in a violent community. She said she had the added stress of trying to protect her son and herself.

Essential Theme 6: Turning Points

Turning points can be defined as “an event marking a unique or important historical change of course or one on which important developments depend” (Merriam Dictionary, 2009). Historically, turning points can be identified in retrospect, such as an event that incited a riot like the equal rights movements and the Kent State riots where the police killed protesting college students. For these women, a turning point was an event or incident where they had an “aha moment” and said to themselves, “I’m not taking this anymore.”

Evelyn shared that one of her turning points was finding out that her husband (ex-husband) was cheating on her with a neighbor. Another turning point occurred when she was a block away from a shoot out while she was coming home with her son. She realized that the only way out of this situation was to return to school. She did so, graduated from college, and was able to move out of the violent community in which she was living.

For Delia, who was pregnant with her third child, she thought that another child would repair a bad relationship. Her turning point was when she discovered her ex-husband in bed with another woman. At that point, she could no longer deny that “things will get better.” Another turning point for Delia was the death of her 10 year old niece, riding her bicycle in the park when she was hit and killed by a random bullet as part of a gang war. As a result, she started a neighborhood watch that provides additional safety through community volunteers patrolling the streets.

Turning points has positively impacted three out of the five participants. Anna and Evelyn were able to move out of the violent communities. Anna is grateful and thanked God for it. She saw it as a gift from God. Evelyn reported her son feels safer and she feels comfortable.

Reflections from a Nursing Model Perspective

The nursing conceptual model selected to provide a perspective on the meaning of the six themes identified was the Roy Adaptation Model (RAM). The six themes: protection, family/friend are reflected in the four modes of the RAM being the physiological, self-concept, role function, and interdependence modes. The appropriateness of this model is based on the model's views of the seeing the person holistically. Furthermore, this model recognizes that the person is always interacting with the environment (Roy, 2009) and the individual is an active participant (Roy & Roberts, 1989).

The adaptation processes in the RAM contributes to the overall goal of health care, which is to promote the health of individuals and society. Furthermore, it enhances system relationships through acceptance, protection, and the fostering of interdependence, and to promote personal and environmental transformations (Roy & Andrews, 1999).

This system includes individuals, the families, organizations, communities, and societies. The interdependence of the single mothers exists with their children, their family members, and trusted friends raising children in a violent community. The person, in the system is considered as being in contact with the milieu from which they receive stimuli that require responses, which can be displayed through their behaviors. These systems are parts of the whole, which are connected and function together as a whole and interdependent with each part. This interactive system strives to maintain stability through balancing mechanisms described as roles and functions assignment to each member of the system. The RAM explains that any change in one system/mode will impact the whole system. The external stimuli of raising children in a violent community are traumatic events affecting the whole system.

As the essence of the study, and consistent with the RAM, the common purpose of the Puerto Rican single mothers in this study was and is raising children in a violent community through the meaningful participation in the lives of their children and accepting support and trust in God through prayer, faith and support of their family or trusted neighbors. It was through the stories that they shared that exemplify the concept of adaptation, in every sense of the term. Adaptation for these women is seen in every part of their stories and their lives.

According to RAM, adaptation occurs as individuals and their environment are continuously interacting. The PRSM raising children is the focal stimulus, which is the primary focus of this study. The contextual stimulus is the violent community. The contextual stimulus is ameliorated by assisting the individuals to adaptation.

This descriptive phenomenological study focused on the lived experience of PRSM raising children in a violent community. The essence that was synthesized was that Puerto Rican single mothers raise their children in a violent community by protecting and monitoring their children's whereabouts through portending doom. They cope with a bad situation by relying on family and friends, believing in God, carrying extra loads and creating turning points. I utilized Roy's concept of adaptation to understand their realities.

The use of the Roy Adaptation Model provides a framework for viewing the essence from the perspective of nursing. The resulting integrated RAM essence states: These women were able to adapt to a life of needing to protect their children, and the use of family and/or trusted neighbors in order to raise their children in a violent community by making positive choices at turning points. By portending doom rather than denying the events of the environment, they were able to protect themselves and their children. The belief in God, as a

philosophical approach to their reality, prompted to me to make a link between PRSM and the concept of adaptation.

Limitations of the Study

Most of the limitations of this study are inherent in qualitative research. The geographic location was limited to the violent communities in one borough of New York City. The findings may be limited to only Puerto Rican single mothers; thus, they cannot be generalized. A potential bias that maybe a limitation were my experiences in living in violent communities and observing the mothers and children's behaviors who live in violent communities. My preconceptions were bracketed during the interviews, the data analysis and throughout the research study although one can never be fully sure that biases have been bracketed. I believe that I conducted research that illuminated the lived experience of the Puerto Rican single mothers raising children in a violent community.

Discussion

For the PRSM, fear elicits a profound emotional response or portending doom. These women were afraid, are afraid and will always be afraid. It is this fear that continues to protect them and allows them to protect their children. Given the nature of this violent community, not only is their fear well founded, but it also serves as a stimulus to invoke behaviors that are protective and supportive of their child or children. Although the challenge from living in that community impacted on them negatively physically and emotionally, they were able to adapt successfully even though their inner strength sometimes failed them. Time has not faded their memories, but it made them stronger. All of them dealt with fear using the love of being a parent for their children. However, they never denied that fear existed inside of them. This phenomenon has always been alive in their relationship with their children. It will always be

part of their lives. In addition, it will probably have an influence when they become grandmothers. They feel good about themselves, and they felt that they dealt with life differently than most women. Their self-concept is high as they recalled that they have taken care of the most significant people in their life, their children.

Implications for Nursing Practice

The findings from this study have implications for the RAM. The findings supported and reinforced the theoretical framework. The themes derived from the analysis address the concepts of the stimuli, modes of adaptation, and coping processes. They also delineated the change from focal to conceptual.

Also, the findings demonstrate the value of nursing's role in dealing with the effects of living in a violent community; when seeing clients who experience dangerous situations and are raising children. The profession of nursing incorporates the clients' environment as well as the pressures of raising children in unsafe environments.

Many nurses deal with patients that live in violent communities. It is important that nurses know how to care for clients with these fears. Since portending doom can become a focal stimulus at the time when the PRSM need care the most. Based on the themes identified from this study, the following are several recommendations for nursing practice:

- 1 Educational awareness programs and support groups for these mothers and their children should be considered in areas where community awareness and support are lacking.
- 2 Nurses should be able to refer them for counseling at the time that they realize that their adaptive level was compromised. Nurses need and hospitals may never realize that they are dealing with patients that have residual fear and the danger of ignoring this fear may become a great risk to their recuperation.

- 3 A thorough assessment of community resources should be made prior to discharge from the hospital.

Professional nurses at the BA/BS level should be dealing with counseling for the care of patients that deals with fear. Advance practice nurses should receive more education in how to deal with patients holistically. Additionally, all nurses should know about community resources in how to access them for their clients. Nurses should be able to recognize when patients need additional support and make the necessary referrals.

Implications for Future Research

This study should be replicated with other groups of participants. Repeating the study with other populations would aid to program development of group work, diverse cultural groups, and different age groups. Based on the themes identified from this study, the following are several recommendations for future research:

1. Support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's position statement on eliminating violence in the communities;
2. Participate in evidence-based practice research to provide social skills, and parenting skills to facilitate positive adaptation to living in violent communities; and
3. Participate in evidence-based practice research to identify the communities' values.
4. Examine if these behaviors are specific to the Puerto Rican single mothers or to all single mothers raising children in a violent community.
5. Examine if the children living in violent communities take on the role of mothering/protector of their single mothers.

Summary and Conclusions

Qualitative research is the human scientific study of the phenomena. It is systematic in its research process, and it explains the meaning embedded in the lived experience and the intersubjectiveness in extending a dialogic relation to corroborate the phenomenon described (van Manen, 1990).

This study has illuminated the meaning of the lived experience of PRSM using the van Manen phenomenological method. The findings were developed independently, related to the literature and the nursing theory that was used. All of the participants completed an in-depth interview with follow-up dialogue. The six themes that emerged were: protection, family and friends, portending doom, belief in God, carrying extra loads, and turning points. The transformed essence stated that Puerto Rican single mothers raise their children in a violent community by protecting and monitoring their children's whereabouts through portending doom. They cope with bad situations by relying on family and friends, believing in God, carrying extra loads, and creating turning points. The nursing model, the RAM, was integrated into the essence statement, which, in conclusion, reads: These women were able to adapt to a life of needing to protect their children, and the use of family and/or trusted neighbors in order to raise their children in a violent community by making positive choices at turning points. By portending doom rather than denying the events of the environment, they were able to protect themselves and their children. The belief in God, as a philosophical approach to their reality, prompted me to make a link between PRSM and the concept of adaptation.

Appendix A



Doctor of Nursing Science Program (DNS)

The Graduate School and University Center
The City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016-4309
TEL: 212.817.7887 FAX: 212.817.1981

Informed Consent

Mirian Zavala
The Graduate Center
City University of New York
Doctor of Nursing Science Program
Room 3317
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016-4309

CONSENT FORM

My name is Mirian Zavala, MS, RN and I am a certified doctoral student in the Doctorate of Nursing Science Program at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled "Lived-Experiences of Puerto Rican Single Mothers Raising Children in a Violent Community?" This study is expected to enhance the nurse's understanding of single mothers raising children in a violent community and to provide information that will be helpful in designing nursing interventions to address the needs of Puerto Rican single mothers raising children in a violent community. I would like permission to interview you about your experiences raising children in a violent community.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate, or if you elect to participate, you may discontinue your participation at any time. In either case, you may do so without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. To preserve confidentiality, all transcripts and audio cassettes will be numerically coded; no names will be used.

This interview will take about sixty minutes. The audio tapes will only be heard by the principal investigator, the professional transcriber and research committee members. All the information gathered will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my office to which only I will have access.

The risks from participating in this study are no more than what you may encounter in everyday life. Your participation in this study may cause you anxiety, if so a mental health professional will be able to talk to you at your request. When I finish this study, with your permission, I may publish the results but names of people or any identifying characteristics will not be used in the publications. If you would like a copy of the results please provide me with your address and I will be glad to send you a copy.

<http://www.gc.cuny.edu>

The Graduate School and University Center is The City University of New York's doctorate-granting institution, which operates in consortium with all the CUNY campuses: Bernard M. Baruch College • Borough of Manhattan Community College • Bronx Community College • Brooklyn College • The City College • CUNY Graduate School of Journalism • CUNY School of Law • CUNY School of Professional Studies • The Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education • Superior Media Arts Center Community College • Hunter College • John Jay College of Criminal Justice • Kingsborough Community College • Pioneers of the City University of New York • Robert F. Wagner College • William E. Macaulay Honors College • Medgar Evers College • New York City College of Technology • Queens College • Queensborough Community College • College of Staten Island • York College

THE GRADUATE CENTER IS



Doctor of Nursing Science Program (DNS)

The Graduate School and University Center
The City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016-4309
Tel. 212.817.7987 Fax 212.817.1881

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at (212) 817-7987 or e-mail me at mzavalal@gc.cuny.edu, or my advisor Dr. Keville Frederickson at (212) 817-7983 or kfrederickson@gc.cuny.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

By signing this consent you are agreeing that you have been fully informed of the nature of the study and that you have volunteered to participate.

Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

Print Participant Name: _____
Address: _____ Email: _____
Phone: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researchers Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree to have this interview audio-taped. Please circle one.

Yes No

Participant's Signature Date Investigator's Signature Date



Appendix B

Informed Consent Procedures

Part II

BRIEF RESEARCH SUMMARY TO BE GIVEN TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this research project is to understand the lived experience of Puerto Rican single mothers raising children in a violent community. The researcher will interview eligible Puerto Rican single mothers raising children in a violent community. The interviews will take place in the setting of a community after-school center. The Puerto Rican single mothers will be asked what it was like raising children in their neighborhood, the experiences they had, and what were their experiences. The information and knowledge gathered in this study will be used to understand what the experience is like for Puerto Rican single mothers. This new knowledge might be included in the plan of care provided to Puerto Rican single mothers and in parental support programs given to health care professionals. An informed consent will be obtained. For the Puerto Rican single mothers, consent will be obtained face to face at the community after-school center between the researcher and eligible Puerto Rican single mothers. To determine whether the participants understand the information that was provided in the informed consent form, the following process will be followed: The written consent will be left with the participants for an amount of time considered suitable by the individual, and then a discussion will take place. The researcher will ask the participant if they understand all parts of the informed consent form and to describe the process as understood. The researcher will provide clarification if needed. All the questions that the participants may have will be answered by the researcher to the best of her ability.

Part III

Graduate Center, CUNY

Participant's Rights

Principal Investigator: Mirian Zavala

Research Title: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PUERTO RICAN SINGLE MOTHERS
RAISING CHILDREN IN A VIOLENT COMMUNITY

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Graduate Center,

CUNY Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 817-7525. Or, I can write to the IRB at Graduate Center, CUNY 365 Fifth Avenue New York, NY, 100xx,

- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
- Audio tapes are part of this research, I () consent to be audio taped. I () do NOT consent to being audio taped. The written audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team.
- Written, audio taped materials () may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research

() may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

- My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: _____

Appendix C

Participant Survey Questionnaire

Date: ___/___/___

1. How old are you? _____
2. Where were you born? _____
3. What is your marital status? (Please check off one.)
 Single Divorced Widowed
4. How many children do you have? _____
5. How old are your children? (Please write down their ages.)

6. What is your highest level of education? (Please check off one).
 Elementary School High School College Graduate School _____

What is your current working status? (Please check off one).

- Working for pay at a job or business full-time.
- Working for pay at a job or business part-time.
- Working from home full-time.
- Working from home part-time.
- Working, but not for pay, at a family-owned job or business full-time.
- Working, but not for pay, at a family-owned job or business part-time.
- Not working at a job or business and not looking for work.
- Not working but looking for work.

Appendix D

List of Group Service for Participants

Support group and counseling service for participants:

Annecy Baez, Ph.D., Director at (718) 960-8761 or annecy.baez@lehman.cuny.edu. The counseling center is located at Lehman College, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY, 10468, in the Old Gym Building, Room 114.

Appendix E

Themes Identified From Initial Analysis of Data

1. Protecting my child from the outside.
2. I don't know what will happen to my children once they go outside (to school, to play)
3. How do I keep my child safe?
4. Having financial issues that create uncertainty/not knowing.
5. Reliance on family support, significant others, trusted neighbor.
6. Self-reliance and resilience working two jobs, being available for the child/children as much as possible.
7. Lives in fear of mugging.
8. Observing atrocities.
9. Pretending to not be afraid for the children.
10. Violent events with child/children present.
11. Minimizing violence as a way to shield the child/children.
12. Prioritize dangers of who cares for the child vs. moving from the neighborhood, my child vs. my safety.
13. Always on edge and constant stress.
14. Avoidance behaviors.
15. Providing positive extra-curricular activities to prevent the child/children from engaging in the community violent activities.
16. PRSM reinforcing the concept of the reliance on family members to their child/children and not on school or community friends.
17. Having to periodically utilize much needed money on taxis in order for the PRSM to feel safe at night, after getting off the train to their homes.
18. The divorce was not easy.
19. Maintaining a job while being a single mother was difficult, particularly when the child/children was/were sick.
20. Former spouse utilizing the violent community as a reason to gain custody even though PRSM kept the children safe.
21. After PRSM was mugged, she did not feel safe because the attacker had all of her personal information. Unable buy a new lock due to the time of the mugging.
22. Calming the child after the child and the mother were mugged even though the mother was nervous and scared.
23. PRSM's junior high school age child wants to find the five attackers because of his duty to defend his mother and younger sibling, "calling into question his manhood".
24. Fearing the unadjusted divorced child may turn to the violent community for ways to deal with life.
25. The difficulty of monitoring the child/children while at work in order the keep them safe.
26. Difficulty of working different hours at night to provide for herself and child/children.
27. Surrounding the child/children with positivism.
28. The biggest concern was who will take care of the child/children while the PRSM worked?

29. Trying to keep the child safe at home.
30. Three out of four PRSMs felt safe in their own building.
31. Cannot afford to move because cannot afford to paid the rent, it is financially hard.
32. Moving will provide positive situations for the child/children to experience and to feel safe.
33. The rent goes up, the building is falling apart, nothing is changing, and there is more violence.
34. The biological fathers were not available as needed for the child/children of three PRSMs.
35. Two out of the four PRSMs did not date because of focusing on the child/children.
36. The need to over-protect the child/children in order to keep them safe.
37. Private schools were safer than public schools which had a lot of fight.
38. Sacrificing to pay for private school in order to keep the child safe.
39. Afraid to use the elevator with strangers because of the fear of being mugged or killed.
40. Thanking God for the periodic positive situation such as being able to send the child to private school, having family available or trusted friend to monitor the child/children while the PRSM worked and having people you recognize in the elevator with you.
41. Telling the child not to lose faith in living in a violent community because working hard and a good family, what you now have is a gift from God.
42. Protecting her child's innocence by not telling the child the complete truth for the need to get away from an emerging gang fight in the playground.
43. I did not feel comfortable letting him be a normal child that goes out to play.
44. Neighbor and PRSM bought ADT alarm systems to prevent break-ins of our apartments.
45. Took son everywhere, to the laundry room, to throw out the garbage because of fear and anticipation something will happen.
46. Six or seven year old son would check the locks to protect his mother.
47. In the Hispanic culture, boys are taught to be the man of the house when the father is absent.
48. Son would get angry by giving dirty looks when the guys on the street made catcalls to his mother. Son was seven years old.
49. Felt she had to get son out of the neighborhood because she did not want her son to get violent but could not move out.
50. I never relaxed.
51. Even when nothing was happening, I still felt tense, that something will happen.
52. I felt I had to be alert, afraid of being robbed.
53. I was anxious living with the son in the violent neighborhood.
54. I depended on two female neighbors, because I met them in the daycare.
55. Son played mostly with the children of her two neighbors who were girls.
56. I was able to give those two neighbors 'confianza'.
57. I fear for my son's future, his college and feared for his life living in the violent neighborhood.
58. My guard was up all the time. I took my son everywhere.
59. I took my son to the hospital even if his stomach hurts. I think it had to do with fears.
60. He did not have friends except for the children of the two neighbors.
61. Punished son for saying, I'm going home to watch my flat screen TV" because she was afraid of being robbed.

62. Explained to son of not saying to others what possessions they have because there were break-ins in the building and she did not want to have her things robbed.
63. The tension of raising her son in that neighborhood and of something happening to him.

References

- American College of Physicians Internal Medicine retrieved on November 5, 2011 from
http://www.acponline.org/residents_fellows/competitions/abstract/2011_ms_oral_poster_presentations.pdf
- American Community Survey (2007). The American Community Hispanic 2004: American Community Survey Reports. U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved on August 3, 2010 from
<http://www.census.gov>
- American Psychological Association. (1996). *Is youth violence just another fact of life?*
 Retrieved September 9, 2009 from <http://www.apa.org/ppo/issues/pbviolence.html>.
- Atta, B. K., Guerra, N. G. & Tolan, P. H. (1994). Neighborhood disadvantage, stressful life events, and adjustment in urban elementary-school children. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 23, 391-400.
- Bank, L., Foratch, M. S., Patterson, G. R., & Fetrow, R. A. (1993). Parenting practices of single mothers: Mediators of negative contextual factors. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55(2), 371-384.
- Bassuk, E. L., Perloff, J. N. & Garcia, C. C. (1998). The plight of extremely poor Puerto Rican and non-Hispanic white single mothers. *Sociology Psychiatry Epidemiology*, 33(7), 326-36.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. U.S.A.: Basic Books.
- Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 759-775.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). *Toward an experimental ecology of human development*.

- American Psychologist, 32, 513-531.
- Bronx Data Center: Lehman College. (2008). Retrieved May 19, 2010, from <http://www.lehman.edu/deannss/bronxdatactr/discover/bxtext.htm>.
- Bronx Data Center: Lehman College. (2010). Retrieved October 18, 2011 from <http://www.lehman.edu/deannss/bronxdatactr/discover/bxtext.htm>.
- Broom, B. L. (1994). The impact of marital quality and psychological well-being on parental sensitivity. *Nursing Research*, 43, 138-143 .
- Burns, N. (1989). Standards for qualitative research. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 2, 44-52.
- Bryman, A. (1988). Quality and quantity in social research. *Contemporary Social Research Series*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Ceballo, R., Dahl, T. A., Aretakis, M. T., & Ramirez, C. (2001). Inner-city children's exposure to community violence: How much do parents know? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 927-940.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). History of violence. Center for Disease Control. The history of violence: As a public health issue. Retrieved on February 8, 2010, from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/history_violence-a.pdf
- Child Protection Center of Zagreb, 2011. Retrieved on August 4, 2011, from <http://www.poliklinika-djeca.hr/english/>
- Cammack, N. L., Lambert, S. F., & Ialongo, N. S. (2011). Discrepancies between community violence exposure and perceived neighborhood violence. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(1), 106–120.
- Correctional Association of New York: Juvenile Detention in New York City (2007). Retrieved

- on February 26, 2010 from http://prisonpolicy.org/scans/detention_fact_2007.pdf.
- Current Population Survey. (2009). U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2009. Retrieved on August 4, 2010, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/09statab/pop.pdf>
- Deleire, T., & Kalil, A. (2002). Good things come in threes: Single-parent multigenerational family structure and adolescent adjustment. *Demography*, 39(2), 393-413.
- DeMarris, K., & Tisdale, K. (2002). What happens when researchers inquire into difficult emotions? Reflections on studying women's anger through qualitative interviews. *Educational Psychologist*, 37, 115-123.
- Drew, N. (2004). Creating a synthesis of intentionality: The role of the bracketing facilitator. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 27(3), 215-223.
- Dreyfus, H. L., & Spinosa, C. (1999). Coping with things in themselves: A practice-based phenomenological basis of robust realism. *Inquiry*, 42(1), 49-78.
- Fitzpatrick, K. M. & Boldizar, J. B. (1993). The prevalence and consequences of exposure to violence among African-American youth. *Journal of American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 3 (22), 424-430.
- Forehand, R., Miller, K. S., Dutra, R., & Chance, M. W. (1997). Role of parenting in adolescent deviant behavior: Replication across and within two ethnic groups. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65, 1036-1041.
- Furman, W., & Buhrmester, D. (1992). Age and sex differences in perceptions of networks of personal relationships. *Child Development*, 63, 103-115.
- Garabarino, J., Dubrow, N., Kostelny, K., & Pardo, C. (1992). Children in danger: Coping with the consequences of community violence. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Glenn, E. N., Chang, G., Forcey, L. R. (Eds.). (1994). *Mothering: Ideology, experience and agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Gorman-Smith, D., Henry, D. B., & Tolan, P. H. (2004). Exposure to community violence and violence perpetration: The protective effects of family functioning. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 33(3), 439-449.
- Graefe, R. D., & Lichter, D. T. (2002). Marriage among unwed mothers: and Hispanics compared. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 34(6), 286-293.
- Guarnaccia, P., Pincay, I. M., Alegria, M., Shrout, P., Louis-Fernandez, R., & Canino, G. (2007). Assessing diversity among Latinos: Results from NLLAS. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science*, 29(4), 510-534.
- Hall, D. S. (2004). Work-related stress of registered nurses in a hospital setting. *Journal for Nurses in Staff Development*, 20, 6-14.
- Hill, H. M., & Madhere, S. (1996). Exposure to community violence and African-American children: A multidimensional model of risks and resources. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24, 26-43.
- Healthy People (2010). Retrieved on October 9, 2011 from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/22593219/Healthy-People-2010-Injury-and-Violence-Prevention>
- Hill, H. M., & Jones, L. P. (1997). Children's and parents' perceptions of children's exposure to Violence in urban neighborhoods. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 89, 270-276.
- Hispanic and Latino: National healthy marriage resource center. Retrieved on July 14, 2010 from <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/marriage-and-culture/hispanics-and-latinos>

- Holy Bible, new international version (1983). Michigan: Zondervan Bible Publishers.
- Hurt, H., Malmud, E., Brodsky, N. L., Giannetta, J. (2001). Exposure to violence psychological and academic correlates to child witness. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 155(1), 1351-1356.
- Husserl, E. (1962). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*. New York: Collier.
- Jackson, A., Brooks-Gunn, J., Huang, C., & Glassman, M. (2000). Single mothers in low-wage jobs: Financial strain, parenting, and preschoolers' outcomes. *Child Development*, 7, 1409-1423.
- Johnson, S. L., Solomon, B. S., Shields, W. C., McDonald, E. M., McKenzie, L. B., & Gielen, A. C. (2009). Neighborhood violence and its association with mothers' health: Assessing the relative importance of perceived safety and exposure to violence. *Journal of Urban Health*, 86, 538-550.
- Jones, D. J., Forehand, R., O'Connell, C., Armistad, L., & Brody, G. (2005). Mother's perceptions of neighborhood violence and mother-reported monitoring of African American children: An examination of the moderating role of perceived support. *Behavior Therapy*, 36, 25-34.
- Kaiser, M. M., & Hays, B. J. (2006). Recruiting and enrolling pregnant adolescents for research. *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 29, 45-52.
- Kleiman, S. (2004). Phenomenology: To wonder and search for meanings. *Nurse Researcher*, 11 (4), 7-19.
- Krenichyn, K., Saegert, S., & Evans, G. W. (2001). Parents as moderators of psychological and physiological correlates of inner-city children's exposure to violence. *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22, 581-602.

- Leventhal, T. & Brook-Gunn, J. (2000). The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence upon child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 309-337
- Linares, L. O., Hereen, T., Bronfman, E., Zuckerman, B., Augustyn, M. & Tronick, E. (2001). A meditational model for the impact of exposure to community violence on early child behavior problems. *Child Development*, *72*, 639-652.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Luna, I., de Ardon, E. T., Lim, Y. M., Phillips, L., & Russell, C. K. (1996). The relevance of familism in cross-cultural studies of family caregiving. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, *18*(30), 267-283.
- Luthar, S.S., & Goldstein, A. (2004). Children's exposure to community violence: Implications for understanding risk and resilience. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *33*(3), 499-505.
- Lynch, M. L., & Cicchetti, D. (2002). Links between community and the family system: Evidence from children's feelings of relatedness and perceptions of parent behaviors. *Family Process*, *41*(3), 519-532.
- Maccoby, E. E. (1992). The role of parents in the socialization of children: A historical overview. *Developmental Psychology*, *28*(6), 1006-1017.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. New York: Routledge Classics.
- Merleau-ponty, M. (trans., 1964). *The primacy of perception*. United States of America:Northwestern University Press.
- Miranda, A. O., Bilot, J. M., Peluso, P. R., Berman, K., & van Meek, L. G. (2006). Latino

- families: The relevance of the connection among acculturation, family dynamics, and health for family counseling research and practice. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 4(3), 268-273.
- Moore, C. G., Probst, J. C., Tompkins, M., Cuffe, S., & Martin, A. B. (2007). The prevalence of violent disagreements in US families: Effects of residence, race/ethnicity, and parental stress. *Pediatrics*, 119, S68-S76.
- Munhall, P. L. (2007). *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (3rd ed). Sudbury: Jones & Bartlett.
- Munhall, P. L., & Chenail, R. (2008). *Qualitative research proposals and reports: A guide* (3rd ed.). Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett.
- National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2006) retrieved on Feb. 20, 2010 from <http://www.ncccev.org/violence/community.html>.
- New America Media retrieved on November 5, 2011 from http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/viewarticle.html?article_id=1451a6675655c4f5cd381a29c52fe628
- New York Police Department, Office of the Chief of Department, New York City.Gov
Retrieved on October 9, 2011 from
http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/crime_statistics.shtml
- Noble, C. L., Eby, L., Lockwood, A., & Allen, T. D. (2004). Attitudes toward working single parents: Initial development of a measure. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 64(6), 1030-1052.
- O'Byrne, P., & Holmes, D. (2008). Researching marginalized populations. Ethical concerns about ethnography. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 40(3) 144-159.
- Osofsky, J. D. (1995). The effects of exposure to violence on young children. *American*

- Psychologist*, 50, 782-788. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.50.9.
- Polifroni, C., & Welch, M. (1999). *Perspectives on philosophy of science in nursing: An historical and contemporary anthology*. New York: Lippincott.
- Portend. In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/portend>
- Proctor, L. J. (2006). Children growing up in a violent community: The role of the family *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 11(6), 558-576
- Rawlings, S. W. (1980). Families maintained by female householders, 1970-1979. In U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current population Reports*, Series P-23, No. 107, 1980.
- Richters, J. E., & Martinez, P. (1993). Violent communities, family choices, and children chances: An algorithm for improving the odds. *Development and Psychopathology*, 5, 609- 627.
- Rivera-Batiz, F., & Santiago, C. (1994). *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A changing reality*. Washington, DC: National Puerto Rican Coalition.
- Roberts, P., Priest, H., & Taylor, M. (2006). Reliability and validity in research. *Nursing Standards*, 20(44), 41-45.
- Rogers, S. J., & White, L. K. (1998). Satisfaction with parenting: The role of marital happiness, family structure, and parents' gender. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 293-308.
- Roy, C. (2009). *The Roy adaptation model* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Roy, C. Andrews, H. A. (1999). *Roy adaptation model*. Connecticut: Appleton & Lange.
- Saldala, M. L. A. & Adorno, R. D. C. F. (2001). Phenomenology as a method to investigate the experience lived: a perspective from Husserl and Merleau-Ponty's thought. *Journal of*

Advanced Nursing, 37(3), 282-293.

- Segura, D. A., & Pierce, J. L. (1993). Chicana/o family structure and gender personality: Chodorow, feminism, and psychoanalytic sociology revisited. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 19(1), 62-91.
- Simon, R. L., Beaman, J., Conger, R. D., & Chow, W. (1993). Stress, support, and antisocial behavior trait as determinants of emotional well-being and parenting practices among single mothers. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55(2), 385-398.
- Stacks, C. (1974). *All our Kin: Strategies for survival in a Black community*. New York: Harper Row.
- Steidel A. G. L., & Contreras, (2003). A few familism scale for use with latino populations. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 25(3), 312-330. Doi: 10.1177/0739986303256912.
- Stockdale, S. E., Wells, K. B., Lingqui, T., Thomas, R. B., Zhang, L., & Sherbourne, K. D. (2007). The importance of social context: Neighborhood stressors, stress-buffering mechanisms, and alcohol, drug and mental health disorders. *Social Science & Medicine*, 65, 1867-1881.
- Swab-Stone, M. E., Ayers, T. S., Kaprow, W., Voyce, C., Barone, C., Shriver, T. & Weissberg, R. P (1995). No safe haven: a study of community violence in an urban community. *Journal of the American /Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 34, 1343-1352.
- The Holy Bible (1983). *New International Version*. New York: Zondervan Bible Publishers.
- Thomas, S. P. (2005). Through the lens of Merleau-Ponty: Advancing the phenomenological approach to nursing research. *Nursing Philosophy*, 6, 63-76.

- Thomas, S. P., & Pollio, H.R. (2002). *Listening to patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing research and practice*. New York. Springer.
- Torres-Martullo, C. (1975). Acculturation and psychopathology among Puerto Rican women in mainland United States. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 46(4), 710-719.
- Turning point. In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/turning+point?show=0&t=112481821>
- Umana-Taylor, A. J., Bamaca, M. Y. & Guimond, A. B. (2009). The central role of familial ethnic socialization in latino adolescent' cultural orientation. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, (71), 46-60
- US Census Bureau. (2000). American Fact Finder. *Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights: Selected Population Group*: Retrieved on August 13, 2010 from <http://factfinder.census.gov>
- Udanský, M. L. (2003). A demographic perspective of the harmfulness of single-parent families in US magazines and social science journals 1900-1998. PAA Paper submission, extended abstract.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany: State University Press.
- Wollett, A., & Phoenix, A. (1991). Psychological views of mothering. In A. Phoenix, A. Wollett, & E. Lloyd, (Eds.), *Motherhood, meanings, practices, and ideologies* (pp. 28-46). Newbury Park, MA: Sage Publications.